

Oct 24, 2024

Contact Kylie Mason

Phone (850) 245-0150



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Takes Legal Action Against DOJ for Attempting to Block Florida's Investigation into Second Assassination Attempt on President Trump and Related State Crimes



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody filed a lawsuit in federal court against the U.S. Department of Justice over its unlawful attempt to block Florida's criminal investigation following the second attempted assassination on President Donald Trump. Florida announced an independent state investigation to ensure appropriate state laws are enforced. Within days, however, DOJ began demanding that Florida suspend its investigation.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "The State of Florida has been clear that a dual-track investigation would be in the best interest of all parties involved. It is not lost on us that the American people have concerns about federal agencies exclusively handling this matter while simultaneously investigating and attempting to prosecute President Trump. Given that the Department of Justice is preventing our independent investigation from proceeding, we filed suit to ensure that Florida can take appropriate action to enforce its laws."

After Florida announced its independent investigation, Gov. Ron DeSantis signed [Executive Order Number 24-197](#), directing the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and Florida Highway Patrol to work with relevant partners and with Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution to investigate the attempted assassination and other state-law crimes

emanating from Mr. Routh's actions.

As explained in the complaint, it is common for states to investigate violations of state law in parallel to federal investigations of federal law. Nonetheless, shortly after Florida announced its investigation, DOJ began seeking to thwart the State's investigation.

As reflected in the complaint and exhibits, DOJ began impeding when FDLE agents asked for access to the crime scene and evidence during a call with FBI Special Agent in Charge Jeffrey Veltri. During that phone call, Mr. Veltri made reference to a federal statute, 18 U.S.C. § 351(f), which purports to temporarily "suspend the exercise of jurisdiction by a State or local authority" where the federal government asserts "investigative or prosecutive jurisdiction" over violations of § 351, which would include the attempted assassination of a major presidential candidate, though at the time only two federal firearms offenses had been charged.

In subsequent discussions, DOJ again suggested that § 351(f) prevents Florida from investigating violations of state law and indicated that Florida should not even interview witnesses.

Following these discussions, Attorney General Moody sent a [letter](#) to U.S. Attorney Markenzy Lapointe and FBI Director Christopher Wray seeking clarification as to whether DOJ intended to formally invoke § 351(f). Within the week following Attorney General Moody's letter, the federal government filed an indictment adding the attempted assassination charge of a major presidential candidate. U.S. Attorney Lapointe then responded, "the federal indictment returned last week—which post-dates your letter—resolves any potential uncertainty about whether 18 USC 351(f) applies here." The letter went on to suggest that Florida could not take any actions to investigate violations of state law until the federal investigation is concluded.

Attorney General Moody's suit explains that DOJ misreads § 351(f). It further argues that, if the court adopts DOJ's reading, then that statute unconstitutionally intrudes on state power. Either way, Florida asks the court to prevent U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland from blocking its timely investigation so that Florida may enforce state law as appropriate.

To view a copy of the lawsuit, click [here](#).

#