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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND  
URBAN AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6075

March 30, 2026

The Honorable Paul Atkins  
Chairman  
Securities and Exchange Commission  
100 F St NE  
Washington, D.C. 20549

Dear Chairman Atkins,

I write regarding reports of the abrupt resignation of the Director of the Securities and Exchange Commission's (the "Commission") Division of Enforcement (the "Division"). The departure of Judge Margaret Ryan<sup>1</sup> – reportedly due to disagreements with Commissioners about whether to hold financial backers of President Trump accountable for potential violations of our securities laws<sup>2</sup> – is deeply troubling and calls into question the Commission's ability to effectively protect investors and the markets. Further, the Commission's continuing failure to release its enforcement data for the Fiscal Year 2025, despite repeated requests from Congress,<sup>3</sup> constitutes an unacceptable lack of transparency and accountability to the public.

The Commission's Division of Enforcement's mission is to "protect investors and the integrity of the financial markets by investigating potential violations of the federal securities laws and litigating enforcement actions."<sup>4</sup> On August 21, 2025, the Commission announced that Judge Margaret Ryan would serve as the Director of the Division.<sup>5</sup> Judge Ryan previously served as a senior judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, a position to which she was nominated by President George W. Bush.<sup>6</sup> Regarding her appointment, you said, "I am thrilled to welcome Judge Ryan to the SEC. She brings to the Commission decades of experience as a respected judge and practitioner of the law. She is fulfilling a critical role. Judge Ryan will lead the Division guided by Congress' original intent: enforcing the securities laws, particularly as they relate to fraud and manipulation."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SEC, "SEC Announces Enforcement Division Director Judge Margaret A. Ryan Has Resigned From Agency," press release, March 16, 2026, <https://www.sec.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2026-27-sec-announces-enforcement-division-director-judge-margaret-ryan-has-resigned-agency>.

<sup>2</sup> Reuters, "US SEC's Ex-Enforcement Chief Clashed with Bosses Over Trump Cases Before Leaving, Sources Say," Chris Prentice and Marisa Taylor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/us-secs-ex-enforcement-chief-clashed-with-bosses-before-leaving-sources-say-2026-03-23/>.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren to SEC Chair Paul Atkins, February 27, 2026, <https://www.banking.senate.gov/newsroom/minority/warren-calls-on-sec-chair-atkins-to-release-delayed-2025-enforcement-data-after-refusal-to-confirm-enforcement-decline>.

<sup>4</sup> SEC, "About the Division of Enforcement," <https://www.sec.gov/about/divisions-offices/division-enforcement/about-division-enforcement>.

<sup>5</sup> SEC, "SEC Names Judge Margaret Ryan as Director of the Division of Enforcement," press release, August 21, 2025, <https://www.sec.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2025-108-sec-names-judge-margaret-ryan-director-division-enforcement>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

Typically, “S.E.C. enforcement chiefs serve for years.”<sup>8</sup> But on March 16, 2026, approximately six months into her tenure as Director, the Commission announced Judge Ryan’s resignation from the agency. The press release announcing her departure did not include a reason or name a successor. But news reports suggest that Judge Ryan may have been stymied in her efforts to enforce the law. Judge Ryan reportedly “wanted to be more aggressive in pursuing charges for fraud and other misconduct including in cases that touched the president’s circle,” yet “faced resistance from SEC Chair Paul Atkins and other top Republican political appointees” in doing so.<sup>9</sup> Cases that “sparked tension” in particular allegedly “involved cryptocurrency entrepreneur Justin Sun, a major backer of the Trump family’s World Liberty Financial venture” and “Elon Musk, a big donor to Trump’s campaign who briefly served as the president’s special adviser.”<sup>10</sup> In the Commission’s case against Mr. Musk, for example, a settlement was apparently negotiated with the agency without the knowledge of the Division of Enforcement’s lawyers actively litigating the case, raising “questions about whether Musk or his lawyers were tapping relationships with other officials in the Trump administration in an effort to dispense with the case.”<sup>11</sup>

Judge Ryan’s unusually short term and the reported circumstances of her abrupt departure are deeply troubling. Reports that Judge Ryan was not given the latitude to enforce the law against allies of President Trump fit into a broader narrative that has marked your tenure as SEC Chair: if you have the ability to pay or have connections to the President, you can act with impunity. The SEC has dropped cases or investigations against parties with relationships with the President or who have made donations to his campaign, including but not limited to Gemini,<sup>12</sup> Binance,<sup>13</sup> and Devon Archer.<sup>14</sup> Your failures to enforce the law allow bad actors to get away with harming investors and threaten the integrity of our markets.

We are also concerned about what this abrupt transition means for the Division’s ability to fulfill even the most basic of its responsibilities. Judge Ryan’s departure comes at a time when, due to prior Commission and broader Trump administration efforts, the Commission has lost between

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<sup>8</sup> New York Times, “S.E.C.’s Enforcement Chief Abruptly Resigns,” Ben Protess, March 16, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/16/us/politics/sec-enforcement-chief-resigns.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Reuters, “US SEC’s Ex-Enforcement Chief Clashed with Bosses Over Trump Cases Before Leaving, Sources Say,” Chris Prentice and Marisa Taylor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/us-secs-ex-enforcement-chief-clashed-with-bosses-before-leaving-sources-say-2026-03-23/>.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Financial Times, “Elon Musk’s Lawyers Sidestepped SEC team in Twitter Case Settlement Talks,” Stefania Palma and Stephen Morris, March 17, 2026, <https://www.ft.com/content/018528f9-964f-42ab-aea7-72fadd173918?syn-25a6b1a6=1>.

<sup>12</sup> Reuters, “SEC agrees to dismiss case over crypto lending by Winklevoss’ Gemini,” Mrinmay Dey, January 26, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/sec-agrees-dismiss-case-over-crypto-lending-by-winklevoss-gemini-2026-01-24/>.

<sup>13</sup> SEC, “Binance Holdings Limited; BAM Trading Services Inc.; BAM Management US Holdings Inc.; Changpeng Zhao,” press release, May 29, 2025, <https://www.sec.gov/enforcement-litigation/litigation-releases/lr-26316>.

<sup>14</sup> New York Times, “Journey From Biden Loyalist to ‘Full MAGA’ Ends in a Trump Pardon,” Kenneth P. Vogel, March 29, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/29/us/politics/journey-from-biden-loyalist-to-full-maga-ends-in-a-trump-pardon.html>; The New York Times, “The S.E.C. Dropped a Complaint Against Its Chairman’s Former Client,” Kenneth P. Vogel, September 24, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/24/us/politics/sec-paul-atkins-devon-archer-trump.html>

nearly 20% of its staff,<sup>15</sup> including 13% in the Division of Enforcement in headquarters, and more across its regional offices. This significant reduction in staff, coupled with sudden leadership changes, likely impacts the Division's ability to effectively function and protect investors and market integrity. Indeed, under your leadership, the Commission has filed the lowest number of enforcement cases in a decade.<sup>16</sup>

The Commission also continues to withhold enforcement data for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025—nearly six months ago. On February 12, 2026, you appeared before the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and disputed public reports that enforcement actions have fallen dramatically over the past year — and promised that data would be forthcoming. I wrote to you on February 27, 2026, to request prompt release of the data. One month on, you have yet to release the data.<sup>17</sup> We are now as close to the end of fiscal year 2026 as the end of fiscal year 2025, and if delays in releasing data are allowed to compound year-to-year, the public's understanding of the Commission's enforcement work will continue to lag.

I once again ask you to release the Commission's FY25 enforcement data and respond to all inquiries included in my February 27, 2026, letter. In addition, please respond to the following questions by April 13, 2026:

1. Provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for Judge Ryan's departure.
2. Preserve and provide all documents, records, and communications, communications between Judge Ryan and the Commission or individual Commissioners regarding enforcement cases.
3. Preserve and provide all documents, records, and communications between the Commission or individual Commissioners and attorneys for Mr. Elon Musk relating to the SEC's case against him for violations of Section 13 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.
4. Preserve and provide all documents, records, and communications between the Commission or individual Commissioners and attorneys for Mr. Justin Sun since Judge Ryan's arrival on August 21, 2026.
5. Preserve and provide all documents, records, and communications between any employee of the SEC and any employee of the White House since August 21, 2026 regarding Judge Ryan, Mr. Sun, Mr. Musk, and SEC enforcement more generally.
6. Please explain how the Commission's workforce reduction initiatives and Judge Ryan's departure will affect the ability of the SEC to execute its enforcement responsibilities and comply with other statutorily mandated responsibilities.

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<sup>15</sup> Reuters, "US SEC Buyouts Hit Legal, Investment Divisions Hardest, Data Shows," Douglas Gillison and Chris Prentice, May 16, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/business/world-at-work/secs-legal-investment-markets-divisions-cut-up-19-staff-after-buyout-program-2025-05-15/>.

<sup>16</sup> Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance, "SEC Enforcement: 2025 Year in Review," Harris Fischman, Lorin Reisner, Jessica Carey et al., January 21, 2026, <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2026/01/21/sec-enforcement-2025-year-in-review/>.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren to SEC Chair Paul Atkins, February 27, 2026, <https://www.banking.senate.gov/newsroom/minority/warren-calls-on-sec-chair-atkins-to-release-delayed-2025-enforcement-data-after-refusal-to-confirm-enforcement-decline>.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth Warren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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Elizabeth Warren  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Banking,  
Housing, and Urban Affairs