

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2020

The Honorable Donald W. Hafele
15th Judicial Circuit of Florida
Judge Daniel T. K. Hurley Courthouse
205 North Dixie Highway
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Dear Judge Hafele,

As members of the Democratic Women's Caucus of the United States House of Representatives, we write to request that you release any grand jury transcripts and documents surrounding the 2008 plea deal involving Jeffrey Epstein. This information could provide crucial details as to why Epstein received a lenient plea deal, as well as better inform our work to reform the Crime Victims' Rights Act. We are pleased that Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg and newly elected Clerk of the Court Joe Abruzzo recently removed any objection to releasing these documents.

Jeffrey Epstein, a well-known billionaire with deep political connections, was accused of molesting and trafficking dozens of young women since the late 1990s. In May 2006, Palm Beach Police charged Epstein with multiple counts of unlawful sex acts involving a minor. In June, it is reported that, after hearing from only one accuser, a Palm Beach County Grand Jury returned an indictment of one count of solicitation of prostitution. The Palm Beach police, shocked and disheartened by this lenient action, took the matter to the FBI for a federal investigation.

On June 30, 2008, after more than a year of investigation and bargaining between the two legal sides, Epstein appeared in a Palm Beach County courtroom and pled guilty to one count of solicitation of prostitution and one count of solicitation of prostitution of a minor under the age of 18. He was given a sentence of 18 months in jail plus a year of community service, and was required to register as a sex offender.

He then spent only 13 months in a private wing of the county jail where his cell door remained open and a television was installed for his personal use. Furthermore, Epstein was permitted to spend six of seven days each week in work release despite being designated as a sex offender by the Court and contrary to existing policies that prohibited the participation of sex offenders in work release programs.

Epstein was able to plead to these minor charges not only without notice to any of the victims, in clear violation of the Crime Victims' Rights Act, but with the terms of his plea actively concealed from his victims by agreement between Epstein's counsel and the government. These extraordinary circumstances have been expressly confirmed in the written findings of the federal district court before whom detailed documentary evidence and sworn testimony has been presented.

While we cannot undo the damage Epstein has caused the victims of his abuse, the survivors of Epstein's exploitation and manipulation deserve transparency and answers to unresolved questions. The terms of Epstein's plea deal, work release conditions, and his treatment as a

designated sex offender, have all come under severe criticism, and merit further official inquiry. Allowing a public view of the grand jury proceedings will add much insight into what appears to be a malfunction of the criminal justice system.

The Courtney Wild Crime Victims' Rights Reform Act is named after one of Jeffrey Epstein's victims. If passed into law, it would update the Crime Victims' Rights Act to improve the justice system's interactions with victims before, during, and after criminal proceedings. The legislation would empower victims to assert their rights and obtain restitution more effectively, ensure accountability and remedies for when victims' rights are violated, and facilitate better legal advocacy for victims during criminal proceedings.

A release of the grand jury proceeding in the Epstein case would, most likely, amplify the need for this legislation and assist Congress and the public in understanding as to what went wrong in the effort to seek justice.

We urge you to consider, consistent with applicable law, rules, and regulations, allowing the clerk to release these documents to the public immediately.

Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

/s/
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/
Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

/s/
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

/s/
Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s/
Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress

/s/
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

/s/
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

/s/
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

/s/
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

/s/
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

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Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

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Susan Wild
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/s/
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

/s/
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s/
Bonnie Watson Coleman
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/s/
Cindy Axne
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Betty McCollum
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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/s/
Doris Matsui
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/s/
Carolyn Maloney
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/s/
Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/
Gwen Moore
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Nanette Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

/s/
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

/s/
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

/s/
Sheila Jackson Lee
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Kathleen Rice
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Robin L. Kelly
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Lori Trahan
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Stephanie Murphy
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Rosa L. DeLauro
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Sylvia R. Garcia
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Norma Torres
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/s/
Zoe Lofgren
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/s/
Jan Schakowsky
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/s/
Terri Sewell
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Judy Chu
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Kim Schrier, M.D.
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Joyce Beatty
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Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress