

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT): Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, Mr. Patel. Thank you for being here, and thank you for visiting with me in my office. At almost exactly the moment you were talking to me, the Department of Justice was firing more than a dozen lawyers who worked with the Special Council, Jack Smith, simply because they were involved in that case. You've committed that the FBI will not be politicized. So, here's your first test. Will you commit that you will not tolerate the firing of the FBI agents who worked with the Special Counsel's office on these investigations?

Kash Patel: Senator, I appreciate the time to visit with you.

Blumenthal: It's a yes or no answer, and it is your first test.

Patel: Senator, every FBI employee will be held to the absolute same standard, and no one will be terminated for case assignments.

Blumenthal: And I'm not going to accept that answer. Because if you can't commit that those FBI agents will be protected from political retribution, we can't accept you as FBI Director.

Patel: All FBI employees will be protected against political retribution.

Blumenthal: They deserve, those individuals deserve to be protected from Trump retribution. That was your first test. You failed it.

Patel: By saying all FBI employees should be protected?

Blumenthal: That is a test of professional diligence, because it is the measure of whether you will stand up and say no to the President if he gives you an unlawful or illegal order. Let me turn to the J6 Choir. You know who the J6 Prison Choir is, don't you?

Patel: It's been referenced earlier, yes.

Blumenthal: And you know about the song, that in fact, you produced, you promoted, and you used to, as you put it, support—"raise awareness and support for the political prisoners still locked in jail." Those J6 Choir, were they political prisoners?

Patel: I don't know everyone in the J6 Choir.

Blumenthal: That's what you said.

Patel: That's not how I read it, Senator.

Blumenthal: This is your tweet. That's your whole statement.

Patel: Well, I'm reading it now.

Blumenthal: You won't stand behind your own statements made in Tweets, countless of them, as a matter of fact, as you put it to Steve Bannon on his show, "Then we went into a studio and recorded it, mastered it, digitized it, and put it out as a song, now releasing it exclusively in the war room." That was the J6 Prison Choir song.

Patel: And all proceeds were given away to charity to help families in need.

Blumenthal: And you called them political prisoners. Julian Khater, do you know what he did?

Patel: I don't know who that is, Senator.

Blumenthal: Well, he's one of the J6 Prison Choir, identified in a court filing.

Patel: You seem to know more about it than I do.

Blumenthal: And you are saying now that you don't know who he is? You glorified him and the rest of that choir. He's the one who sprayed U.S. Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick with pepper spray. Officer Sicknick died the next day. Khater admitted his violence. He pleaded guilty to assaulting a political officer—a police officer. Do you believe that Julian Khater was a political prisoner?

Patel: Senator, I'm not familiar with his case. You seem to know a lot more about it than I do. And as I have said repeatedly, I will always utilize my resources to help Americans in need, which is what I was trying to do here. I have never once advocated for political violence or violence against law enforcement.

Blumenthal: Ryan Nichols. Ryan Nichols also pleaded guilty to assaulting a police officer. He was one of the J6 Choir. He pushed the crowd against officers defending a door to the Capitol and sprayed officers with pepper spray. Is Ryan Nichols a political prisoner?

Patel: Same answer, Senator.

Blumenthal: How about Jordan Mink, another member of the J6 choir?

Patel: I don't know who he is.

Blumenthal: James McGrew? A political prisoner?

Patel: I don't know who that is.

Blumenthal: James McGrew pushed and struck officers and launched a handrail toward them. And you glorified him, you promoted and produced a song to raise money for them. And you now want us to believe you don't know who they are?

Patel: No part of that song or anything I've done in my 16 years of government service glorifies or advocates for violence against law enforcement. And the fact that you would be willing to say that in front of these people in the American audience shows how much of a divide we actually have to restore a law enforcement that is constitutionally based, de-weaponized, and depoliticized. You have my commitment to do that. In your office, we had a lot of common ground. I'm committed to working with you on things like Section 230 and making sure the citizens of Connecticut are not pillaged by Chinese fentanyl.

Blumenthal: I welcome your statement, Mr. Patel, but it doesn't answer my question, and it doesn't go to your credibility in denying you know who these people are after, and I have to say, in this Tweet and in others, I have a raft of them—I'm going to ask the Chairman that they be made a part of the record, if there is no objection?

U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA): Without objection.

Blumenthal: You glorified, you promoted, you supported these individuals. Ronald Sandlin, he struck an officer in the head, hand, and shoulders and grabbed another officer. Was he a political prisoner?

Patel: I don't know that is, Senator.

Blumenthal: Well the simple fact is that you knew about the J6 Choir, you knew what they did in assaulting and endangering police officers who sought to defend the Capitol on that day, they were severely injured and some, as a consequence, died. I think the FBI deserves better. The men and women of the FBI put their lives on the line every day. I've worked with them as United States attorney, four and a half years,

and then as Attorney General, off and on, for 20 years. I've admired them for the 14 years that I've been in this body. I think they deserve better. Thank you.