

KENNY MARCHANT  
24TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

COMMITTEE ON  
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SELECT REVENUE MEASURES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL SECURITY

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4324

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
1110 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-6605

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
9901 EAST VALLEY RANCH PARKWAY  
SUITE 3035  
IRVING, TX 75063  
(972) 556-0162

June 7, 2012

The Honorable Eric Holder  
Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW Suite 5111  
Washington, DC 20530-0009

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I am writing to you regarding my concern that several conservative bloggers have been the targets of significant harassment and potentially criminal violations. I am very afraid of the potential chilling effects that these reported actions may have in silencing individuals who would otherwise be inclined to exercise their Constitutional right to free speech.

It has been brought to my attention that many of these harassing actions are dangerous hoaxes popularly known as "SWAT-ting." SWAT-ting involves someone contacting the police with a false report of a violent incident at the home of the target. It is further believed that perpetrators are using advanced telecommunications technology to mask the real location of their contact with police. Local police then respond to the target's home under the false pretense that the call originated inside of the home which also hides the true identity of the caller. Victims are left with a significant police presence at their home which is not only embarrassing but could potentially be dangerous. I am asking the Department of Justice to immediately investigate this alarming trend of SWAT-tings.

In addition to causing significant unjust harm to the victims, SWAT-ting is a major drain on police resources that could be responding to actual crimes. Does the Department of Justice have an action plan in place to help local law enforcement reduce the occurrence of SWAT-ting? If there is no current plan in place, I strongly encourage the Department of Justice to create a plan and provide guidance to state and local law enforcement to greatly reduce SWAT-ting occurrences. Moreover, given the advanced use of telecommunications technology involved in many SWAT-ting incidents, do any of these actions potentially constitute federal crimes?

Though the practice of SWAT-ting may not be new, I am very concerned that it has now become an option for those who seek to do harm to those of differing political opinions. Is the Department of Justice aware of the recent reports of SWAT-ting being used to target political opponents? Are there any statutory or regulatory changes that you would recommend be made to improve the Department of Justice and/or state and local law enforcement's ability to reduce occurrences of SWAT-ting and apprehend those responsible?

Thank you for your review of this correspondence and I look forward to your reply. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me, or my Legislative Director, Scott Cunningham, at 202.225.6605 or [scott.cunningham@mail.house.gov](mailto:scott.cunningham@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

  
Kenny Marchant  
Member of Congress