

SDNY Announces Criminal Enforcement Priorities for 2024, Whistleblower Pilot Program

By **Rachel Maimin** and **Daniel W. Borneman**

Damian Williams, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced an expansion of his office's priorities for 2024, adding fights against the fentanyl epidemic and public corruption to its previously stated "co-equal" priorities of protecting against violent crime, rooting out corruption in financial markets, and vigorously enforcing civil rights.

- **Fighting Fentanyl:** Williams pledged to focus his office on attacking the fentanyl epidemic by using a two-pronged approach: stemming the flow of the drug into the district by charging criminal networks of traffickers and producers abroad, and concurrently prosecuting offenders at home, calling the approach "from root to branch."
- **Public Corruption:** Citing a long tradition of the office's complex public corruption prosecutions, Williams announced that his office will focus on cleaning up the "pollut[ed]" public institutions in the Southern District in 2024 "without any regard to partisan politics."

To these ends, Williams also announced a whistleblower pilot program that offers non-prosecution agreements to encourage certain nonviolent criminal offenders to "call [SDNY] before [SDNY] call[s] you."

Whistleblower Pilot Program:

The pilot program applies only to criminal conduct either (a) "undertaken by or through public or private companies, exchanges, financial institutions, investment advisers, or

investment funds involving fraud or corporate control failures or affecting market integrity" or (b) "involving state or local bribery or fraud relating to federal, state, or local funds." To qualify under the pilot, the whistleblower must self-disclose their criminal conduct and meet various other conditions intended to exclude violent or high-profile offenders, while ensuring that the information given is actionable.

Contact

Please contact the listed attorney for further information on the matters discussed herein.

RACHEL MAIMIN

Partner

T: 212.419.5876

rmaimin@lowenstein.com

NEW YORK

PALO ALTO

NEW JERSEY

UTAH

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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