

## **Banking and Finance Law Daily Wrap Up, CRIMES AND OFFENSES – Trump signs E.O., formally launches task force to eliminate federal benefit fraud, (Mar. 17, 2026)**

Banking and Finance Law Daily Wrap Up

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By Suzanne Cosgrove

The White House says J.D. Vance will head up the task force, which will advise the president on government efforts to fight fraud, waste and abuse in programs receiving federal funds.

On March 16, 2026, President Donald Trump signed an [Executive Order](#) creating the Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a panel chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance that will advise the president and coordinate government-wide efforts to combat fraud, waste, and abuse in federal benefit programs.

[According](#) to a White House release, the chairman of the Federal Trade Commission will serve as vice chairman of the task force, the assistant to the president for Homeland Security will serve as senior advisor, and an executive director will manage daily operations, with relevant cabinet secretaries and heads of government agencies to serve as Task Force members.

States administer these federally funded programs, the release noted, “and some States have embraced loopholes that avoid individual eligibility validation, allow self-certification of eligibility, and expand eligibility far beyond what the Congress intended.”

The release cited “staggering fraud and waste in Minnesota” as a case in point. Echoing charges made previously by President Trump, including in his [State of the Union](#) address, delivered on February 24, the White House said federal prosecutors in Minnesota “estimate that Medicaid fraud in recent years could total in the billions.”

The most recent charges appear to amplify a case brought in Minnesota in 2022 in which 47 people were accused by the Department of Justice of defrauding \$250 million from a state-run, federally funded child nutrition program during the pandemic.

**A national strategy.** The Monday White House release did not provide specific details on how the Task Force will fit in with prior presidential initiatives to investigate fraud but stated the Task Force would coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to stop fraud across Federal benefit programs.

A [fact sheet](#) that accompanied the release specified that the Task Force “will coordinate measures to improve eligibility verification, implement pre-payment controls, detect high-risk fraud trends, and disrupt and dismantle fraud networks and the mechanisms through which fraud is committed.” The Task Force also is assigned to coordinate development of minimum anti-fraud requirements, “including proof of identity and documentation requirements, risk controls, and audit and remedial actions,” while member agencies work “to develop a measurable implementation plan.”

**Prior initiatives.** As reported previously (see *Banking and Finance Law Daily*, Jan. 12, 2026), the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced a series of actions to address government benefits fraud in Minnesota in January, including investigative actions by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network and the issuance of a Geographic Targeting Order imposing additional reporting requirements on certain financial institutions.

Separately, in January, the Trump administration also [announced](#) it planned to create a new division within the Department of Justice to focus on national fraud enforcement, stating that it would “enforce the Federal criminal and civil laws against fraud targeting Federal government programs, Federally funded benefits, businesses, nonprofits, and private citizens nationwide.”

**Deadline set.** The White House said Monday that within 90 days of its Executive Order, each member of the Task Force would be required to submit “a measurable implementation plan” concerning the issues identified or developed under this order.

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