

ENTERING THE GOLDEN AGE: ENDING THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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ENTERING THE GOLDEN AGE: ENDING THE WEAPONIZATION OF THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Washington, DC

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:26 p.m., in Room 2237, Rayburn House Office Building, the Hon. Jefferson Van Drew [Chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Van Drew, Moore, Onder, Schmidt, Gill, Crockett, Moskowitz, and Johnson.

Also present: Representative Hunt.

Mr. VAN DREW. The Subcommittee will come to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time. We welcome everyone to today's hearing on Ending the Weaponization of the Justice Department.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from the great State of Alabama, who is going to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, and then we will remain standing for a moment of silence.

ALL. I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection, Mr. Hunt of Texas will be permitted to participate in today's hearing for the purpose of questioning the witnesses if a Member yields time to him for that purpose.

I will now recognize myself for an opening statement.

Welcome, everyone, to the first hearing of the Subcommittee on Oversight. Today we are here to shine a light on something that should be deeply concerning to every single American: How our justice system was allowed to become weaponized against political opponents.

Early in his Presidency, Joe Biden told the Nation, "It is not my Justice Department. It is the Justice Department." Former Attorney General Merrick Garland promised the same thing. That was their promise. We now know it was a lie.

For the past four years, it was not the people's Justice Department. It was a political weapon used to go after anybody the

Biden–Harris Administration felt needed to be attacked. Let me lay it out clearly, case after case, so there is no confusion about what happened.

Let's start in the great State of New York. Alvin Bragg ran for Manhattan DA, focused on only one thing, targeting Donald Trump instead of cleaning up the many problems facing New York City. After years of searching, he revived a dismissed case with the help of former DOJ officials and used a shaky legal theory to turn misdemeanors into felonies.

It wasn't just Bragg. New York's Attorney General, Letitia James, also made it her mission to go after President Trump. She campaigned on him. Prosecutors, attorney generals—they shouldn't campaign on politics. They should campaign on justice. She campaigned on it, and she promised voters she would, exact quote, "get Trump" before even seeing a shred of evidence. Sure enough, once in office, she followed through, twisting civil statutes into weapons for political gain, targeting not just Trump but his entire family business.

In Fulton County, Georgia, Fani Willis also campaigned on prosecuting President Trump. She coordinated with a partisan January 6th Committee and the Biden White House from Georgia and hired her romantic partner as the lead prosecutor. Couldn't make this stuff up. I guess office romances can sometimes take you places. For Fani Willis and Nathan Wade, it was tropical destinations. It was luxury hotels, all on the taxpayer's dime. While they were busy enjoying the perks, the cases they were building against Trump were falling apart under the weight of conflicts and impropriety because it was pure political lawfare.

I want to just note no one should run for DA, AG, or any legal office, Republican, Democrat, conservative, liberal—nobody should do this with the sole goal of going after one political figure. It is not what those jobs are about. That is not justice. That is vengeance.

Our legal system isn't supposed to be about personal grudges or political payback. It is about fairness. It is about impartiality. It is about the rule of law. That is supposed to be the standard in America. Unfortunately, under President Biden, that standard wasn't just abandoned at the State level. It was shattered. It was shattered at the Federal level as well.

Jack Smith was unconstitutionally appointed as Special Counsel. His lead counsel pressured a defense attorney with a judgeship offered to flip a client. So, if a client flipped, he would get a judgeship. Smith admitted to altering evidence in the *Mar-a-Lago* case, evidence tampering at the highest and most important level—pure political lawfare.

The FBI conducted an unprecedented raid on Mar-a-Lago, the home of a former President. They ignored standard protocol. They didn't wait for President Trump's lawyers to respond. They didn't use the local field office. They bypassed all typical legal channels—pure political lawfare.

The FBI also targeted religious institutions. You couldn't make this up, again. Parents—they labeled traditionalist Catholics as domestic terrorists, traditional Roman Catholics as domestic terrorists, and considered spying on their churches, on their priests, and

on their parishioners. Think about that. I really want everybody to think about it. Forget the politics for a minute.

The FBI was planning to spy on grandmothers clutching their rosary beads in prayer, treating them as if they were a national security threat. If they can do this to Catholic churches—and this is the important part—what is stopping them from doing it in any place of worship, to Protestant churches, to Jewish synagogues, to Muslim mosques, or to Hindu temples? If it is Catholic churches one day, it could be any of those another day. It could be you.

If you think that sounds far-fetched, I want you to just take a look, if you get a chance, at what they did in my home State, in New Jersey. In New Jersey, the FBI raided the largest Hindu temple in the Western hemisphere, home to some of the most peaceful and spiritual people on the face of the earth, Hindus.

The Biden's FBI stormed the temple. He invaded private quarters, religious areas, and held guns—they held guns to the faces of swamis, holy men, some of whom were wearing nothing but their evening wear, their nightwear, their pajamas. These are individuals devoted to peace, nonviolence, and prayer, yet they were treated like dangerous criminals in an aggressive show of force. It is wrong. It is un-American.

It didn't stop at places of worship. The DOJ also turned its sight onto parents, moms and dads, grandparents who dared to speak, who dared to speak up for their children at local school board meetings. Instead of seeing concerned citizens, the Biden Administration saw potential domestic threats. They used counterterrorism resources to monitor and intimidate parents simply for voicing their concerns about what is happening to their own children in their own classrooms.

The DOJ even weaponized the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, the FACE Act, to target prolife advocates. This doesn't even matter if you're prolife or prochoice. Again, it could happen to anybody. Take Mark Houck, a peaceful prolife activist and father of seven kids. In a blatant show of force, the FBI sent a SWAT team to his home, raiding in a predawn raid with guns drawn, terrifying his wife and his children.

Whether it is people praying in churches or parents speaking out at school board meetings, the message from Biden's DOJ is clear: If you practice your First Amendment rights in ways they don't like, you will become a target. It could happen to any one of us. This is pure political lawfare.

The Justice Department slow-walked the investigation into Hunter Biden, allowing statutes of limitations to expire, tipping off defense lawyers about search warrants, then ultimately offering a sweetheart plea deal that nobody else would ever get. Meanwhile, the DOJ was slow-walking investigations that might make the President look bad.

The full force of the DOJ was aimed at President Trump and even worse yet, people that didn't sign up for this—any of his allies. Just look at the timeline. After announcing his candidacy, President Trump was indicted four times, twice by partisan DAs and twice by an unconstitutionally appointed special counsel.

I am sure my Democratic colleagues will say that it was not coordinated, but it was. I will say it was pure political warfare. What

I have laid out is just the framework of what the Judiciary Committee, this Judiciary Committee, uncovered last Congress. It was the work of this Judiciary Committee and our Chair, Jim Jordan, that did that.

My colleagues, we will dig deeper into each case. I pledge to you that this Committee, this Subcommittee, is going to dig deep and dig hard and find out the real truth. The reason is not because we want to rehash everything in that ugly, ugly past. The reason is we never, ever want it to happen again.

It shouldn't matter, it really shouldn't matter, if you are a Republican or a Democrat or a liberal or conservative. It could happen to you. I want you to really think about it could happen at your church. It could happen to your mosque. It could happen to your synagogue. It could happen to your temple. It could happen to your cause, whether on the Right or the Left. It could happen to your beliefs. It is un-American. It is wrong.

This should never happen again. Our justice system should be blind to politics, blind to personal beliefs, and focused solely on fairness and the law. Under Attorney General Pam Bondi's leadership, this administration, this Congress, and this Subcommittee are working to restore integrity to the DOJ for everyone, all of us. We will ensure that never again will our justice system be used as a political weapon.

I thank our witnesses, all of you, for being here today, and I look forward to your testimonies.

I now recognize the Ranking Member, Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. This is my first time serving as a Ranking Member of a Subcommittee during a hearing, and I am grateful to be here today. I look forward to working with you and the rest of this Committee on behalf of the American people.

Before I was elected to Congress or to the Texas House of Representatives, I was a public defender and civil rights attorney by trade. I know about the Department of Justice and what they are supposed to be doing. I am also very concerned by a rogue DOJ or one that is not beholden to the American people. I am very concerned about the DOJ being weaponized by the White House. I am concerned about the FBI being used for purposes outside of our domestic security and maintaining peace at home.

So, weaponization of the Department of Justice—this phrase, the weaponization of government, is something that has been overly used and repeated by my Republican colleagues. They use it as a war cry, a battle call to justify dismantling Federal agencies and the purging of thousands of hardworking, dedicated Federal servants who swore an oath to protect the Constitution and the rule of law.

If the purpose of this hearing today is to examine and expose the weaponization of government, specifically the weaponization of Department of Justice, then it is essential that we understand what exactly weaponization means. Fortunately, history is kind to us.

Last Congress, the House Judiciary Committee held numerous hearings on this notion of weaponization. In those hearings, Republicans described weaponization as, quote, "corruption," quote, "government abuse and political treachery," having the government act,

quote, “against people who were innocent and did nothing wrong,” quote, “targeting people of one political persuasion.”

As one of my colleagues aptly described, quote,

If you speak up about the abuses you are seeing or are sharing information that may not fall in line with the political narrative, you will be suspended without pay, have your security clearance revoked, or your life will be turned upside-down. It is pretty clear that the MO is, if you don't comply, they will retaliate. If you don't agree with their political agenda, you get suspended. They do it in such a way to deter others from speaking up and speaking out.

These are not my words. These are not the words of Ranking Member Raskin or Leader Jeffries. These are the words of Congressional Republicans. This is what they believe embodies weaponization. I am the first to admit that I don't often agree with many things that my Republican colleagues say but wholeheartedly concur with their descriptions here.

What concerns me, however, is the inability of my colleagues on the other side to connect the dots that are in front of them, while the rest of America is watching as this DOJ weaponization takes hold right before our eyes. To be clear, what we are witnessing happening before us satisfies the descriptions used by my Republican colleagues.

Corruption—any lawyer with a good head on their shoulders will tell you that the recent attempt by Trump's DOJ to drop the corruption case against Mayor Adams is ironically riddled with corruption itself. This decision to try and drop this case was never about some flawed argument or approach by the DOJ.

In fact, even Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove in his February 10th letter to the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, the office handling the case, stated that the Department of Justice's attempt to drop this was done, quote, “without assessing the strength of the evidence or legal theories on which the case is based inherent.”

Instead, it is trying to drop the case because Trump's DOJ, quote,

Is particularly concerned about the impact of the prosecution on Mayor Adams' ability to support critical ongoing Federal efforts to protect the American people from the disastrous effects of unlawful mass immigration and resettlement.

Put differently, the Department of Justice wants Mayor Adams to give fealty to Trump and also use him to execute Trump's immigration policy in New York City.

The blatant corruption of this quid pro quo alone should warrant the Subcommittee to investigate the current weaponization of this Department of Justice. This is far from the only example of weaponization occurring before us.

Next, government abuse and political treachery—make no mistake. Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove ordering Brian Driscoll, the then-acting Director of the FBI, to turn over a list of not just current but also former FBI staff who were assigned, quote, “at any time to investigations and/or prosecutions related to the events that occurred at or near the U.S. Capitol on January 6th”—it is a clear illustration of government abuse targeting employees they wrongfully claim are political adversaries.

In fact, rather than utilize the FBI's time and resources to protect America from cyber-attacks, terrorism, and other violent crimes, Trump's DOJ is choosing to spend resources to build loyalty to Trump. If that is not government abuse, I just don't know what is.

Third, the view that the government is acting, quote, "against people who were innocent and did nothing wrong"—for those of you who may not be familiar, when career prosecutors and staff at DOJ are assigned to cases, they take these tasks on not because of power or politics but because it is quite simply part of the job.

It is rare that prosecutors get every case they want. Instead, prosecutors and staff are assigned cases because of their capacity, experience, and expertise. Where we see commitment to the Constitution and the rule of law, the Trump DOJ sees reason for retribution.

This has already taken shape in various forms, but notably, on January 27th, Trump's then-acting attorney general, James McHenry, fired DOJ officials, those of who which worked on Federal criminal investigations into Trump. Let me repeat this. They fired DOJ officials who did nothing wrong. These officials simply did their jobs.

Now, finally, quote, "targeting people of one political persuasion"—while I just briefly touch on this point, I want to be very clear with the American people. Within the last 35 days, Trump's DOJ has already sent inquiry letters to Democratic Members of Congress for speaking out and criticizing Elon Musk.

Our task on this Subcommittee today is to conduct real Congressional oversight of the Department of Justice because this notion of weaponization is not simply a threat; it is a reality. The public is worried. Career attorneys are worried. Congress is worried. The world is worried. Every day that passes, the Department of Justice is losing institutional knowledge and exceptional attorneys because of a blind arrogance and vengeance.

We owe it to this country to come together to call out weaponization happening today, to call out corruption, government abuse, attacks on innocent people, and the targeting of people with different political views. We owe it to everyone to speak the truth, even if the truth is hard to hear. We owe it to us all to preserve our country's rule of law.

The final point that I will make is that there were a number of attorneys that were brought up in the Chair's opening remarks, Attorney General Letitia James of New York as well as DA Fani Willis. I do want to point out that each of these women are women that were duly elected in their States, and Fani Willis was just re-elected.

That is not Federal lawfare. That is not the weaponization of the Federal Government. Both of those women work on the State law enforcement level. The final point that I will make is that while they work on State levels, there were only a certain amount of cases that were able to be tried prior to the election.

Any cases that did take place, whether they were civil cases or Federal cases, I do want to point out, regardless of who brought those cases, those cases ultimately—at least the ones that did go, they ultimately went to juries. They went to juries that were full

of American citizens, juries that were not asked, “Are you going to sit here and support Donald Trump and his agenda, or do you have some Left-wing agenda?” They were given an opportunity to hear the evidence, and they were able to rule based on the evidence that was presented to them.

I am someone who misses the courtroom every single day, as I practiced for 17 years before entering into Congress. If we continue to pretend as if the voices of everyday American citizens don’t matter when they have an opportunity to listen to both sides of a case and make a decision, then we really are in for a rude awakening in this country.

One thing that we should do as Members of Congress is we should preserve our institutions and make sure we build them up to the point that people have trust. When you walk into a courtroom, you have no idea who is walking in and who just decided that they would actually show up for jury duty.

I am here to tell you that I still believe in that imperfect but beautiful system that we have in this country known as the jury system. With that, I will yield.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Ranking Member. I will quickly point out that the President did ask his attorneys for a neutral venue and was denied during some of those cases, and Judge Merchan himself was very politically connected, particularly through his daughter.

However, I did want to make an announcement. This is a one-time-only appearance, pretty much, here. Kind of scheduling issues. From now on, for those who come regularly, we will be in the other room that usually the Judiciary Committee is in.

I now recognize the great Chair of the Full Committee, the gentleman from Ohio, Jim Jordan, for his opening statement.

Chair JORDAN. I don’t know about the great part, but thank you, Mr. Chair.

They could never tell us who planted the pipe bombs on January 6th. They could never tell us who leaked the *Dobbs* opinion. They could never tell us who put cocaine at the White House. They sure had time for a lot of other things.

On October 2, 2021, they set up a snitch line to report moms and dads who had the nerve to show up at a school board meeting and advocate for their son or daughter. On September 23, 2022, 10 unmarked cars pull up to Mark Houck’s home, arresting him in front of his wife and seven children, and what did he do wrong? What did he do wrong? Pray in front of an abortion clinic. When some crazy guy comes up and starts yelling obscenities in his kid’s face, he makes sure he deals with that guy. He went to court. The jury found him not guilty.

On November 18, 2022—the Chair talked about this—raid—excuse me. Actually, before that, the Summer of 2022, raid on President Trump’s home. President Trump’s attorney said, “You can come.” They were working with him. “No, no, no. We’ve got to go raid.” We had, actually, Mr. Steven D’Antuono, head of the Washington Field Office, tell us how wrong that was, how they broke all kinds of protocol.

Two months later, Mr. Garland appoints Jack Smith as Special Prosecutor. As the Chair pointed out in his opening statement, the

lead prosecutor, Jay Bratt, used the promise of a judgeship to try to pressure one of the defendant's lawyers. You are not allowed to do that. We are going to talk to Mr. Bratt at some point, this Committee. We will have him in for a deposition.

On January 23, 2023, FBI Richmond Field Office issues a memorandum where it says if you are a prolife Catholic, you might be a domestic violent extremist. Can't tell us who put cocaine at the White House, but you can call Catholics extremists.

In the Spring 2023, two brave whistleblowers come forward and tell us about the sweetheart deal that David Weiss was trying to do for Hunter Biden. Of course, those guys' reward for coming forward as good, brave whistleblowers was to have their security clearances taken from them and be retaliated against.

At 6:01 a.m., March 19, 2024, Brian Malinowski, Little Rock, Arkansas, highest paid official in the Little Rock government, runs the Bill and Hillary Clinton Airport. At 6:01, all these folks show up in the morning. The first thing they do is put tape on the doorbell cam, and they are coming after Mr. Malinowski, a warrant to search his home because they believed he had sold six guns that he wasn't supposed to sell. At 6:01, tape on the doorbell cam. Fifty-three seconds later, Brian Malinowski is shot in the head, later dies.

They could have handled that so—the SWAT team and everything else—just talk to his lawyers. All kinds of ways you could have handled that to avoid the terrible outcome. We had Brian Malinowski's spouse was here last Congress. His lawyer testified—a tragic story because of this Justice Department, the previous Justice Department, the way they handled things.

Don't forget December 12, 2024, when the Inspector General told us about the 26 confidential human sources, who were there on January 6, 2021. Seventeen went into restricted space, which they were not authorized to do. Four went into the Capitol, which they were not authorized to do. None of them were charged. Two of the four who went into the Capitol were asked to be there by the FBI.

We got all kinds of questions about that incident, about those confidential human sources, all kinds of questions we want answered. Now, thank goodness—and the Chair referenced this as well. Thank goodness Pam Bondi, Todd Blanche, Kash Patel, and Dan Bongino are now going to be running the Justice Department where we won't have this kind of ridiculous focus on agencies being turned on the very people they are supposed to serve.

We sent seven subpoenas today, seven subpoenas that we sent asking for information about all these issues. We want everything you got so the American people have answers. Maybe it is not as bad as I think. One thing I have learned in my time in Congress with these investigations—every single time, the only thing we get wrong is it is always worse than we thought. It is always worse than we thought.

So maybe I will be proven wrong this time. We are going to get that information. I think the date is March 7th, they are supposed to have this information back to us.

I want to thank the Chair and the good work I know he is going to do this Congress, the great work he has done on our Committee, for having this hearing, taking a look back at what we saw from

this ridiculous previous Justice Department and the good work I think we are going to see from the folks who are now running that critical Department and Agency.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair.

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. Raskin, for his opening statement.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair, thank you very kindly.

Last Congress the Chair of the Committee and the Committee sent over 150 letters of inquiry, and subpoenas to the DOJ and the FBI. That is more than two inquiries a week for every week that we were in session. All that breathless investigation didn't yield much evidence of weaponization, any more than it led to the impeachment of Joe Biden, which was the express objective of it all.

I have good news for all the weaponized sleuths and gumshoes out there on the Committee.

The Department of Justice and the FBI are now filled with actual staggering corruption and weaponized lawlessness. We should get on it immediately. It has only been 36 days since the beginning of the Administration and we already have a thick report we are releasing today on the violations of law and the Constitution that have taken place, the early misdeeds of the Trump Administration DOJ.

It is true the Federal courts have issued more than 20 temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions to try to stop this governmental crime wave. We cannot maintain a demure legislative silence, Mr. Chair, about the shocking weaponized corruption overtaking the U.S. Department of Justice.

Ten days ago, seven career prosecutors resigned in protest rather than carry out a corrupt and lawless order from the Acting Deputy Attorney General and former Donald Trump private Defense Attorney Emil Bove. He ordered prosecutors in the Southern District to dismiss for totally political reasons a major public corruption case against New York Mayor Eric Adams, who had been charged, by a unanimous Grand Jury in a 57-page indictment, with five felony counts of criminal bribery and soliciting illegal contributions.

Trump ordered DOJ to withdraw the Grand Jury indictment after Adams traveled to Mar-a-Lago and agreed to back Trump's political agenda in return.

The Interim U.S. Attorney Danielle Sassoon resigned rather than make her storied office a party to this profoundly corrupt bargain. She refused to extend prosecutorial favoritism toward a politician who had been indicted for serious bribery and corruption charges. Nor would she participate in Mr. Bove's project to cover up the details of this dirty deal.

Ms. Sassoon is a Republican with impeccable credentials in the conservative movement. For anyone who might doubt it, a member of the Federal Society, and a former law clerk to Supreme Court Justice Scalia, a jurist whom I know the Chair has repeatedly praised.

Now, in ordinary times we wouldn't have to raise this. Here we do, because we are living in an atmosphere of political paranoia. This is a very conservative U.S. attorney who said, "she could not abide the corruption of the new Trump Administration's Depart-

ment of Justice.” Her resignation triggered a cascade of further resignations as six other veteran prosecutors refused in their turn to take part in this corrupt bargain.

The officials included the Acting Head of the Criminal Division, several leaders of DOJ’s Public Integrity Section, and the lead prosecutor on the case from the Southern District, Hagan Scotten, a decorated veteran, and another Republican with impeccable Right-wing credentials who could not stomach the thought of joining this plot, and said in a letter to the agents that, “I will submit to the record that it will take a fool or a coward to join this plot against justice.”

The next day an apparently exasperated Mr. Bove demanded that the career prosecutors in the Public Integrity Section volunteer one lawyer to sign this disgraceful dismissal order or there would be a mass firing of all of them. One lawyer, set to retire, agreed to sign the dismissal to protect his colleagues from this outrageous threat of collective mass punishment, something that would be more appropriate to Stalin’s Russia than to the United States of America.

This eye-popping sellout of public integrity and public safety in New York wasn’t even a secret. In a *Fox News* interview, Tom Homan, the Border Czar, sat next to Mayor Adams and explicitly referred to the corrupt bargain saying,

If he doesn’t come through, I’ll be back in New York. We won’t be sitting on a couch, I’ll be in his office up his butt saying, “Where the hell is the agreement we came to?”

Last Friday, the judge in the case at least provisionally refused to honor this dirty deal, instead appointing an independent monitor, Republican Paul Clement, to evaluate what should be done with the now orphaned five-count criminal corruption indictment.

Mr. Chair, these facts are shocking: Blatant corruption, coverup, mass resignations, threats, and coercion. This, can you imagine what the Republican Members of this Committee would be saying if that happened under President Biden, if Joe Biden had done that for the corrupt Democratic Mayor of New York City? My God.

This toxic sweetheart deal demands a Committee inquiry. Where is it? It is infinitely worse than any of the flotsam and jetsam the Committee examined with the brainy intensity of Lieutenant Columbo in the last Congress.

The Majority has asked no questions, written no letters, demanded no briefings, or issued no subpoenas on this scandal. Why not? Why has the cat got your tongue?

Well, this Adams debacle provides us with a whiff of the raw sewage already overpouring the Department of Justice. They sacked dozens of prosecutors with superior credentials and evaluations simply for doing their jobs when they were assigned to work on the January 6th teams. These people must get their jobs back under the Civil Service rules, which allow dismissal and discipline only for poor performance or misconduct. The majority has not uttered a peep wondering about how such an appalling violation of the law and professional ethics has come to pass.

Why not?

Last Congress you investigated the DOJ for allegedly hiring and firing employees based on political ideology. Nothing came of it.

Now, DOJ has openly fired dozens of career prosecutors—Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—for the sole reason that they were assigned to work on the January 6th insurrection cases, in other words, for doing their jobs in a case that Donald Trump now considers uncomfortable for him.

How is that remotely acceptable?

Even Trump said on January 7th, in the wake of the vicious, premeditated attack on our police, and our Congress, and our Constitution, that it was “a heinous attack.” He said,

The demonstrators who had infiltrated the Capitol have defiled the seat of American democracy. To those who engaged in acts of violence and destruction, you do not represent our country. And to those who broke the law you will pay.

Well, the only people paying now, after his pardons are the prosecutors and FBI agents they are going after for doing their jobs because Donald Trump thinks it is too much truth.

In an act of Orwellian revisionism that would make Joseph Stalin blush, Trump’s team wants to punish hardworking prosecutors and FBI agents for doing the jobs they were told to do. If this is not weaponization of the Department of Justice, then what is, Mr. Chair? It is far worse than the imaginary things floating around last Congress that led nowhere.

When will we have a hearing on what is taking place for real in the Department of Justice right now? They have hollowed the career leadership ranks of the DOJ, ravaging the offices that prosecute public corruption and terrorism. Now we meet Ed Martin, the new U.S. Attorney of DC, who has already proven himself to be to legal ethics what Bobby Kennedy is to public health. He is an election denier who participated in the insurrectionary mass protests of January 6th, which he joyfully likened to Mardi Gras on the social media.

Until recently, very recently in fact, into his term of office he has been a defense lawyer of record in the courts for numerous January 6th criminal defendants. After taking over the U.S. Attorney’s Office he fired dozens of prosecutors, again for doing their jobs, for prosecuting January 6th rioters.

The DOJ ethics rules plainly require that he recuse himself because of this glaring conflict of interest created by his ongoing representation of private plaintiffs being prosecuted by the Government. Naturally, the Trump DOJ forced out the Senior Ethics Official Brad Weinsheimer who would have ruled on the matter and replaced him with two inexperienced political appointees who apparently think it is OK not just for the fox to guard the henhouse, but for the fox to simultaneously represent other foxes in court who have already ravaged the henhouse.

Mr. Martin has literally made filings on both sides of January 6th cases, as defense counsel for participants in the riot, and now as a prosecutor dismissing the charges against the same defendants he was representing.

When will there be a hearing on this? This is taking place right now.

The list goes on. We don’t have time to go through everything that has already happened, but I would encourage the Chair to please check out our report on that this hearing was entitled “En-

tering the Golden Age: Ending the Weaponization of the Department of Justice,” a title that comes just in time to help us celebrate the 50th anniversary of Saturday Night Live. Well, perhaps the title is referring to a golden age for corrupt billionaires, or lawless oligarchs, and violent White nationalists, but it is no golden age for the Department of Justice, which is now mired in corruption and lawlessness, halting prosecutions, disbanding the anticorruption task forces, and purging veteran prosecutors and agents who are dedicated to public safety, and have superior performance evaluations but have run afoul of the new political correctness imposed on the Department.

Chair Jordan has championed our power under Article I, to ensure that the Department of Justice upholds the rule of law for all, without fear of favor. Good for him. I don’t need to quote his eloquent speeches for you on the subject; we know them well.

So, I ask this Committee to be true to our own beautiful words. Let’s not use our oversight power selectively. Let’s investigate these startling developments so dangerous to justice in America. Let’s start with the dirty deal with Mayor Adams, which has now put a giant worm in the Big Apple.

Mr. Chair, I would invite you to join us in sending this letter today to Attorney General Bondi demanding specific answers on her shocking abuse of prosecutorial power, the shocking abuse of prosecutorial power that has taken place at DOJ in the whole Mayor Adams matter.

I would think that the Committee should move very quickly to have a hearing on this next week.

Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Ranking Member.

Real quickly, Pam Bondi will be here for the Committee of the whole. I am sure Members also will meet some of her staff and ranking people; they will be at this Committee as well.

I would maintain the attorneys were removed not because they were doing a great job. Because they weren’t doing their job, and they were involved in lawfare. That is the point.

With that, Mr. Raskin, I believe you wanted to enter something into the record?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, please. Two things: First, the letter to Attorney General Bondi.

Second, a new report, “President Trump’s New Gilded Age, how Trump’s Department of Justice is promoting political and corporate corruption to benefit”—

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection, all other opening statements will be included in the record.

We will now introduce today’s witnesses.

First, Mr. Chris Swecker. Mr. Swecker is a former FBI agent who retired as the Assistant Director of the Criminal Investigations Unit. He served with the Bureau for 23 years. That is a lot. He currently practices law in the great State of North Carolina.

Mr. Jonathan Fahey. Mr. Fahey is a partner with Holtzman Vogel, where his practice focuses on investigations and white-collar criminal defense.

He previously served in various roles in the Department of Homeland Security and as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Mr. Peter Breen. Mr. Breen is the Executive Vice President and Head of Litigation at the Thomas More Society, a public interest law firm focused on Constitutional rights. Mr. Breen successfully, successfully defended Mark Houck, a prolife advocate, against FACE Act charges brought by the Biden-Harris Administration.

Mr. Brendan Ballou. Mr. Ballou is a former Federal prosecutor. He served with the Justice Department for five years.

We welcome all our witnesses today and thank them for appearing here.

We will begin by swearing you in. Please rise. Raise your right hand.

Do you swear or affirm under penalty of perjury the testimony you are about to give is true and correct to the best of your knowledge, information, and belief, so help you God?

[Witnesses affirm.]

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. You may be seated.

Let the record reflect that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative.

Please know that your written testimony will be entered into the record in its entirety. Accordingly, we ask that you summarize your testimony in five minutes.

Mr. Swecker, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF CHRIS SWECKER

Mr. SWECKER. Good afternoon, Chair and Ranking Member, and the Members of the Subcommittee.

It is an honor to appear at this hearing today. As mentioned, I have over 42 years of active experience in the criminal justice system as a prosecutor, as an agent, and as an attorney. That informs my testimony today.

I served under seven FBI directors and seven attorney generals. While attorney generals are cabinet appointments and politics goes with the position, this should not be the case with the FBI director, who has a 10-year term that was designed to insulate the position from politics.

Indeed, during my 24 years in the FBI, I can attest that politics did not drive the initiation or conduct of any investigations, and cases were not pursued for political purposes.

Sadly, that has not been the case at the DOJ and FBI since at least 2016.

I am not here to convey my political views. I know how Federal investigations flow, however, and I know the laws, policies, and procedures that govern FBI and DOJ operations. I am familiar with the work of the Committee, this Committee, as well as the DOJ Inspector General Horowitz, Special Counsel Durham, and all the relevant investigations from Crossfire Hurricane to the Mar-a-Lago raid.

Many official actions taken by DOJ and the FBI in the last eight years were simply wrong. I share the goals of this Subcommittee that these agencies should never again be used as political weapons.

The facts speak for themselves. The U.S. DOJ and its agencies have effectively been used as political weapons. This has taken the form of selective and hyper-aggressive prosecutions of political opponents, while slow-walking and even sabotaging investigations of favored political figures.

There has been coordination with and even funding of State prosecutions of Donald Trump. There has been use of some of the most intrusive techniques available against political opponents of Joe Biden, and injection of personal animus and political views into investigations and prosecutions.

Much of this weaponization was driven by an entrenched group of ideologues within the DOJ and FBI, in perfect alignment with the Biden Administration, that can't be chalked up to coincidence.

A well-known example is Crossfire Hurricane, a notoriously unprejudiced investigation of the 2016 Trump Presidential campaign, tainted by four FISA surveillance orders, based on deliberately false information contained in opposition research. This was a campaign by an unprecedented infiltration of the campaign by multiple informants.

Crossfire Hurricane further involved the potential entrapment of a cabinet-level appointee based on the pretext of an introductory intelligence briefing. Rather than target the Russian influencers and protect the unwitting campaign operatives, the FBI targeted the Trump Presidential campaign through those operatives.

Note that when similar information was developed about the Hillary Clinton campaign, she was immediately afforded a defensive briefing.

Undeterred by the misconduct identified in the DOJ I.G. Horowitz and Special Counsel Durham reports regarding Crossfire Hurricane, many of the same DOJ and FBI managers opened and pursued a classified documents case on the former President and Presidential candidate culminating in a dawn raid of his personal residence. This was ostensibly to execute a search warrant and was conducted despite ongoing negotiations regarding the declassification and possible return of the documents.

After the raid, it was disclosed that Biden had squirreled away classified documents himself.

Another example, the inexplicably tepid DOJ-controlled FBI investigation of the Biden family influence peddling schemes, despite the existence of over 170 Bank Suspicious Activity Reports, multiple witnesses, 20 offshore corporations, 19 million in potentially illicit proceeds from hostile and corrupt foreign governments, oligarchs, and shadowy international characters seeking official favors, and a laptop full of evidence, the investigation languished.

It doesn't take a MENSA candidate to surmise that serious criminal activity was afoot that extended well beyond a garden variety tax and firearms case.

The case was plagued by interference by DOJ attempting to slow walk the investigation past the statute of limitations, and a deceptive effort to discredit the laptop. It took an alert Federal judge to expose the clever attempt to implement a global plea bargain hidden in a plea agreement to a single firearms charge. The contrast with the multiple scorched earth investigations targeting Donald

Trump should be clear to pretty much anyone that is being objective.

Since I am running out of time, I ask that you introduce my full statement into the record.

Thank you.

I want to also add I am not here in any official capacity for the FBI. As was mentioned, I retired from the FBI, so I am here as a concerned citizen with some experience.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Swecker follows:]

Testimony of Chris Swecker

Good morning, Subcommittee Chairman Van Drew and Ranking Member Crockett.

It is an honor to appear at this hearing today. As mentioned, I have over 42 years of active experience in the criminal justice system which informs my testimony today. I served under seven FBI Directors and seven Attorney Generals. While Attorney Generals are cabinet appointments and politics goes with the position this is not and should not be the case with the FBI Director who has a ten-year term that was designed to insulate the position from politics. Indeed, during my 24 years in the FRBI I can attest that politics did not drive the initiation or conduct of any FBI investigation and cases were not pursued for political purposes.

Sadly, that has not been the case at the DOJ and FBI since at least 2016.

I am not here to convey my political views. I know how federal investigations flow however and I know the laws, policies and procedures that govern FBI and DOJ operations. I am familiar with the works of this Committee as well as the DOJ Inspector General Horowitz, Special Counsel Durham and all the relevant investigations from Crossfire Hurricane to the Mar-a Lago raid. Many official actions taken by DOJ and FBI in the last 8 years were simply wrong and I share the goals of this Subcommittee that these agencies should never again be used as political weapons.

The facts speak for themselves: The US DOJ and its agencies have effectively been used as political weapons. This has taken the form of selective and hyper aggressive prosecutions of political opponents while slow walking and even sabotaging investigations of favored political figures such as Hillary Clinton and the Biden family. There has been coordination with and even funding of state prosecutions of Donald Trump. There has been use of some of the most intrusive investigative techniques against political opponents of Joe Biden and injection of personal animus and political views into investigations and prosecutions.

I am familiar with the work of the Select Subcommittee on Weaponization of the Federal Government and will not rehash all the many instances of misuse and abuse of the immense powers entrusted to the DOJ and FBI, especially over the last eight years. The scary part is that much of this weaponization was driven by an entrenched group of ideologues within the USDOJ and FBI in perfect alignment with the Biden administration that can't be chalked up to coincidence.

A well-known example is "Crossfire Hurricane" a notoriously unpredicated investigation of the 2016 Trump presidential campaign tainted by four FISA surveillance orders based on deliberately false information contained in opposition research purchased by the FBI. This was accompanied by the unprecedented infiltration of the campaign by multiple informants. Crossfire Hurricane further involved the entrapment of a cabinet level appointee based on the pretext of an introductory intelligence briefing. Rather than target the Russian influencers and protect the unwitting campaign operatives the FBI targeted the Trump presidential campaign through those operatives. Note that when similar information was developed about the Hillary Clinton campaign, she was immediately afforded a defensive briefing.

Undeterred by the misconduct identified in the DOJ IG Horowitz and Special Counsel Durham reports regarding Crossfire Hurricane many of the same DOJ and FBI managers opened and pursued a classified documents case on the former president and then presidential candidate culminating in the dawn raid on the personal residence of Donald Trump. This raid was ostensibly to execute a search warrant and was conducted despite ongoing negotiations regarding the declassification and possible return of the documents. I ran the FBI's Criminal Division for almost three years and held various leadership positions in the most active field offices and don't remember ever working a documents case. The dramatic pre-dawn execution of a search warrant at Mar-a-Lago was an act of spite and intimidation. It was designed to undermine a presidential campaign. That is weaponization.

After the raid it was disclosed that Biden had squirreled away classified documents in multiple non-secure locations, including his own garage. It's likely that most of these date from his years as U.S. Senator and Vice President, when (unlike President Trump) he had no authority to declassify and was not even supposed to remove them from their secure locations. He was deemed "an elderly man with a poor memory" and faced no consequences.

In another example was the inexplicably tepid DOJ controlled FBI investigation of the Biden family influence peddling schemes. Despite the existence of over 170 Bank SARs, multiple credible witnesses, 20 offshore corporations, 19 million in potentially illicit proceeds from hostile and corrupt foreign governments, oligarchs and shadowy international characters seeking official favors and a laptop full of evidence the case

languished. It does not take a Mensa investigator to surmise that serious criminal activity was afoot that extended well beyond a garden variety tax and firearms case

This case was plagued by DOJ interference, attempts to slow walk the investigation past the statute of limitations, and a deceptive effort to discredit the Biden laptop. It took an alert Federal Judge to expose a clever attempt to implement a global plea bargain hidden in a plea to a simple firearms charge. The contrast with the multiple scorched earth investigations targeting DJT should be clear to any objective person.

In another example the DOJ and FBI sleepwalked through the riots of 2020 which featured attacks on federal buildings and courthouses, the cold-blooded murder and wounding of 2 Federal Protective Service contractors, assaults of over 60 US Secret Service officers and agents, arson of 97 police vehicles, assaults on over 2000 police officers and hundreds of other crimes perpetrated by well-funded anarchists imported from other states.

After ignoring this mayhem and destruction the DOJ and FBI then proceeded to form a team of 60 federal prosecutors to go after virtually every person who entered Capitol grounds on January 6.

To be clear the Jan 6 riots and Capitol takeover involved serious crimes committed by multiple bad actors but many of the trespass and other misdemeanor prosecutions were highly questionable and an entire category was invalidated by SCOTUS. It was unwarranted excess prosecution. Blanket pardons would likely not have been granted if the Biden DOJ had focused on the assaults and more serious charges.

As we now know, that at the expense of working transnational criminal enterprises, terrorists and espionage cases over 5000 FBI Agents were employed in this massive investigation targeting our own citizens. This, by far, was the most intrusive investigation ever conducted by the DOJ/FBI. They bullied wholesale tranches of information from all the large financial institutions and cell phone carriers. They accessed private information on individuals who made cell phone calls or conducted financial transactions around the Capitol on January 6. They induced Google to "geofence" the Capitol area and used the geo location features on google apps to identify people on the grounds that day.

Given the disinterest in the anarchist criminal activities and the questionable financing and crimes committed all over the country by Hamas sympathizers one can only conclude that the powers at the DOJ and FBI are only interested in activities that are engaged in by Americans perceived to be right of the political spectrum.

I could go on but in the interest of time let me close by saying it's time for the FBI to return to its core mission of dismantling transnational criminal organizations, cartels and gangs, disrupting terrorists, catching spies and tracking down cyber crime enterprises. The initiation of any type of case targeting a political campaign or political opponent should be prohibited without a court order by a panel of federal judges, like the FISA courts. Any employee of DOJ or a DOJ investigative agency should be subjected to the severest discipline if they inject politics or animus into their work. An example is the now removed FBI SAC in Miami who not only directed many of the Crossfire Hurricane missteps and the Mar-a Lago raid but made a series of anti-Trump social media postings, yet this FBI ideologue was promoted to run one of the largest FBI Field Offices in the country.

Currently the FBI Director has a statutory ten-year term. The legislative history of this statute is clear that this was designed to remove the FBI Director from politics, but by setting this term as a ceiling only, that goal is defeated. In my opinion the FBI Director should have a set term of office that transcends a two-term president. This term should be both a floor and a ceiling with removal based on clear malfeasance only.

Finally, the FBI is a highly professional investigative agency where investigative skills and acumen are honed over 20–30-year careers. Most DOJ Attorneys are just passing through to large lucrative law firm positions. The FBI Director and FBI Agents should be afforded a measure of independence from DOJ and Administration influence. The reporting structure from the FBI Director to the Attorney General should be one where the FBI investigates, and the DOJ prosecutes. No FBI investigation should be directed by a federal prosecutor and no prosecution should be directed by an FBI Agent or executive.

The weaponization must end. The FBI and DOJ must earn back the respect of the American people day by day and case by case. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Swecker.
Without objection, we will enter the full statement of all of you into the permanent record.
Mr. Fahey, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN L. FAHEY

Mr. FAHEY. Thank you.
Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, and the Members of the Subcommittee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Jonathan Fahey, and I am a partner at—

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Fahey, I believe your mike is not on.

Mr. FAHEY. Oh, OK. Is it on? OK.

Mr. VAN DREW. Some folks might not like that, but we want to hear you.

Mr. FAHEY. OK. You didn't miss anything at the beginning.

[Laughter.]

Mr. FAHEY. I am a partner of a law firm of Holtzman Vogel. Most of my career practice in law I served as a prosecutor, both at a State and Federal level. During this time I had the opportunity to work with numerous hardworking men and women of law enforcement and fellow prosecutors.

Because of my experience, I have immense respect for the members of the law enforcement community who every day make sacrifices on behalf of all of us, and a lot of times things that go unnoticed and probably should be recognized more often.

By and large, I found that both State and Federal law enforcement agents adhere to the highest ethical standards, they have an unwavering commitment to justice and to public safety.

My work with fellow prosecutors was similar. I want to echo, basically echo what Mr. Swecker said. I worked with some of the finest attorneys of the Eastern District of Virginia. We worked side by side on cases, big and small. I worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney under President Bush 43, President Obama, and President Trump. During these times, even though some priorities had changed, I never saw any politicization. Often I didn't really know what the politics were of my colleagues, other than occasionally in private conversations.

I was extremely proud of the work I did as a prosecutor. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to stand up in court to advocate on behalf of victims, and stand and say my name on behalf of the United States.

I gained, in addition to that, amazing professional experiences, many friends in law enforcement, fellow prosecutors, defense attorneys, and courtroom personnel. It is an experience I wouldn't trade for anything.

One of the most important things I learned, which I think is relevant here, is the tremendous responsibility that comes from being a prosecutor with every decision you make, and how many people can be affected by those decisions.

Sadly, the last Administration I believe changed the prosecutor's role and, instead of focusing on public safety issues, they focused on political agendas and advanced the political agenda. This manifested itself in many of the cases the Chair spoke about earlier. It

led to a severe distrust in the criminal justice system and the FBI. Meanwhile, Americans became less safe because the focus was on political agendas rather than public safety issues.

One of the most egregious examples that has been referenced a lot, but I think it is important here, is the investigation into the school boards or the parents speaking out at the school boards. This came, the timing of this is critical.

First, it was toward the beginning of the Biden Administration so it sort of set the tone. The other part is this occurred in October 2021, when the election in Virginia, as well as in New Jersey, the most critical issue, most important issue, was the school issues involving COVID policy as well as curriculum.

With some information about threats that came in—I think there is dispute about how it came in, but a lot of information that may have come in from teachers' unions and things like that—the Attorney General of the United States created a task force for these parents that consisted of the Criminal Division of DOJ, the Civil Rights Division, the National Security Division, the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys, the FBI, the Community Relations Service which I didn't know exists, and the Office of Justice Programs. He also ordered the U.S. Attorneys, each U.S. Attorney, to convene meetings with local officials to supposedly learn more about these threats.

This was within 30 days of his memo, which was early October. Coincidentally, the election with the biggest issue on the table was November of that year.

After all this attention, there was not a single Federal prosecution that was brought as a result. However, the harm to the system and to the individuals was profound. The specter of law enforcement investigating what you say at a school board meeting not only intimidated parents who have spoken up, that may have wanted to speak up but also marginalized them so other people that might agree with their stance when they see them labeled as terrorists, it would have a political impact.

So, that is one of the things I think is most egregious about the weaponization.

I know my time is near. In all these cases the Department of Justice had to make decisions, whether it was January 6th, whether it is the protest outside a Supreme Court Justice's home, whether or not where to put your resources. Do you put them into public safety, or do you prosecute the 1,500th person that came into the Capitol on January 6th, while carjackers were not being prosecuted, while murderers were not being investigated fully?

That is really the issue here. The American people suffered during the last four years, because crime was higher and it was higher in many respects because the attention was not focused on what affected the community.

Going forward, I hope this new Department of Justice will focus on issues from the bottom up, to not politicize anything, to focus on what affects people day to day on the street, whether it's fentanyl trafficking, gangs, human trafficking, and other kinds of violence. I believe if they do that, the American people will be well served, they will be safer, and they will restore, this will restore

credibility for the Justice Department and the justice system as a whole.

I thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fahey follows:]

Testimony of Jonathan L. Fahey

My name is Jonathan Fahey, and I am a partner at the law firm of Holtzman Vogel.

I have spent most of my 25 years practicing law as a prosecutor, both at the state and federal level.

During this time, I had the opportunity to work with numerous hardworking men and women who served as prosecutors and law enforcement officials. Because of my experiences, I have tremendous respect for the men and women of law enforcement and appreciate the sacrifices they make on a daily basis which often go unnoticed. By and large, I have found both state and local law enforcement officers to adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards while having an unwavering commitment to justice and public safety.

My work with fellow prosecutors was similar. I worked with some of the finest attorneys and worked on big and small cases. While working side by side with fellow prosecutors, I did not see politics playing a role in decision-making and usually did not even know the political leanings of my colleagues. As an Assistant United States Attorney under Presidents Bush (43), Obama, and Trump, this did not change even when Departmental policies shifted.

As a prosecutor, I was extremely proud of the work that I did and the way I did it. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to represent the United States in court and advocating on behalf of crime victims. I also gained amazing professional experiences and made many friends, including law enforcement officers, fellow prosecutors, defense attorneys, and courtroom staff. It is an experience that I would not trade for anything and encourage others to seek out. One of the most important things I learned from being a prosecutor is the tremendous responsibility that comes with every decision that you make and how many people are affected by those decisions.

Sadly, the last administration fundamentally changed the prosecutor's role with respect to the administration of justice. The prosecutor role, which has been traditionally local in nature and responsive to the public safety issues in each district—was mobilized in pursuit of a progressive agenda in the last administration. This manifested in the form of pursuing cases to advance a political agenda at the expense of public safety. This has led to a severe distrust in the criminal justice system, low morale for law enforcement officers, and worst of all, the community becoming less safe as American citizens were victimized by crimes while the Department of Justice was more interested in political matters.

One of the most egregious examples was the 2021 investigation into the supposed increased threats involving school boards. This came during the fall of 2021 when the most important and hotly contested political campaign was the Virginia Governor's race with educational issues related to COVID protocols and curriculum being the most critical issue. Throughout the country, these issues were hotly debated, often pitting the teachers' unions and school boards on the opposite side of concerned parents.

In response to a supposed increase in threats, the Attorney General ordered the creation of a taskforce consisting of the Criminal Division, Civil Rights Division, the National Security Division, the Executive Office of U.S. Attorneys, the FBI, the Community Relations Service, and Office of Justice Programs. He also ordered US Attorneys to convene meetings with local officials to supposedly learn more about the threats within 30 days of his memo which coincided with the elections. At the end of it all, and despite massive federal resources and attention, there were no federal prosecutions brought as a result. However, the harm to individuals and the system was profound. The specter of large-scale government persecution and overreach, including from the National Security Division, frightened and intimidated parents who had spoken out on important education issues.

Another example in which the prior administration prioritized politics over public safety and rule of law was the refusal to charge protesters, or even condemn their actions, when abortion rights activists protested outside of conservative Supreme Court Justices' homes in advance of the release of the previously leaked *Dobbs* decision, in violation of 18 USC 1507. This law serves as a safeguard to allow jurors and judges to reach decisions free from intimidation. Not only were the protestors not charged, while the White House and Attorney General Garland tacitly condoned their conduct. At one point the Attorney General even suggested that the U.S. Marshals were to blame for failing to bring criminal charges.

The final matter that I want to mention is the January 6th prosecutions. These spanned the entire Biden presidency and resulted in over 1,500 people being charged. While most people agree that it was appropriate to charge those who were engaged in violent acts against police or involved in the destruction of property, many who did neither were also charged. While the D.C. U.S. Attorney was pursuing charges against non-violent individuals, violent criminals were running rampant throughout D.C. During the Biden administration, rates for

homicide, robbery, and carjackings skyrocketed—with the perpetrators often facing no consequences at all. In 2023, for example, Washington, D.C. saw massive increases in crimes including homicide and carjackings. Two things were alarming about this. One was that the closure rates for murders were at their lowest level in nearly 20 years. Second, crime specifically went up in D.C., while it dropped nationally and in other major cities. Both show that focusing on January 6th cases at the exclusion of other matters contributed to more residents falling prey to violent criminals.

There were multiple other situations where the justice system was politically weaponized to the detriment of public safety but what is most important now is how it moves forward while ensuring that it does not happen again. To regain public trust, the Department of Justice must address crimes that have the most impact on people's lives and community safety, such as crimes involving violence, gang participation, drug trafficking, human trafficking with a ground up approach. Focusing on these crimes will not only help restore the reputation of the justice system but will also restore morale to the amazing men and women of law enforcement who entered the profession to help others and not to advance a political cause.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Fahey.
Mr. Breen, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF PETER BREEN

Mr. BREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, and the Members of the Committee.

As noted before, I am honored to lead the Society's national litigation team. Our dedicated professionals work in State and Federal courts across the country to defend the Constitutional rights and, really, the rights of every American.

Relevant to today's hearing, as noted, I am proud to have led the defense of Mark Houck for the Society. Our team has represented dozens of other prolife Americans against the unprecedented assault on them by the Biden Department of Justice. Numerous criminal prosecutions were brought, civil cases across the country

Now, the Biden DOJ engaged in a systematic campaign to abuse the power of the Federal Government against prolife advocates, while that same DOJ ignored hundreds of acts of vandalism and violence against prolife churches, pregnancy help centers, and other advocates.

On behalf of our clients in the prolife movement as a whole we are thankful to President Trump for his recent pardons, and to the Members of this House who supported that effort. Those pardons sent a powerful message to the country, and especially to the millions of Americans in the prolife movement, that the Federal Government should not be weaponized against Americans because of their sincere beliefs in the sanctity of human life.

We are grateful as well for the actions of the Trump DOJ, its Chief of Staff, who issued the memorandum directing the dismissal of the prosecutions and civil lawsuits against our clients. That memo highlighted the fact that the Biden DOJ selectively prosecuted and enforced the law against our folks, while ignoring the many acts on the other side.

You may have heard some of the stories of these advocates.

There is Paul Vaughn, the Evangelical Christian father of 11 whose children were outside waiting to go to school when heavily armed Federal agents rolled up, held his kids at bay as other agents then arrested their father. Paul didn't even block access to a clinic. He was there to give moral and spiritual support to those who did. Still, the DOJ charged him with a FACE Act violation and a felony "Conspiracy Against Rights." While he escaped prison time, others did not.

Because of that "Conspiracy Against Rights" felony, we have had numerous clients who have received multiple-year prison sentences, especially in Washington, DC.

You heard about Mark Houck, of course. Twenty Federal agents at dawn directed their guns at him and his family, took him away in handcuffs. The thing is, we offered to present Mark to the prosecution. Had he been anybody but Mark Houck, we would have been allowed to do so. Instead, they spent those law enforcement resources creating an incredibly dangerous situation on his front lawn outside Philadelphia.

Now, we did beat the Biden DOJ in the *Mark Houck* case, winning that unanimous not guilty verdict from the Phillie jury. After

that win, the DOJ under Biden did not prosecute another sidewalk counselor.

See, because at the same time, you may not have heard, the Biden DOJ was investigating numerous other sidewalk scuffles at abortion facilities coast to coast. We had numerous clients contacted by the FBI in connection with those incidents. Had we not won for Mark, and won so definitively and publicly, we are sure that there would have been a wave of *Houck*-style prosecutions, Federalizing minor sidewalk squabbles across the country.

Now that the President has acted, the DOJ is cleaned out, and our clients' criminal records are wiped clean, is the matter concluded? Absolutely not.

Because of the actions of the Biden DOJ, which mirrored to some extent the actions of the Obama DOJ, the Sword of Damocles still hangs over prolife advocates. There are long statutes of limitations on these Federal laws. So, folks remain in fear that some future administration will twist the law and come after them. Some of those Biden prosecutions were for actions under the first, that were taken under the first Trump Administration.

The DOJ's recent dismissals were ordered on the basis of selective prosecution, and did not necessarily recognize that the underlying laws don't apply to the conduct.

So, of course, while we urge the Congress to repeal the FACE act, which is selectively and illegally enforced, we do have several other concrete steps that we would recommend.

First, as noted, this Committee is very much needed because you need, respectfully, to continue to investigate and expose the misuse of the FBI and DOJ over the past four years against prolife Americans. Sunlight is the best disinfectant. This Subcommittee has a lot of light to bring.

Second, we would ask that you urge the Trump Administration to bring to justice those who committed the violence and vandalism. If the FACE Act is going to remain on the books, it should be enforced equally.

Third, there are some very concrete things that the DOJ can do to properly define the scope of the FACE Act and the "Conspiracy Against Rights" statute, and can take far more written positions on those laws that will help to prevent this going forward:

- (1) Recognize that Congress intended the FACE Act not to apply to sidewalk squabbles. That was agreed to by Senator Ted Kennedy. It has been on the record from over 30 years ago. They agreed to that as part of passing this act. It has been wiped away and ignored ever since. That needs to be recognized.
- (2) We need to make clear the FACE Act's "physical obstruction" doesn't apply to peaceable counseling activity that does not intentionally obstruct a patient or an abortion provider. The Biden DOJ advanced a contrary theory, which mirrored the Obama DOJ before it. The New York Attorney General is continuing that action right now. That needs to stop.
- (3) Again, that recognize that FACE cannot be applied to others who are not actually blocking the clinic without running afoul of the First Amendment.

- (4) Get rid of this “Conspiracy Against Rights” statute application because its 10-year felony provisions cannot be applied to prolife advocates at all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Breen follows:]



**PETER BREEN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT & HEAD OF LITIGATION
FEBRUARY 25, 2025 WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE
U.S. HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**

My name is Peter Breen, and I am the Executive Vice President and Head of Litigation for the Thomas More Society, a public interest law firm dedicated to the defense of Life, Family, and Liberty. I am honored to lead the Society's national litigation team, whose dedicated professionals work in federal and state courts from coast to coast to defend those values. Relevant to today's hearing, the Thomas More Society led the defense of pro-life Americans against the unprecedented assault on them by the Biden Department of Justice in numerous criminal prosecutions and civil lawsuits across the country. The Biden DOJ engaged in a systematic campaign to abuse the power of the federal government against pro-life advocates, while that same DOJ ignored hundreds of acts of vandalism and violence against pro-life churches, pregnancy help centers, and advocates.

On behalf of our clients and the pro-life movement, I want to thank President Trump and his team for his recent pardons. Those pardons sent a powerful message to the country—and especially to the millions of Americans in the pro-life movement—that they need not fear the federal government under President Trump. We are grateful as well for the actions of the Trump DOJ, and the Chief of Staff, who issued the memorandum directing the dismissal of the criminal prosecutions and the civil lawsuits against our clients, principally on the grounds of selective prosecution. His memo highlighted the fact that the Biden DOJ selectively

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prosecuted and enforced the law against our peaceable pro-life clients while ignoring hundreds of acts of pro-abortion violence and vandalism against pro-life churches, pregnancy help centers, and individuals.

You may have heard the stories of these brave pro-life advocates.

There is the story of Paul Vaughn, the Evangelical Christian father of 11, whose children were outside waiting to go to school when heavily armed federal agents rolled up and kept his kids at bay as other agents arrested their father. Paul didn't even block patients from accessing a clinic, he merely gave moral and spiritual support to those who did. Still, the DOJ charged Paul with engaging in a "conspiracy against rights," and he was convicted on a misdemeanor FACE Act count and a felony conspiracy count. While Paul escaped prison time, others did not, because the conspiracy against rights felony comes with a 10-year maximum sentence. We had numerous clients in our Washington DC case who received multiple-year prison sentences from the federal district judge there.

And there is Mark Houck, the Catholic father of 7 who faced 20 heavily armed federal agents on his lawn, at dawn, who directed their guns at him and his family, before taking him away in handcuffs. Mark's crime was defending his son against an aggressive and foul-mouthed abortion escort on a public sidewalk. The Biden DOJ tried to turn him into a felon for it. I was honored to serve as one of the trial counsel for Mark. Fortunately, after a lot of sleepless nights and hard work, we secured a unanimous not-guilty verdict from Philadelphia jury. That's against the federal DOJ, which almost never loses a prosecution it takes to trial.

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Now, while you may have heard of Mark's plight, you likely did not hear about the Biden DOJ also investigating numerous other minor sidewalk scuffles at abortion facilities coast to coast. We had numerous clients contacted by the FBI in connection with these incidents while we were defending Mark. Had we not won for Mark—and won so definitively and publicly—there presumably would have been a wave of Houck-style prosecutions, federalizing minor sidewalk squabbles, across the country.

But now that the president has acted, and our clients are home and their criminal records are wiped clean, is the matter concluded? Absolutely not.

You see, despite the recent actions of President Trump and his DOJ, a Sword of Damocles hangs over pro-life advocates. Because of the long statutes of limitation on the relevant federal laws, pro-life Americans remain in fear that some future administration will twist the law and come after them. Many of the Biden prosecutions were for actions that occurred during the first Trump Administration. And the DOJ's recent dismissals were ordered on the basis of selective prosecution, not because *the underlying laws don't apply to the conduct*.

Of course, we urge Congress to repeal the FACE Act, which is selectively and illegally enforced by pro-abortion presidential administrations. But in the immediate term, Congress has several other concrete steps it can take, working with the new Administration to define the proper scope of the laws and to defend the rights of pro-life Americans:

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First, continue to investigate and expose the misuse of the FBI and DOJ over the past 4 years against pro-life Americans. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

Second, urge the Trump Administration to bring to justice those who committed violence and vandalism against pro-life ministries. If the FACE Act is to remain on the books, it should be enforced equally.

Third, urge the DOJ to properly define the scope of the FACE Act, 18 USC § 248, and the Conspiracy Against Rights statute, 18 USC § 241, and take formal, written positions on the application of those laws, that:

- a. Congress intended that the FACE Act not apply to sidewalk squabbles between pro-abortion “clinic escorts” or “clinic defenders” and pro-life sidewalk counselors. The Senate sponsor of FACE, the late Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), agreed to an amendment with Sen. David Durenberger (R-MN) that clarified the relevant scope of the Act to solely patients and abortion providers in a clinic. As Sen. Durenberger put it, “The bill, as currently drafted before us, allows legal relief only to clinic patients and personnel. . . . We have recognized that Federal law should be extended narrowly to protect only those who were actually attempting to obtain or provide medical or counseling services. It does not protect the escorts.” 139 Cong. Rec. S15686. This is the Mark Houck case—a dispute between an escort and a sidewalk counselor that should have never been federally prosecuted.

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- b. The FACE Act's "physical obstruction" does not apply to peaceable counseling activity that does not intentionally obstruct a patient or abortion provider. The Biden DOJ advanced a contrary theory, as did the Obama DOJ before it. And the New York Attorney General, with the blessing of the Biden DOJ, pressed and continues to press that contrary theory today.
- c. The FACE Act cannot be applied to others who do not actually block without running afoul of the First Amendment. The Courts have recognized that pro-life sit-ins are First Amendment activity, and while those who actually block can be prosecuted under the Act, those who provide moral and spiritual support should not be prosecuted, consistent with the First Amendment.
- d. The "Conspiracy Against Rights" statute and its 10-year felony provisions cannot be applied to pro-life advocates at all. There is no federal right to abortion, and clinic access is not the sort of right intended to be protected by this statute from the 1800's, which was intended to protect the voting rights of Black Americans against the KKK. The DOJ's use this statute was a critical injustice in the recent prosecutions of peaceable pro-lifers, allowing them to be branded as convicted felons and subjecting them to years in a federal penitentiary.

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These immediate actions will provide pro-life Americans with the comfort to know that their federal government will not target them unfairly and will even-handedly apply the law. Thank you for your attention to this important topic.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Breen.
Mr. Ballou, you may begin.

STATEMENT OF BRENDAN BALLOU

Mr. BALLOU. Thank you. As mentioned, my name is Brendan Ballou, I serve in the Justice Department's National Security and Antitrust Divisions, and for two years was detailed to prosecute crimes stemming from the attack on the Capitol. It is important to remember that approximately one hundred and forty police officers were assaulted by rioters on January 6, 2021. One officer told me that he feared for his life more that day than during his entire deployment to Afghanistan in 2001.

Another told me that he texted his family that afternoon because he expected to die. The work we did was about getting justice for those officers. Justice is only possible when Federal prosecutors have credibility, and I want to explain how the Justice Department built that credibility over many decades, and how it is being destroyed in a matter of weeks.

After Watergate and the Nixon Administration, Congress and the Executive built protections to make it less likely that the Department's powers would be abused. The Offices of Professional Responsibility and Inspector General were created. The Department limited communications with the White House, and FBI officials began regularly testifying before Congressional Committees like this one.

Investigations into activists were largely ended, and the Department refocused its energy on public corruption. In the past month the Administration has largely destroyed these reforms, and refocused the Department away from prosecuting the corrupt, and toward favoring friends, and investigating enemies. To give just a few examples, most obviously the President pardoned nearly 1,600 rioters who stormed the Capitol and its grounds in the President's name.

Including rioters whom I helped prosecute, who punched officers, who dragged them into the crowd, and who speared them with flagpoles. The acting D.C. U.S. Attorneys threatened investigations into various perceived enemies of the Administration, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, and former Special Counsel Jack Smith. The Department has largely stopped enforcing the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which prohibits bribery, prosecuting cases under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, which prohibits secret work on behalf of a foreign power.

Pursuing the work of the Kleptocapture Task Force, which enforce sanctions against Russian oligarchs. The Administration also threatened to fire the attorneys of the public integrity section, who prosecuted corrupt politicians. Now, there is an effort to draw a false equivalency between these actions over the last month, and those of recent administrations.

Either to argue that what is happening now is nothing new, or that if it is, it deserves retribution. This attempt at equivalence, however, is a mistake for two reasons. First, a weaponized Justice Department endangers anyone involved in politics, no matter their political persuasion. Since the President pardoned the Capitol rioters, FBI agents have been subject to personal and specific threats of violence.

These threats have no party limits, just this weekend at a conservative political conference speakers considered insufficiently loyal to the President were threatened, and told that pipe bombs had been planted in the building.

Second, a weaponized Justice Department corrupts all of society, makes life harder, and more expensive for people far from politics.

For instance, *The Wall Street Journal* reports that executives at Twitter recently demanded that a company advertise on its platform, and intimated that the Government might stop or slow a proposed merger if it did not. This is an attempt to use the tools of the Justice Department to enrich one politically connected business, and it is how an oligarchy is created.

The actions of the past month should concern us all, largely ending foreign bribery and corruption cases, and threatening to fire public corruption prosecutors, investigating political enemies while putting political friends above the law. These are all efforts to return us to the time of Watergate, and it harms you no matter your political beliefs.

The only people who will benefit from these actions will be billionaire criminals, and for them this will be a golden age. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ballou follows:]

“A New Golden Age”
Brendan Ballou
February 25, 2025

My name is Brendan Ballou. I served in the Justice Department’s National Security and Antitrust Divisions, and for two years I was detailed to the D.C. U.S. Attorney’s Office to prosecute crimes stemming from the attack on Capitol. The prosecutions of Capitol attackers were driven, not by ideology, but by facts, one of the most important of which was that approximately 140 police officers were assaulted by rioters that day. One of those officers told me that he feared for his life more that day than during his deployment to Afghanistan in 2001. Another told me that he texted his family that afternoon, expecting to die. The work we did was about getting justice for those officers. But justice is only possible when federal prosecutors have credibility. I want to explain how the Justice Department built that credibility over many decades, and how it’s being destroyed in a matter of weeks.

After Watergate, Congress and the White House reformed the Justice Department so that its power wouldn’t be used to prosecute political foes or favor friends. In the last month, this administration has largely destroyed those reforms, and turned away from prosecuting corrupt politicians, businesses, and oligarchs, and towards investigating the administration’s enemies. This is a problem for every American, no matter your political involvement or persuasion.

During the Nixon administration, the powers of the Justice Department were widely abused. Journalists and government officials were illegally surveilled.¹ Newspapers with critical coverage of the administration were investigated.² Witnesses with damaging information were offered clemency in exchange for their silence.³ And most famously, the special counsel investigating the President was illegally fired.

After Watergate, Congress and the Executive built protections to make it less likely that the Department’s powers would be abused. The Offices of Professional Responsibility and Inspector General were created.⁴ The Department limited communications with the White House on specific cases,⁵ and FBI officials began regularly testifying before congressional committees

¹ THE FINAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES 1179 (1974).

² *Id.* at 1183.

³ *Id.* at 1181.

⁴ Sam Berger and Alex Tausanovitch, *Lessons From Watergate Preparing for Post-Trump Reforms*, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS (2018), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/lessons-from-watergate/>.

⁵ Josh Gerstein, *Justice Department issues policy limiting White House contact*, POLITICO (July 21, 2021), <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/21/justice-white-house-contact-biden-trump-500476>.

like this one.⁶ Most importantly, the euphemistically called “domestic security” investigations were largely ended, and the Department refocused its energy on public corruption.⁷

In the past month, the administration has largely destroyed these reforms, and refocused the Department away from prosecuting the corrupt and towards favoring friends and investigating enemies. For instance:

- **Favoring friends:** The President pardoned nearly 1,600 rioters who stormed the Capitol and its grounds in the President’s name, including rioters whom I helped prosecute who punched officers, who dragged them into the crowd, and who speared them with flagpoles.
- **Prosecuting enemies:** The Acting U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia began or threatened investigations into various perceived enemies of the administration, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer,⁸ former special counsel Jack Smith,⁹ and those who vaguely “impact” the work of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency.¹⁰
- **Removing guardrails:** The administration now permits the President and Vice President to discuss specific cases with the Department,¹¹ and named inexperienced political appointees to make ethics and discipline decisions.¹²
- **Favoring the corrupt:** The Department has largely stopped enforcing the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (which prohibits bribery),¹³ prosecuting cases under the Foreign Agents

⁶ Anthony Marro, *Watergate: Justice Dept. Changes*, NEW YORK TIMES (June 17, 1977), <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/06/17/archives/watergate-justice-dept-changes-control-at-justice-dept-tighter.html>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ Scott MacFarlane, *Acting U.S. attorney for D.C. opens inquiries into Democrats, alleging possible threats to DOGE, Supreme Court justices*, CBS (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/acting-u-s-attorney-inquiry-schumer-possible-threat-doge-supreme-court-justices/>.

⁹ Ed Martin (@USAEDMartin), TWITTER (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://x.com/USAEDMartin/status/1890571723965390922>.

¹⁰ ACLU-D.C. *Sends Letter to U.S. Attorney Martin for First Amendment Concerns in Letter to Elon Musk*, AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION (Feb. 4, 2024), <https://www.acludc.org/en/press-releases/aclu-dc-sends-letter-us-attorney-martin-first-amendment-concerns-letter-elon-musk>.

¹¹ Perry Stein and Jeff Stein, *Trump White House says it can talk to Justice Dept. on criminal cases*, MSN (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.msn.com/en-ie/news/politics/trump-white-house-says-it-can-talk-to-justice-dept-on-criminal-cases/ar-AA1yHt2H>.

¹² Ben Penn, *Trump DOJ Assigns Sensitive Ethics Powers to Political Aides*, BLOOMBERG LAW (Feb. 16, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/trump-doj-delegates-sensitive-ethics-powers-to-political-aides>.

¹³ *President Trump Pauses DOJ FCPA Enforcement and Orders Preparation of New Enforcement Guidelines*, JONES DAY (Feb. 12, 2025), <https://www.jonesday.com/en/insights/2025/02/president-trump-pauses-doj-fcpa-enforcement>.

Registration Act (which prohibits secret work on behalf of a foreign power),¹⁴ or pursuing the work of the Kleptocapture Task Force (which enforced sanctions against Russian oligarchs).¹⁵ The administration also threatened to fire the attorneys in the Public Integrity Section, who prosecute corrupt politicians.¹⁶

There is now an effort to draw a false equivalency between these actions over the last month and those of recent administrations, either to argue that what is happening now is nothing new, or if it is, that it is deserved retribution. This attempt at equivalence is a mistake, however, for two reasons.

First, a weaponized Justice Department endangers anyone involved in politics, no matter their political persuasion. Since the president pardoned the Capitol rioters, FBI agents have been subject to personal threats of violence: for instance, Enrique Tarrio, the leader of the Proud Boys, has demanded vengeance against one of the FBI agents who investigated his conduct, declaring that “Success is gonna be retribution.”¹⁷ But this threat of violence has no party limits. Just this weekend, a conservative political conference here in Washington had to be evacuated after speakers considered insufficiently loyal to Donald Trump were threatened and told that pipe bombs had been planted in the building.¹⁸

Second, a weaponized Justice Department corrupts all of society, and makes life harder—and more expensive—for people far from politics. For instance, the Wall Street Journal reports that executives at Twitter recently demanded that a company advertise on its platform, and intimated that the government might stop or slow a proposed merger if it did not.¹⁹ This is an attempt to use the tools of the Justice Department to enrich one politically connected business. It

¹⁴ *Trump’s DOJ Rolls Back Enforcement of the Foreign Agents Registration Act*, KING & SPALDING (Feb. 13, 2025), <https://www.kslaw.com/news-and-insights/trumps-doj-rolls-back-enforcement-of-the-foreign-agents-registration-act>.

¹⁵ Andrew Goudswaard, *Trump administration disbands task force targeting Russian oligarchs*, REUTERS (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-administration-disbands-task-force-targeting-russian-oligarchs-2025-02-06/>.

¹⁶ *Dave Lawler and Sareen Habeshian, Trump’s DOJ is at war with its own prosecutors*, AXIOS (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.axios.com/2025/02/14/trumps-doj-prosecutors-eric-adams>.

¹⁷ Khadeeja Safdar *et al.*, *Freed Jan. 6 Convicts Are Back on the Street and Ready to Help Trump*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (Jan. 23, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/national-security/jan-6-pardons-proud-boys-oath-keepers-1658963d>; Tom Driesbach, *FBI agents, prosecutors fear retribution from Jan. 6 rioters pardoned by Trump*, NPR (Feb. 6, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/02/06/nx-s1-5287708/trump-pardoned-jan-6-rioters-prosecutors-fbi-police>.

¹⁸ Donie O’Sullivan and Veronica Stracqualursi, *Political conference in DC interrupted by death threats against speakers critical of Trump*, CNN (Feb. 23, 2025), <https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2025/02/23/politics/principles-first-washington-dc-threats>.

¹⁹ Suzanne Vranica, *X Hinted at Possible Deal Trouble in Talks With Ad Giant to Increase Spending*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (Feb. 19, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/business/media/x-hinted-at-possible-deal-trouble-in-talks-with-ad-giant-to-increase-spending-feb122a6>.

is a perversion of the free market, it hurts anyone who isn't a billionaire, and it is how an oligarchy is created.

If you are a law-abiding American, the actions of the past month should be tremendously concerning. Largely ending foreign bribery and corruption cases and threatening to fire public corruption prosecutors, investigating political enemies while putting political friends above the law: these are all efforts to return us to the time of the Nixon administration, and it harms you, no matter your political beliefs. The only people who benefit from these actions are vigilantes and militias, corrupt politicians and executives, agents of foreign governments and oligarchs. For them, this will be a golden age.

Biography

Brendan Ballou served as Special Counsel for Private Equity in the Justice Department's Antitrust Division. Previously, he worked in private practice, and before that, in the National Security Division of the Justice Department, where he advised the White House on counterterrorism and other policies. He graduated from Columbia University and Stanford Law School. He is the author of *Plunder: Private Equity's Plan to Pillage America*.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Mr. Ballou. We're now going to proceed under the five-minute rule with questions.

The Chair will recognize the gentleman from Alabama, Barry Moore.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the witnesses being here today. The Biden–Harris DOJ enabled hyper partisan prosecutors, in particular, former Special Counsel Jack Smith to criminalize politics in America. Smith's approach to the prosecutorial process raised many concerns among experts related to what his actions would mean to the future of the DOJ.

In addition to his storied investigations, Smith personally led, he also coordinated with Fani Willis to help with her politically motivated prosecution of President Trump. Willis was also given disproportionate assistance from the January 6th Committee, receiving records simultaneously with help from us in Congress and law enforcement.

Meanwhile, Matthew Colangelo, an attorney known for waging lawfare against Trump during his first term as President, left the elite position at the Biden–Harris DOJ to work with a Manhattan district attorney by the name of Alvin Bragg, where he led the prosecution of President Trump. Mr. Fahey, what are your thoughts generally on the investigations led by former Special Counsel Jack Smith?

Mr. FAHEY. Generally, they were—I would characterize them as heavy handed in all respects. You look at this from, which is sort of the point I was trying to make, is when you are doing something, when you are focusing on something, you are not focusing on something else, but it is also heavy handed to the way other cases are prosecuted by the Justice Department.

The best example of the Jack Smith case is to compare that to how Robert Hur handled President Biden. You have, just when you focus on Mar-a-Lago, you have President Biden, who when he was in the Senate managed to get a hold of classified information that shows up at his house. When he's Vice President, he left office and managed to keep classified information.

He kept this in his home, he kept this at the Biden Center, I think there was one other location. Robert Hur wrote a report describing all that, more than ample evidence, he described his cognitive deficiencies, but there were no heavy-handed measures taken. It wasn't interview everyone until the cows come home, and ultimately, he came to a measured decision for conduct that arguably is more egregious than what President Trump did.

Because President Trump allegedly, all the classified information that he allegedly had, he was allowed to have it at the beginning. President Biden at the time was never allowed to have this information. He was also treated quite a bit differently, when he turned in the information when it first came about, which was before the election of 2022, the Justice Department kept that quiet.

He turns it in through his lawyer, and then he proceeded to turn in more information over the period of the next couple of months, I think until about December. Why that is important, nobody raided his home, nobody did any heavy-handed moves, they let him turn it in at his convenience, at his leisure, and ultimately they did

a consent search because it seemed like every time he turned around there is more classified information in his house.

So, then you compare that to President Trump with they were negotiating with NARA, they were in a far more secure location than his garage, and how was that treated? They ran up in his house, they were searching his wife's, where she keeps her clothes, and intimate clothing, and things like that to get items. It was always under the guise of this is so serious to get these items back because our national security is at risk. When it was Biden, it was sort of like—

Mr. MOORE. In the garage, around the car, in open boxes, it was fine.

Mr. FAHEY. Yes, just swing it by when you have a chance.

Mr. MOORE. Yes, sure. So, are you familiar with the 2013 IRS scandal that targeted conservative nonprofit organizations, are you familiar with that?

Mr. FAHEY. The Lois Lerner?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, and actually—

Mr. FAHEY. I am, but not intimately, yes.

Mr. MOORE. Well, I understand Jack Smith actually, he encouraged the Department of Justice to contact the IRS and continue that process going after those conservatives wherever they may be. Mr. Swecker, I know you served with the FBI for some time, and I appreciate your service. What about the raid to Mar-a-Lago to you stood out? I know we had some other FBI officials testify and tell us what they thought, and so as we look through this process, what about it to you stand out?

Mr. SWECKER. Just the fact that they did it at all. There is a lot of discretion in investigations, there is a lot of discretion in prosecutions. I was a prosecutor, I was an agent, and I know it from both angles. I just think it was never in the best interest of the American public for them, they are during negotiations where there were a lot of issues that were being discussed between lawyers.

The information, the documents were secure, and they weren't going anywhere, unlike Hillary Clinton's server, which was the most least secure place you could ever store information, is on a server, anybody can get to it.

Mr. MOORE. I thought it was interesting, they handled it from the Washington Field Office rather than the Miami Field Office when they raided his home, and I kind of thought that was rather unusual.

Mr. SWECKER. Highly unusual, and that search was conducted over the objection of the Assistant Director in charge of the Washington Field Office.

Mr. MOORE. With that, Mr. Chair, I'm out of time, I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chair, I do have a UC request.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK.

Ms. CROCKETT. I would ask for unanimous consent, I would like to enter into the record the full transcript with Steven D'Antuono, I may be saying that incorrectly, Antuono, the Assistant Director in charge of FBI's Washington Field Office.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, I have got one more, sorry. I would also like to introduce an article titled “Donald Trump Stored, Showed Off, and Refused to Return Classified Documents, Indictments.”

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much.

Mr. VAN DREW. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia for five minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I thank the witnesses for your testimony today, let’s see. Trump is purging experienced career civil servants and filling their roles with inexperienced sycophants who will do whatever they are told to do no matter how unlawful or unconstitutional the ask, and the American people are focused on that real threat to our democracy, and to the rule of law that is poised by this Trump Administration.

So, they are too smart to be distracted by Republicans’ tired conspiracy theories, and that is exactly what we are getting today. Now, Mr. Ballou, you are familiar with Danielle Sassoon, are you not?

Mr. BALLOU. I am, sir.

Mr. JOHNSON. You know here to be a Federalist Society member?

Mr. BALLOU. She is.

Mr. JOHNSON. A former law clerk to Antonin Scalia?

Mr. BALLOU. She is.

Mr. JOHNSON. Anti-LGBTQ rights, anticivil-rights, a blazing Right-wing extremist, isn’t that correct?

Mr. BALLOU. He was an extremely conservative jurist.

Mr. JOHNSON. No, I am talking about Danielle Sassoon.

Mr. BALLOU. I can’t speak to Ms. Sassoon’s personal opinions about those specific legal issues.

Mr. JOHNSON. She is, as you described Justice Scalia, but even she could not stomach the prospect of being a party to a quid pro quo in the *Eric Adams* case, could she?

Mr. BALLOU. No, sir.

Mr. JOHNSON. Dropping charges for illegitimate reasons, she didn’t want to have a hand in that, she was too principled to participate in that. Because we know that when you drop charges against someone for an illegitimate purpose, a quid pro quo, Eric Adams, to force him over a barrel to carry out your deportation political agenda in return for dropping the charges against him eventually, but hanging it over his head with a dismissal without prejudice, she did not want to be a party to such an illegitimate bargain.

We know that if you drop a charge, you will also institute charges for political purposes, for illegitimate purposes. Is that not the essence of weaponizing the Justice Department?

Mr. BALLOU. Yes, absolutely, sir. The concern here is that criminal prosecutions would be used to achieve unrelated policy objectives in the case of the Eric Adams scandal. The reason that we don’t do that is because the powers of prosecutors are so vast that once that happens people will follow government directives not because they want to, or believe in it, but simply because they fear retribution if they don’t.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you. In your testimony you talked about how this administration has corrupted the guard rails that existed

in the Department of Justice with respect to reforms put in place after the abuse during the Republican Nixon Administration. You talked about how guard rails have been destroyed insofar as favoring friends of this administration, what did you mean by that specifically?

Mr. BALLOU. Well, I think we are seeing this in *The Wall Street Journal* reporting about potentially X, or Twitter trying to get advertisers back on their site, and if they don't, well then the Government will investigate them, and potentially stop a merger.

Mr. JOHNSON. This is the Co-President of the United States, who by the way, was unelected and hails from apartheid South Africa trying to leverage his position as Co-President to gain something for his platform that spews mis- and disinformation publicly.

Mr. BALLOU. Yes, when the Government is used in that way, it harms everybody far from politics, because it increases prices, and it interferes with the free economy.

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I can't think of a greater threat to democracy than a guy like Elon Musk set free, or set loose by a President Donald Trump, who was duly elected, but has outsourced now, and privatized his administration to an oligarch billionaire, and his other billionaire buddies.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK, I am going to recognize myself for five minutes. Mr. Swecker, when did you first become aware of the FBI's memo targeting traditional Roman Catholics?

Mr. SWECKER. Well, I don't know the exact date, but it was when it hit the press.

Mr. VAN DREW. I don't need the exact date.

Mr. SWECKER. As soon as it hit the press, I found out about it when everybody else did.

Mr. VAN DREW. Did you get the opportunity to review the memo that came from the Virginia Field Office, did you take a look at it?

Mr. SWECKER. I did, I don't remember all the details in it, but it was a very ill-advised memo.

Mr. VAN DREW. Did it strike you in a bad way?

Mr. SWECKER. Of course it did, I think it would strike anybody in a bad way, I am Catholic, not that this matters, but just singling out a religion, and religious beliefs in the way that they did. Frankly though, I don't know how much play that really got further up the food chain, but it was an incredibly—it just demonstrated incredibly poor judgment.

Mr. VAN DREW. We asked the then Attorney General about it, we asked the then FBI Director about it, they both in essence apologized, but said it was only limited to the Virginia Field Office. Then, fortunately there were other whistleblowers, we got information it wasn't only limited, this was starting to go throughout the country, thank God we found out about it.

As I said before, my good Hindu friends, men of peace, human beings of peace that never would do anything harmful, if it happened to Roman Catholics, and I happen to be Roman Catholic as well, it can happen to anyone.

Mr. SWECKER. I think it does reflect that there were some ideologues deep in the—it wasn't just the leadership in the Bureau.

Mr. VAN DREW. It does, you can't believe otherwise, I mean it just didn't make sense, it was shocking for America. Do you believe the memo infringed on Americans' rights under our Constitution to some degree?

Mr. SWECKER. Absolutely, especially if they had followed through on it aggressively, like they did other things.

Mr. VAN DREW. The memo stated, let me read this, I am quoting now "Catalyzing events in which regionally motivated violent extremists, and radical traditional Catholics." I am not sure what the hell that means, to be honest with you.

Mr. SWECKER. They were calling them domestic terrorists essentially.

Mr. VAN DREW. I don't know, I try to go to mass when I can, I honest to God, I don't see too many—I don't see any domestic terrorists there. They said they might have a common cause including legislation or judicial decisions in areas such as abortion rates, immigration, affirmative action, and LGBTQ protections. Isn't that their right? Is it typical for the FBI to dig into something like that?

Mr. SWECKER. Not the FBI I served under. Actually, Chris Wray made a lot of mistakes, but he apologized for that one, I think that is the one that got away, it should never even have been—

Mr. VAN DREW. I think they were even shocked that they had that level of an ideologue actually and I believe that they were being sincere. I know that the Attorney General at the time almost cried, maybe he did a little bit actually. Do you think the FBI needs stricter control over how these bulletins are created and distributed, hopefully they will now?

Mr. SWECKER. I do. A lot of it is judgment based, and it is who you hire, and the examples that are set at the top of—in this case the FBI. There is no substitute for just good judgment as things—I saw a lot of junk come out of a squad room, reports and that sort of thing, and if you are at the supervisory level, you just cancel that out, you squelch it right there.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. So, I am going to ask the three of you, Mr. Swecker, Mr. Fahey, Mr. Breen, some real quick questions, it is something I always like to do, I like to get to the point, it is either yes or no, not a long answer to this, and I will start with you, Mr. Swecker. Do you believe the DOJ was weaponized against political opponents, yes or no?

Mr. SWECKER. Yes, I think there are many examples of that.

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Fahey?

Mr. FAHEY. Yes, I do.

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Breen?

Mr. BREEN. Yes, absolutely.

Mr. VAN DREW. Should Federal law enforcement agencies surveil parents at school board meetings? Yes or no, Mr. Swecker?

Mr. SWECKER. No.

Mr. FAHEY. No.

Mr. BREEN. No.

Mr. VAN DREW. Was it appropriate for a DOJ official to pressure a defense lawyer with a judgeship offer? Yes or no, Mr. Swecker?

Mr. FAHEY. If that happened, no.

Mr. VAN DREW. It did, we have—

Mr. FAHEY. Yes, I have heard information, I just don't know definitively, but yes.

Mr. BREEN. Correct, outrageous.

Mr. VAN DREW. Is it acceptable for the FBI to categorize certain religious groups in the way that they did? Yes or no?

Mr. SWECKER. No.

Mr. FAHEY. No.

Mr. BREEN. Absolutely not.

Mr. VAN DREW. I think everybody, God help us, agrees on that one, even my friends on the other side of the aisle here might. Do you believe there is currently, or was currently, that there was a twotiered system of justice in America? Yes or no?

Mr. SWECKER. Yes, many examples of that.

Mr. VAN DREW. There are so many.

Mr. FAHEY. Yes.

Mr. BREEN. Yes, and we lived through it.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you. I think it makes our point, and I am almost out of time myself.

Ms. Crockett, the Ranking Member—I am sorry, Mr. Moskowitz.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I appreciate it. Thank you, gentlemen, for coming to today's hearing entitled "Entering the Golden Age." Probably named it that because the price of eggs are the price of gold, but here we are. Chair Drew mentioned something, he said, "the people's Justice Department," I actually think that is very important. Unfortunately, the D.C. U.S. Attorney Ed Martin disagrees with him, because he calls himself Trump's Attorney, his own words in his own statements.

He doesn't say the people's attorney, he doesn't say the Justice Department's attorney, he said he's President Trump's lawyer. So, it seems to me that those two things are not accurate. Mr. Swecker, you think a U.S. attorney is the President's attorney, or the Department of Justice's attorney?

Mr. SWECKER. The people's attorney.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. The people's attorney, OK.

Mr. SWECKER. The President has a White House counsel.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Right, OK, so I just wanted to clear that up, maybe someone should send a quick email to Ed Martin, maybe we can get someone in DOGE to do that, they like emailing people with like five things to do. Maybe like someone could say hey, Mr. Martin, of the five things to do, No. 1, make sure you know who your client is, it is America, not the President.

You know he's also sending letters to Members of Congress, are you aware of that, Mr. Fahey?

Mr. FAHEY. Yes, I think if you are referring to the Chuck Schumer letter, yes.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. No, he is sending letters to Members of the House asking them to clarify statements.

Mr. FAHEY. When he made those statements, or—

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Yes, which is weird, because literally that same week he sent a letter, this Committee literally held a whole hearing on free speech, right?

Mr. FAHEY. Right.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Then all of a sudden the D.C. attorney is sending letters asking Members of Congress to clarify.

Mr. FAHEY. Those are tricky situations, the Schumer thing, if that was not Chuck Schumer, and just a regular person outside of the Supreme Court, I believe that person would at least be investigated for threats, whether or not it comes out. Those are tricky, but I don't think those are so clear cut, because there is—you don't have a free speech right to threaten people, threaten justices—

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. No, of course not.

Mr. FAHEY. So, I don't see—I see your point, and that may be how it breaks out, but I don't think it is inappropriate to look a step further in those types of things.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. We hear a lot about weaponization, and my colleagues across the aisle, they are the bravado party, we can admit that, right? The Republicans just have a lot more bravado than Democrats, and I am OK admitting that. They seem to just not want to—they are like coy on this one. They are not interested in ending the weaponization of the DOJ, they want to continue it.

In fact, the deep State gave them a bad idea, and they are going to run with it. In fact, not only are they going to run with it, man, they are going to do it even better than the deep State. They just hired pacifist Dan Bongino, right? Dan Bongino, that seems to be very against this idea that we want to end weaponization. Dan, who says Americans are having a cold war among themselves, who says that the only thing that matters is power, a system of checks and balances, hah, that is a good one.

That doesn't seem to be someone that wants to end the weaponization, it seems someone who is going to be given power, and wants to continue the weaponization. I have a question, will you gentlemen all come back in let's say a year, and give us your assessment of whether or not we have ended the weaponization? We will do just a quick OK, you are here now, and then like a year later you will come back, and we will be like by the way, mission accomplished.

We will get a big banner, we will fly a plane, and mission accomplished. Or will you come back and admit you know, it looks like it is continuing to go on. OK, not all at once.

Mr. FAHEY. Depending on the scheduling, sure.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. Sure, we don't have to pick a date now, it is fine.

Mr. SWECKER. I thought it was a rhetorical question, but yes, we will come back.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. It was rhetorical, OK, fair, someone was paying attention. So, there has got to be at least one of my colleagues who can get in front of the camera, and be the tough guy, and just be like we are not ending the weaponization, no, no, no, the deep State started it, we are going to run with it, because we have already seen that. In the appointments in the first couple of weeks, I don't need honesty because we are in Congress.

What I want is we already know, the American people know, they know this, we don't need to hide, just tell the American people what they know, revenge tour is coming, we are going to have tour dates, we are going to show up, we are going to play arenas, but the DOJ revenge tour is coming. Thank you.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK, two things. First, I would love to have you back in a year, let's try to make that a date, it may not be exactly one year, it could be 11 months, it could be 13 months—

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. I don't think they want to come, Mr. Chair.

Mr. VAN DREW. I think—let me ask—I think you scared them a little bit. I bet you would be willing to come, including you, Mr. Ballou.

Second, really quick Mr. Moskowitz, I love your sense of humor, you have got to always have a sense of humor as you go through things, you are pretty good at it.

Mr. MOSKOWITZ. That is true, I agree.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chair, I have a unanimous consent. I would like to introduce for the record the letter from the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General related to the Richmond memo that stated we did not find evidence saying anyone ordered—

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. Objected to find a link between racially motivated—

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. I would also like to introduce an article titled, "Jim Jordan's New Myth, an Anti-Catholic FBI."

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. The final one I would like to introduce is an article from *Fox News* noting that the FBI was absolved of malicious intent in the Catholic memo incident.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you.

Mr. VAN DREW. Some people wrote a bad memo.

Anyhow, I now recognize the gentleman from the great State of Missouri, Dr. Onder.

Mr. ONDER. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you all for coming today. Mr. Breen, on September 23, 2022, the FBI raided the home of your client, Mark Houck, following an indictment charging FACE Act violations based on an alleged shoving incident that took place where he was defending his son near an abortion clinic. Mr. Breen, if my memory serves right, other prosecutors had looked at that case, the *Houck* case prior to the SWAT team raid, could you refresh my memory on that?

Mr. BREEN. Yes, Congressman. In fact, it had been prosecuted through the State level system, and the charges were dropped because the complaining witness refused to show up. In fact, he had gone on vacation one time, one time he actually went to the abortion facility to escort, and when Mark arrived, they went to court, he wasn't there, Mark arrived, said, "Did you enjoy your morning at court?" This guy was the complaining witness.

So, that was looked through there, but even on the Federal side, they had started in front of a grand jury and went fallow, it just stopped. Then the *Dobbs* leak hits, all this, and we watched it then restart up, and they get out an indictment. So, it was clearly something that was related to trying to make a point on abortion, not because he had actually committed a crime.

Mr. ONDER. Right, so dropped on the State level, dropped on the Federal level, then resurrected, and then did your client do some-

thing violent, or threaten someone, or something to merit twenty-five SWAT officers that morning?

Mr. BREEN. No, and in fact I can show you the email from my colleague, who was a former Federal prosecutor for 15 years in Arizona. He had corresponded with the local U.S. attorney who had requested response. Said, "hey, if you want, we will present him, we are glad to, he is represented, certainly no need, there wasn't a need to send 25 officers." For heaven's sakes, you send one or two to the door and knock on it if you really want to go arrest him.

Mr. ONDER. Right.

Mr. BREEN. This was outrageous, and we have seen video of it, I mean—

Mr. ONDER. Maybe talk to his lawyer and ask him to appear in court.

Mr. BREEN. Right, and this was our thing. Our local lawyer said if this guy was anyone but him, he would have been brought in to present. They let people that are much, much more dangerous and violent present. Mark did something, and we found out after we went into the case, we realized no one had gone back into the legislative history of the FACE Act.

Senator Kennedy and Senator Durenberger literally on the floor of the Senate cut a deal, and said we are not getting in the middle of the sidewalk squabbles.

Mr. ONDER. Right.

Mr. BREEN. I have got to tell you, as a good Republican, we don't like legislative history, it is a thing for the Republicans, I am a former legislator, I love legislative history. For heaven's sakes, for you guys, I mean you guys in the Congress did this, so I think you should be asserting your rights to say stop it.

Mr. ONDER. Right.

Mr. BREEN. You are expanding this law beyond our intent.

Mr. ONDER. Right, right. So, if Mark Houck wasn't the kind of defendant, the suspect that would merit this kind of treatment, this must have been the Department of Justice sending a political message on abortion.

Mr. BREEN. Main Justice sent people into the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and look, Philadelphia is a rough area. In fact, our trial judge, who is an experienced prosecutor, is a former Pennsylvania Attorney General, he said,

I have never in my time on the bench had main Justice send someone out to prosecute a case in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. ONDER. Well, let me talk about another case of a very dangerous criminal defendant. You might be familiar with Mr. Houck, on January 23rd, President Trump announced the pardons for 23 prolife advocates. One of these was Eva Edl, who at 89 years old faced a sentence of up to 11 years in Federal prison. Eva was a Soviet concentration camp survivor who was charged with singing and praying from her wheelchair at the entrance to an abortion facility.

In 2022, at least 26 prolife advocates faced Federal charges for FACE Act violations. The same year pregnancy research centers experienced serious attacks, firebombings, and yet to my knowledge did not face any FACE Act prosecutions from the Biden Justice Department, am I correct on that?

Mr. BREEN. Yes, Congressman. I have specifically in mind a client in upState New York firebombed their facility, took them half a million dollars to rebuild it, and they told them we can't figure out who did it, and we can't get any answers from the police, we couldn't even get our surveillance video back. It just, it was outrageous when you look at the amount of Federal resources that are spent on our clients, that they couldn't even find these terrorists, actual, literal domestic terrorists.

Mr. ONDER. So, again, aggressive, aggressive prosecutorial action against proliferators, none against actual arsonists, and domestic terrorists. Would that be a politicization of the Justice Department?

Mr. BREEN. Absolutely, that is a politicization, and it is one that can be fixed with the new DOJ, and under the guidance of this Subcommittee.

Mr. ONDER. Thank you.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from the great State of Maryland, Mr. Raskin, the Ranking Member.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. We have decades of excellent government law enforcement experience represented at the table. Unfortunately, I have only got five minutes.

So, I want to go very quickly. I want to ask a few yes or no questions. I will start with Mr. Ballou, and I will go down.

In your time as a prosecutor, have you been aware of any case where prosecutors have been fired or otherwise disciplined in office for having worked on a particular case that they were assigned to before January 6th?

Mr. BALLOU. Not until the last month.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Fahey—Mr. Breen, you are not a prosecutor, is that what you said?

Mr. BREEN. No, just an attorney.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Mr. Fahey, in your years of government law enforcement, were you aware of any prosecutors whoever were disciplined, or demoted, or fired because they had worked on a particular case before January 6th?

Mr. FAHEY. Just for being assigned to a case? Or, beyond that? I know of people that may have been disciplined by their work on a case.

Mr. RASKIN. I am not talking about misconduct on a case, yes.

Mr. FAHEY. Just by being assigned, no.

Mr. RASKIN. By virtue of being on a team.

Mr. FAHEY. I don't know of any.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Mr. Swecker, did you ever encounter that in your many years on the FBI?

Mr. SWECKER. Not based on mere assignment of a case. I will note that at the end of an administration, U.S. Attorneys routinely submit their resignations and usually are fine.

Mr. RASKIN. In terms of line prosecutors, civil service lawyers, you are not—or FBI agents rather, you are not aware of any—OK. Let me continue with you for a second.

Have you heard of a case where participation as an FBI agent in a particular case is grounds for dismissal or demotion just for having worked on a particular case?

Mr. SWECKER. No. Absent misconduct.

Mr. RASKIN. OK. Mr. Ballou, back to you. So, a number of attorneys, around two dozen have been sacked just because they worked on a particular case.

Even if they are civil service people, which means you can't be fired for political reasons, you can only be fired for poor performance or misconduct, but all the dozen attorneys who worked for Jack Smith, and a dozen attorneys were fired on the very first day, because they had worked on the January 6th prosecution.

Will you describe what you think the lawfulness of that is? Then also, what effect will that have on morale and cohesion within the ranks of lawyers who work at the Department of Justice.

Mr. BALLOU. It certainly seems unlawful, in that these people were being fired not because of misconduct, but because of simply the cases that they were working on. Essentially, viewpoint discrimination.

The effect is profound. These attorneys weren't just working on the January 6th cases, they were working on other cases within the D.C. U.S. Attorney's Office.

Mr. RASKIN. It is not viewpoint discrimination based on any of the viewpoints that they had. We have no idea what their viewpoints were, at least viewpoints based on the people who have come into the office who think that somehow it is a badge of stigma or shame to have worked on a particular case.

Mr. BALLOU. Precisely.

Mr. RASKIN. There were six thousand FBI agents who worked on January 6th, which was the most massive violent mob attack on U.S. Congress, and the peaceful transfer of power, and the Vice President, in American history.

What do you think about the idea that somehow there was an attempt to demonize and vilify people for having done their jobs in working on it?

Mr. BALLOU. Yes. I think if they are demonized, if they are fired, it is going to be devastating for the FBI, because these are folks that are working on counterterrorism, counterespionage, and other cases.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes. So, Mr. Fahey, one other question for you. Do you think that the idea of sacking all these lawyers simply because of having worked on a particular case, will promote public safety in the District of Columbia, or undermine public safety in the District of Columbia?

Mr. FAHEY. If people are being fired just for the—I know the hypothetical. I don't know why individuals were fired, and if it was their conduct, or things that were interrelated.

Overall, the morale is going to be far higher, because morale is rock bottom at DOJ, rock bottom at the FBI under the prior administration.

Mr. RASKIN. In the last four weeks, I agree with you on that.

Mr. FAHEY. No, no, no. During the prior administration. If you talk, if you bring in some law enforcement agents—

Mr. RASKIN. I would love a separate hearing on that. We will get back to you on that one.

Mr. FAHEY. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Ballou—

Mr. FAHEY. You have got to talk to them, because they are—

Mr. RASKIN. All right. We will have your back, I promise. I would love nothing more.

Mr. FAHEY. Yes.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Ballou, let me come back to you. I have heard, I was there on January 6th. So, I know that was something that really happened.

Officer Brian Sicknick really died from strokes that he had based on the violence visited on him, and being sprayed in the face with noxious chemicals. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

I will take anyone with the Sicknick family over there to see him. This is not some kind of a mirage. This really happened.

One hundred and forty of our officers were smashed in the face with Confederate battle flags, Trump flags, broken furniture, steel pipes, and you name it. There were heart attacks and traumatic brain injury.

I have got constituents who have never recovered from the wounds that took place there. Sergeant Gonell had to leave there.

When we talk about it, when I hear about the prosecution and vilification of parents, of mothers and fathers. Hey, I am a father. My kids went to public school. That doesn't sound very good to me.

So, I try to get to the bottom of this, because I have been hearing about it for five years now. I ask myself, what are they talking about?

So, I got the memo, which was from Attorney General Merrick Garland. It begins, I don't have time to read the whole thing, there has been a disturbing spike in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence against school administrators, teachers, board members, and staff.

The words mother or father don't appear. The word parents doesn't appear here. There is all this propaganda about some prosecution of parents based on absolutely nothing. This is just made up out of thin air.

So, I will submit this for the record, the memo that all this goes back to, Mr. Chair. Thanks so much.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection. The Chair recognizes Mr. Schmidt from the great State of Kansas. I have got to remember that.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Thank you, Mr. Chair. It will be on the exam at the end. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, thank you for convening this hearing. Thank you to the witnesses, who I know have covered a wide range of subject matters today.

I had a couple of questions regarding the school board matter, which I am not sure has been focused on perhaps as much as I might have thought it would have been.

This is, of course, the matter from 2021, where the National School Board Association oddly, in my view, requested that the President of the United States initiated a Federal law enforcement investigation of, in effect, parents who had shown up at a variety of school board meetings around the country.

In my view, understandably, they were distressed by some very difficult and ill-advised decisions that were made regarding masking, regarding shutting kids out of school, regarding a variety of other very unusual practices that occurred during the Covid period,

and wanted to express their views on that to their locally elected officials who were making those decisions, perhaps much as we are doing here in a different scale.

It struck me as very odd that we had, at the time, this private association asking for a Federal law enforcement investigation and that they directed their request to the President of the United States.

So much so that, at the time, I was serving as Attorney General in Kansas, and about three weeks after that request came in and the Department of Justice had directed, as I recall, some of the local offices to take certain actions in terms of responding to threats was their top line, rather an odd assertion, given that there weren't any actual threats asserted in the request.

A group of 17, I believe, State Attorneys General wrote to the President and to the then U.S. Attorney General, Mr. Garland, on October 18th, and asked them, in effect, what are you doing and why are you doing it?

We expressed in that, a concern that they were being asked to intervene in what we called a quintessentially local issue, which is public safety in the room of a public governing body that was local.

We asked that the President, and the then Attorney General, and others under their direction, take our point of view, that local authorities were perfectly capable of handling any threats in these local meetings, as they do each and every day all over the country, without this sort of fanfare. There were then some additional steps and the School Board Association, as I recall, backed off a bit of what they had asked for.

Then, about a week after that, on October 26th, a smaller but still substantial group of 14 of us, followed up with a second letter to the President and to the Attorney General, asking that they take a look at the School Board Association's actions, and how those requests that were very odd, had come to pass.

So, a handful of questions for our witnesses. I will start with Mr. Swecker, but perhaps also Mr. Fahey, in the course of all this, it came to light that there had been conversations between people at the White House and the School Board Association, functionally consulting on the drafting of this letter that then requested that Federal law enforcement investigation.

In your experience, is that ordinary for the White House to be involved with a third-party outside organization, in asking that Federal law enforcement engage on a matter?

Mr. SWECKER. I can't come up with any examples of it during my tenure. The most disturbing thing about it, was that it was rolled out as a national initiative.

It wasn't just an isolated instance where someone came in and said, I am going to set up a bomb in this meeting. It was people just like city council meetings, and county commission meetings, and boards of trustee meetings across the country, that is where people exercise their First Amendment rights.

Clearly, this went way, way beyond that, in the form of a national level initiative.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Have you ever seen anything like it?

Mr. SWECKER. No.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Mr. Fahey?

Mr. FAHEY. I have never seen anything like it. Another thing that is striking about this, if you look at DOJ and they put together a task force on things like drug trafficking, terrorism, and human trafficking, it is usually major things.

This was all of a sudden, whatever information they had, they nationalized this with a task force and every U.S. Attorney elevating it to a level. I am sure, you all know, threats are fairly common. I am sure what you do, and I dealt with them all the time at the U.S. Attorney's office.

The idea that anything would have risen to this level, was really, it just shows that it was political in nature. Because, as you know, the issue of the day of that November election, both in New Jersey as well as Virginia, was that educational issue.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Did any Federal prosecutions result from this use of resources?

Mr. FAHEY. My understanding was none. That is the other thing, if you put that much resources into it, the fact that you would come up with nothing, it just shows that there probably was nothing there to begin with.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Chair?

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. May I just have a UC request?

Mr. VAN DREW. Yes. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. There are four articles. First, *Reuters*, "School Boards Get Death Threats Amid Rage Over Race, Gender, Mask Policies." That is February 15, 2022.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Second, "I Don't Want to Die for It—School Board Members Face Rising Threats." *The New York Times*, November 5, 2021.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Third, a transcript with a former DOJ official describing death threats.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Fourth, this note that appeared in *The New York Times*, "It's too bad that your momma is an ugly communist whore, if she doesn't quite or resign then we will kill her, which was on the windshield of a school board member."

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. VAN DREW. I will now recognize the Ranking Member from the great State of Texas, Ms. Crockett.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair. I just want to level set on a few things, because my head has been spinning from some of the testimony that we have heard today.

So, just to level set really quickly. All of you have been involved with the criminal justice system in some way at some point in time in your lives.

As it relates to January 6th, I just want to be clear, if anyone was incarcerated because of what happened on January 6th, they either went to trial, or they entered pleas of guilty.

Is that true or false? I will start with you, Mr. Swecker.

Mr. SWECKER. I really don't know.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. That is fine. Mr. Fahey?

Mr. FAHEY. Well, there would be—

Ms. CROCKETT. Yes or no, Mr. Fahey. I ain't got that much time.

Mr. FAHEY. Well, it is not a yes or no. There were—

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. Then, I will move on.

Mr. FAHEY. There were people who were incarcerated pretrial—

Ms. CROCKETT. I am going to reclaim my time.

Mr. FAHEY. So, that is a separate category.

Ms. CROCKETT. I am going to reclaim my time.

Mr. FAHEY. The people that were sentenced and incarcerated, yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. Thank you. Mr. Breen?

Mr. BREEN. Yes, assuming that this was the process. Although, I understand the trials were not fair.

Ms. CROCKETT. Oh, interesting. OK. Mr. Ballou?

Mr. BALLOU. Every January 6th defendant who was incarcerated was charged or found guilty.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. It is interesting that we are not having a conversation around January 6th. We are talking about school boards. We are talking about people that never ended up being arrested.

We are talking about the process seemingly working, because there were people that felt like there should be an investigation, but ultimately, they did not feel like there was anything that warranted going forward.

I can tell you for sure that we as Americans watched in despair, because we did not know what was going to happen on January 6th. As a result, over a thousand people were arrested and/or convicted.

The first day, the first priority that the sitting President had, was to release these criminals. So, while we are talking about whether or not we are going to be safe, I want to clarify, these weren't little innocent folk that were running around and were persecuted as it was made out to be.

In fact, we know that the day after one of those defendants got out, he was rearrested on a firearm's charge. We know that soon after another defendant got out, he was arrested for child solicitation.

We know that after another one got out, he was actually killed by law enforcement in a confrontation. We know that after another one got out, she was sentenced because of a fatal car crash that she caused.

So, I want to be clear, in this country we should believe in law and order. I am going to be honest, because much like Mr. Breen, the only time that I ever entered a criminal courthouse, was in defense of someone. In defense of the accused.

It is because I believe in the Constitution. I believe that everyone has the right to due process. As a defense attorney, I should show up ready, and I am hoping that the system works.

I will say hoping. Nothing on this earth is perfect. One of the things that I actually used to take a lot of issue with, was the fact that I did believe that there was a two-tier justice system.

This is not something that the Black community somehow woke up and said, "oh, this is a new thing." Although we are talking about it, and we are meaning it in different ways.

All of a sudden, you had somebody with more power than arguably anyone in the world, somehow Lady Justice found him too. I say Lady Justice somehow found him, because it was the grand juries that had to indict him.

Then, ultimately, he was found guilty of 34 counts of felonies, at least in one courthouse. We know that the other cases never proceeded for various reasons. We also know that when he entered into civil courthouses, he was found liable for various things.

Listen, I don't want to have the American people get it twisted. I don't want them to be confused and believe that just because somebody is a prosecutor or just because somebody brings a case, that somehow that is weaponization.

If they bring it forward and if the justice system works the way that it is supposed to be, Mr. Breen, you talked about how your client was found not guilty. I am guessing that you accepted that jury's verdict.

Mr. BREEN. Certainly.

Ms. CROCKETT. You accepted that jury's verdict for your client?

Mr. BREEN. Absolutely correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. OK. I want to—I have got to move onto a few other things really quickly.

Christopher Wray, Mr. Ballou, do you know who that is?

Mr. BALLOU. Yes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Was Christopher Wray appointed by Joe Biden?

Mr. BALLOU. No. He was appointed by President Trump.

Ms. CROCKETT. He was appointed by President Trump. Now, Christopher Wray, for those that don't know, was the head of the FBI.

Christopher Wray, was he fired by Joe Biden just because Joe Biden was a Democrat that came in?

Mr. BALLOU. No.

Ms. CROCKETT. In fact, Christopher Wray left the FBI when Trump threatened to fire him. Christopher Wray still had time on the clock, didn't he?

Mr. BALLOU. He did.

Ms. CROCKETT. So, any prosecutions that took place, they actually took place under the Wray FBI department. Is that correct?

Mr. BALLOU. That is correct.

Ms. CROCKETT. OK. The last thing, Mr. Chair, I am out of time. Just really quick. The last thing that I want to ask, because we have talked about the Mayor of New York.

Is he a Democrat or a Republican?

Mr. BALLOU. He is a Democrat.

Ms. CROCKETT. He was prosecuted under a Democratic DOJ or a Republican DOJ?

Mr. BALLOU. A Democratic DOJ.

Ms. CROCKETT. Thank you so much. I will yield. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. VAN DREW. You are welcome, Ranking Member.

Really quickly, if it wasn't for this Committee and what we revealed, about parents, happening to parents in schools, and what happened to parishioners in churches, by whistleblowers, God knows what would have happened.

It was just, it was the work actually that we did here. So, the justice system, again, was not working at that time.

With that, I will yield to the Chair of the Committee as a whole, Mr. Jordan from Ohio.

Chair JORDAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Swecker, how long have you been at the FBI?

Mr. SWECKER. Twenty-four years.

Chair JORDAN. Twenty-four years, distinguished career?

Mr. SWECKER. I like to think so.

Chair JORDAN. I think so too. Assistant Director of the Criminal Division. That is a pretty darn important position you held.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. In that time at the FBI, did you ever deal with confidential human sources?

Mr. SWECKER. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. On a regular basis?

Mr. SWECKER. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. What can you tell me—well, let's frame it this way, 26 of them were there on January 6, 2021. We know that at least 17 of them did something they weren't authorized to do.

Is that typical?

Mr. SWECKER. I wouldn't say it is atypical. Informants are generally in the criminal mix, so they often find themselves in places where there are crimes taking place, yes.

Chair JORDAN. So, it was OK for them to do something they weren't authorized to do on January 6th?

Mr. SWECKER. No. There is a process for the FBI to authorize ordinary criminal activity. It has to be in, they are very structured about how they handle informants.

If an SAC, a Special Agent in Charge, authorizes ordinary criminal activity, it is going to be in the file.

Chair JORDAN. According—have you read the Inspector General's report on these 26 confidential human sources?

Mr. SWECKER. Not the entire report.

Chair JORDAN. According to the Inspector General, they were not authorized to do so.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. They were not authorized to enter the restricted space.

Mr. SWECKER. Right. Correct.

Chair JORDAN. Certainly, not authorized to go into the Capitol.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. We know 17 entered restricted space, four went in the Capitol. Yes. How does it normally work?

Do you think these guys were—I am just asking as an expert, 24 years, Assistant Director of the Criminal Division, do you think these guys were paid for what they were involved with, or what they did, or what they witnessed, how they informed, whatever they did on the 6th, do you think they were paid by the taxpayers?

Mr. SWECKER. By the time they are formally vetted informants, they generally are paid to be where they are.

Chair JORDAN. So, certainly the two, or is it fair to say the two who were asked to be there by the FBI that particular day, were probably on the payroll?

Mr. SWECKER. I would say yes. I think that is a good guess.

Chair JORDAN. OK. So, they were being paid by the taxpayer, most likely being paid by the—well, to be fair, most likely being paid by the taxpayer.

They went, two of these four, went into the Capitol, who were being paid, or who were asked to be there. So, they are asked to be there by the FBI, they are likely being paid, and they did something they weren't allowed to do.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. Why was it that every time Christopher Wray, the Director of the FBI, came in front of the Committee over the last several years, and we would ask, we would have some, Republican Members would ask him about any confidentials, why was he so reluctant to just say yes, they were there?

Mr. SWECKER. It was an embarrassing thing for the Bureau for the public to know that they had that many informants on the premises.

Chair JORDAN. So, there is no procedure, nothing prohibiting from him telling us. We are not asking for their names. We are not asking him to identify them.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. We certainly know we understand that is part of your investigative techniques and tactics.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. There was nothing prohibiting Christopher Wray from telling us, yes, there were confidential human sources there that day.

Mr. SWECKER. There was nothing prohibiting that I know of.

Chair JORDAN. He went out of his way to make sure we couldn't get that information. Then, we didn't get that information, frankly, until after the election, four years later.

He didn't need to wait four years to tell us what they knew on January 7th.

Mr. SWECKER. Right.

Chair JORDAN. Well, actually, they knew on January 6th, because they asked him, they asked some of these people to be there.

Mr. SWECKER. It is pretty extraordinary, because my mind goes to prevention. If they had that many informants out there, what were they doing, and why weren't they reporting on what was going on ahead of time? Why didn't the FBI take steps to prevent what happened?

Chair JORDAN. Because if these guys were helping and actually doing what they were supposed to do, we might have prevented some of the things that took place that day, is what you are saying.

Mr. SWECKER. Absolutely.

Chair JORDAN. Yes. OK. Mr. Fahey, is it appropriate for the Special Counsel, Mr. Jay Bratt, to say to a defendant's counsel, to say that we didn't know you were a Trump guy, and we knew, we thought you would do the right thing? We understand you are interested in this judge position?

Is that appropriate behavior from someone in the Special Counsel saying to a defendant's counsel?

Mr. FAHEY. That would be highly inappropriate.

Chair JORDAN. That is as bad as it gets, isn't it?

Mr. FAHEY. That would seem, I don't recall anything even remotely comparable or even hearing of anything along those lines.

Chair JORDAN. Stanley Woodward, who just happened to—

Mr. FAHEY. I know if he is—and it is shocking to me when I hear it. It was only until I heard it multiple times that it was definite.

Chair JORDAN. It was one of the many things that were shocking about this Special Counsel. The idea today, in this Special Counsel case in Florida, they mixed up this, the stuff that they got, they screwed it up and had to file with the court, oh, the classified documents that we said Mr. Trump, that President Trump mishandled, we actually mishandled.

They had to file that with the court, didn't they?

Mr. FAHEY. Yes. That is sort of the irony of it all, of holding one standard to President Trump, and a lower standard not only for them, but also for President Biden.

Chair JORDAN. One last question for the three of you. Why all the predawn raids?

What they did to Mr. Houck. What they did to Brian Malinowski. Let's assume even, I am not sure if Brian Malinowski did anything wrong.

Let's assume he did. He had six firearms; sold six firearms he wasn't supposed to sell. Why in the world would you knock on his door, have ten cars pull up, coordinate with local police, put the tape on the doorbell cam, and do what they did, which resulted in his loss of life. Why would you do that?

We will start with Mr. Breen since you have not answered anything yet.

Mr. BREEN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Look, the outrageous thing too, so they overdo it. I have got to tell you, I asked for body cam footage from the feds. They are not wearing their body cams. They are not on.

The only people I could get it from was from the Pennsylvania State Police. They gave me a full video of the incident.

Chair JORDAN. Yes. You are talking about Mr. Houck. You are talking about Mark Houck, the case you had.

Mr. BREEN. Yes, yes. For Mark Houck.

Chair JORDAN. I understand. I understand.

Mr. BREEN. You can't even figure out what these folks are doing? They taped the Ring doorbell. It is amazing.

Chair JORDAN. Well, they did the same thing. The point is, the consistency, and they did the same thing with Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. Houck was acquitted by the jury, found not guilty by the jury. Mr. Malinowski wound up dead.

Mr. BREEN. Yes.

Chair JORDAN. Because he thought he was being robbed. He defended his home. Then was shot in the head and died, died a few hours later. It was terrible what happened.

The interesting thing about the *Malinowski* case? They were surveilling him for weeks. They were all set to do this raid predawn still, the week before. They found out he wasn't there.

They were going to get firearms. He doesn't need to be there. Why in the world would you do that and jeopardize life? Of course, the worst thing happens.

Mr. Swecker, would you? That is not how it is supposed to operate, is it?

Mr. SWECKER. No. Most of the time you do a couple of hours of surveillance. You get the routines down. You catch them walking out to the car when they are unaware.

Maximum drama is the only thing that you could say.

Chair JORDAN. Yes. The only explanation could be that, because they followed him. They could have went to the airport where he worked, where everyone knew him. It was so ridiculous.

Mr. Chair, I thank you for this hearing. I thank you and I yield back.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chair. That concludes today's hearing. We thank our witnesses for appearing before us and the time they spent.

Without objection, all Members will have five legislative days to submit additional written questions for the witnesses or additional materials for the record.

Without objection, the hearing is adjourned.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Chair? I had two UCs. I am sorry.

Mr. VAN DREW. Go ahead. Let's do it.

Mr. CROCKETT. Thank you. I would ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record, an article from *Reuters*, "FBI Did Not Send Undercover Operatives to Join January 6 Attack," Watchdog Says.

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. CROCKETT. As well as an article from *The New York Times*, "FBI Did Not Send Informants to Encourage Capitol Rioters."

Mr. VAN DREW. Without objection.

Mr. CROCKETT. Thank you so much.

Mr. VAN DREW. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:24 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

All materials submitted for the record by Members of the Subcommittee on Oversight can be found at: <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=117924>.

