

MEMO TO INTERESTED PARTIES

From: Ian Sams, Special Assistant to the President and WH Oversight Spokesperson
Date: Thursday, February 9, 2023
Re: Chairman Jim Jordan Launches Fox News Reboot of the House Un-American Activities Committee to Carry Out Extreme MAGA Agenda

Today, Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan is launching the Fox News reboot of the House Un-American Activities Committee with a political stunt that weaponizes Congress to carry out the priorities of extreme MAGA Republicans in Congress.

Instead of working with President Biden to address the top priorities of the American people – fighting inflation and lowering costs, creating jobs, boosting manufacturing and infrastructure, and protecting and expanding people’s health care and rights – this is what House Republicans are focused on.

Led by Jordan and Congressman Matt Gaetz, this committee plans to weaponize the MAGA agenda against their perceived political enemies, going after civil servants, private citizens, and the rule of law—all in service of getting booked on Fox News. In fact, its initial hearing even will include “witness testimony” from [multiple Fox News commentators](#).

It appears the committee plans to target [“ongoing criminal investigations,” protect insurrectionists who attacked the Capitol, and continue the never-ending quest to deny and relitigate the outcome of the 2020 election.](#)

These extreme MAGA Republicans in Congress are choosing to make it their top priority to go down the rabbit hole of debunked conspiracy theories about a “deep state” instead of taking a deep breath and deciding to work with the President and Democrats in Congress to improve Americans’ everyday lives.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SEE THIS FOR WHAT IT IS: A POLITICAL STUNT

Despite Jordan, Gaetz, and the House Republican majority claiming this is a substantive effort, the American people already see it for what it is: a partisan political stunt.

- [Washington Post](#): Most Americans “dismiss Republican plans to investigate the government’s ‘weaponization’ as political.”
 - By a 20-point margin (56-36%), most Americans say the House GOP’s so-called “weaponization” committee is “just an attempt to score political points” rather than a “legitimate investigation.”
- [NBC News](#): The majority of Americans (55%), including a majority of independents, believe that House Republicans will spend “too much time investigating President Joe Biden and not enough time on other priorities.”
 - A combined 63% have no to little confidence that Congress will conduct a fair and impartial investigation into Biden and his administration.

- Just 13% of Americans feel investigations of the IRS, FBI, and other federal agencies – the very targets of this committee to weaponize the MAGA agenda – are most important for Republicans in Congress to pursue.
- [Morning Consult/POLITICO poll](#): Fewer than 3 in 10 Americans say Congress should make it a top priority to investigate DHS’ disinformation board and claims that the Administration censored Americans online – another top focus of this committee to weaponize the MAGA agenda.
- [Washington Post](#): GOP’s ‘weaponization’ committee viewed as more suspect than its targets
 - “The GOP-controlled House’s new select subcommittee on the weaponization of the federal government is, as you might expect, predicated on the idea that the federal government has been weaponized – specifically against conservatives. But when it comes to the premise embedded in its name, the committee has a lot of convincing to do.”

In fact, in a brief moment of candor last August, Jordan actually admitted what the American people have already figured out: his investigations are politically-motivated. He [told](#) far-right activists that his investigations “will help frame up the 2024 race, when I hope and I think President Trump is going to run again. And we need to make sure that he wins.”

HOUSE REPUBLICANS CLAIM THIS IS A MODERN-DAY, SERIOUS ‘CHURCH-STYLE’ COMMITTEE – BUT HISTORIANS AND PEOPLE FROM THE CHURCH COMMITTEE CALL THAT LAUGHABLE

House Republican leaders, including Speaker Kevin McCarthy, have compared this subcommittee to the highly-respected bipartisan 1970s “Church Committee,” which uncovered government wrongdoing against Americans’ civil liberties. “You’re almost going to have to have a Church-style investigation to reform the FBI,” McCarthy [told](#) Fox News.

But historian Julian Zelizer [had another comparison in mind](#): “[Joe] McCarthy’s goal wasn’t to find where communist threats in the US may have been; it was primarily the same tool Republicans are using now. The House Un-American Activities Committee was, like this one, itself a weaponized committee: The goal turned into using that platform to go and make allegations about Communist ties among Democratic and progressive circles. That’s a useful model to keep in mind as this committee’s work goes forward.”

And people who were on or worked for the Church Committee have slammed House Republicans’ comparisons of this political stunt to their work:

- [Former Sen. Gary Hart in the New York Times](#): I Was on the Church Committee. The New Republican Version Is an Outrage.
- [Former Senior Aide to the Church Committee](#): “House Republicans are staging a witch hunt... Republicans appear to be invoking Church’s legacy not to push for real solutions, as the late senator did, but to obtain impunity for themselves and punish their enemies.”

- [Former Aide to the Church Committee in The Hill](#): I worked for the Church Committee – what Jim Jordan is leading bears no resemblance: “What we are faced with over the coming months is not that kind of serious examination, designed to focus on, and solve, real issues. Rather, it is vitriolic, attack-dog politics at its worst.”
- [Former Aides to the Church Committee in The Bulwark](#): “Jim Jordan’s ‘weaponization’ subcommittee bears no likeness to the Church committee. Jordan and company intend to generate headlines rather than needed reforms. They seek not to expose wrongdoers but to deflect attention from them. And instead of leaving a legacy of bipartisan honor and truth-seeking, their work will be remembered as a scandalous exercise in personal and partisan self-preservation.”

Look no further than the committee’s leadoff witnesses in the first hearing to see this laid bare: [“Two GOP Senators and two Fox News commentators.”](#)

NUMEROUS INDEPENDENT FACT-CHECKERS HAVE ALREADY DEBUNKED MANY OF THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES THIS COMMITTEE PLANS TO ‘INVESTIGATE’ ...

On issue after issue that Jordan and Gaetz plan to target with this committee to weaponize the MAGA agenda, independent news organizations and fact-checkers have already debunked conspiracy theories that these extreme MAGA Republicans have trafficked in.

- [FactCheck.org](#) analyzed one of Jordan’s claims about the FBI and found it false: “The email is not evidence of what Jordan and other conservative observers have concluded”
- [FactCheck.org](#) scrutinized claims, including by Gaetz, about alleged DOJ politicization, calling them “unfounded”
- [PolitiFact](#): False: The “Department of Homeland Security and the State Department coordinated with a group called the ‘Election Integrity Partnership’ to censor Joe Biden’s opponents.”
- [PolitiFact](#): FBI, DOJ tagged threats against school officials, not parents for attending school board meetings
- [Washington Post](#): The false GOP claim that the Justice Dept. is spying on parents at school board meetings

... AND EXTREME MAGA HOUSE REPUBLICANS REFUSE TO EXAMINE HOW THE PRIOR ADMINISTRATION POLITICIZED FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

If these extreme MAGA Republicans in the House want to use this committee to examine “weaponization” of government, they could start by looking at many of the actions of the previous administration.

- [The New York Times](#): Trump Wanted to Order Justice Dept. to Prosecute Comey and Clinton

- [NBC](#): “President Donald Trump found four former federal officials guilty of ‘treason’ Thursday — and then commissioned his intelligence agencies to help the Department of Justice prove it.”

Instead of working with President Biden in a bipartisan way to push forward an agenda that actually helps improve the daily lives of the American people – like lowering costs by ending junk fees, creating more manufacturing jobs, and tackling gun violence, police reform, and opioids – House Republicans are weaponizing Congress to carry out the extreme MAGA agenda. They should join the President to focus on the issues most important to Americans, not waste time staging pointless political stunts.