

Opening Statement
Hearing on “The Weaponization of the Federal Government”
Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government
10:00 AM, Wednesday, May 1, 2024
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)

This is now the 6th hearing the Select Subcommittee has held on the so-called Twitter Files.

Remember, the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government was supposed to be the Republican rebuttal to the groundbreaking work the January 6th Committee did to hold insurrectionists accountable for their violent attack on the United States Capitol. We were promised this Subcommittee was going to be a blockbuster. It was supposed to have an identical budget to the January 6th Committee, it was going to initiate far-reaching investigations, and of course leading it all: Chairman Jim Jordan.

It is safe to say this effort is not even in the same league as the January 6th Committee. Two-thirds of the Subcommittee’s hearings this Congress have been on the Twitter Files. Majority witness after majority witness has been coaxed out of the shadows of conspiracy theory only to wither under the lights at our witness table.

No one is proud of the work the Subcommittee has done. Not even Chairman Jordan. Case in point: the Subcommittee has interviewed 25 social media employees for dozens of hours as part of the majority’s Twitter Files investigation, yet not a single full transcript or video of witness testimony has been released.

Why? Because not a single witness has provided testimony saying that the Biden White House forced, coerced, or intimidated them into taking down social media content. The entire investigation has collapsed. The majority, however, is using this zombie investigation to support a Republican-led case before the Supreme Court, *Murthy v. Missouri*, so we are all forced to sit through yet another hearing that is full of accusations but empty on substance.

Chairman Jordan, give it up. The Subcommittee has been a waste of time and money. The work of this Subcommittee has been an embarrassment that has debased the concept of sober Congressional oversight. Disband this sad endeavor.

But if you will not disband it, at least reinvent it as something useful and relevant. For example, the former President of the United States Donald J. Trump is currently facing 88 criminal charges, every single one of them felonies related to his time as a presidential candidate, his single term as President, or shortly after his presidency.

Certainly, Congress has some interest in crafting statutory guardrails that might prevent such gross violations of law by any future President of the United States. Four of the charges brought against former President Trump are related to his effort to interfere in the peaceful transfer of power following the 2020 presidential election. Perhaps a Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government might have an interest in the only instance in our nation’s history in which the sitting President weaponized the office of the Presidency against another branch of government in the effort to overturn the results of a free and fair election.

It is safe to say that this Subcommittee has not even lived up to Republican expectations, whatever they may have been. The majority should disband the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government.