

“The Basis for an Impeachment Inquiry of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.”
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
10:00 AM, Thursday, September 28, 2023
2154 RHOB
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)

Just this week, a New York judge ruled that Mr. Trump and his sons repeatedly committed fraud by inflating the value of their business assets by as much as \$2.2 billion. This ruling opens the door to the dismantlement of the Trump Organization.

In addition, former President Trump faces four indictments for seeking to stop Congress’ certification of the electoral vote on Jan. 6; attempting to overturn his loss in the 2020 election; retaining classified documents after his presidency; and falsifying business records in connection with a payoff to his alleged mistress, Ms. Stormy Daniels. Currently, the former President faces four felony counts in Washington, D.C.; 13 felony counts in Georgia; 40 felony counts in Florida; and 34 felony counts in New York.

And yet without a shred of evidence, Congressional Republicans would have us suspend disbelief for a hearing titled, “The Basis for an Impeachment Inquiry of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.”

There is no basis for an impeachment inquiry against President Joe Biden. Republicans have produced zero evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the President. This is an impeachment inquiry in search of a justification, and it is a particular waste of time while we sit at the precipice of government shutdown forced by Congressional Republicans. They cannot get out bed to fund the government, but they stay up day and night in rabid pursuit of their partisan fever dreams.

Republicans allege that when President Biden was Vice President, he called for the ousting of a Ukrainian prosecutor to protect his son’s business dealings. In reality, Vice President Biden called for the removal of Viktor Shokin, the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, who was notoriously known for his failures to pursue corruption among the country’s politicians. Vice President Biden’s actions were in lockstep with well-known U.S policies to combat corruption in Ukraine. Furthermore, these actions were not only supported by the International Monetary Fund and international community, but by GOP Senator Ron Johnson himself.

The only reason we are talking about this today is because Mr. Rudy Giuliani, former President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer and an admitted liar, manufactured this conspiracy theory and worked tirelessly to get Republicans to parrot these baseless accusations against President Biden and the President’s family. Unfortunately for Chairman Comer and Republicans on this Committee, doing the bidding of Rudy Guiliani never ends well. Ask his co-defendants.

The hearing today is a further debasing of our institution by Congressional Republicans. The same people calling for President Biden’s impeachment were the ones sticking their heads in the sand while former President Donald Trump was impeached twice, once for extorting the President of Ukraine to get dirt on his political opponent and then a second time for trying to

overturn a free and fair election through the use of political violence that ultimately resulted in the deaths of at least seven people.

Republican impeachment efforts emanate from a clinical case of projection. Everything they accuse President Biden of doing, former President Trump did as a matter of public record.

For example, in June 2020, Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Zelinsky testified that Trump political operative Roger Stone received special treatment because of his relationship to the President, including Mr. Zelinsky being told he would be fired if he did not recommend a lower sentence for Mr. Stone.

Furthermore, while former special counsel Robert Mueller's "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election," respected the Department of Justice policy not to indict a sitting President, it explicitly stated its findings did not "exonerate" the President. Predictably, Trump's hand-picked Attorney General, Bill Barr, took it upon himself to absolve the President, even going as far to say in a letter to Congress, "Our determination was made without regard to, and is not based on, the constitutional considerations that surround the indictment and criminal prosecution of a sitting president." Barr unjustly absolved Trump of his crimes in a manner that even Robert Mueller later objected to in writing.

Most recently, former President Trump's former Chief of Staff, John Kelly, revealed that President Trump discussed having the IRS and other federal agencies investigate individuals who he perceived as his political enemies. This hit list includes former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; former FBI director James Comey; Mr. Comey's deputy, Andrew McCabe; two FBI officials who had been involved in the investigation into the connection between Russia and the Trump campaign, Peter Strzok and Lisa Page; as well as Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon and the owner of The Washington Post, whose coverage often angered former President Trump.

Even Republican attacks on Hunter Biden are pure projection. They claim favoritism for Hunter Biden, a man who is currently being charged by the Department of Justice, despite his father's position in the highest seat of government. They make that claim with a straight face even while ignoring the clear crimes and conflicts of interest of the Trump children. For example, Ivanka Trump got her Chinese trademarks approved 40 percent faster than those she requested before her father's victory in the 2016 election, sometimes securing approval days after or before the Administration took a favorable action with regards to China. Trump's son in law, Jared Kushner, secured a \$2 billion investment from a fund led by the Saudi crown prince six months after leaving the White House. And finally, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump, who served as Executive Vice Presidents for the Trump Organization, were recorded engaging in numerous investments and deals with foreign countries during their father's presidency despite promises not to do so. And as icing on the cake, this year, the Trump Organization was convicted for carrying out a 15-year-long criminal scheme to defraud tax authorities which resulted in a \$1.6 million fine.

As you know, the House of Representatives has the sole power to initiate the impeachment process. However, the Constitution explicitly states that impeachment is to be used

to remove from Office those guilty of Treason, Bribery, and other high Crimes and Misdemeanors. I take that charge very seriously as I did during the consideration and debate on the two impeachments of former President Trump. Current impeachment efforts against President Biden are baseless, despite Republican distraction and gaslighting efforts to the contrary. Therefore, I do not support initiating the impeachment process.