

**Statement for the Record**  
**Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly**  
**“Influence Peddling: Examining Joe Biden’s Abuse of Public Office”**  
**Committee on Oversight and Accountability**  
**Wednesday, March 20, 2024**

For the past year, my Republican colleagues in the House have led one of the most unproductive Congresses in history and an impeachment train to nowhere. Even after subpoenaing 100,000 pages of documents, collecting dozens of hours of testimony from more than a dozen witnesses, and holding a deposition of Hunter Biden, the only thing they have proven is that President Joe Biden was never involved in, nor did he ever profit from any of his son’s business ventures.

Moreover, Republican’s own so-called “whistleblowers” have been indicted for acting as an unregistered foreign agent for Chinese entities, violating trade sanctions against Iran, and making false statements to federal agents. Their reliance on these individuals has undermined the integrity of the Committee and called into question the credibility of their own investigation. Instead of working to solve the big challenges facing our country, Republicans have allowed their party to be consumed by an obsession to impeach President Biden, and they have nothing to show for it.

House Republicans have a case of clinical projection. The Republican’s inspiration for these baseless allegations is crystal clear: Donald Trump. Mr. Trump faces five upcoming trials, which include four criminal cases and one civil case. Charges include the solicitation of violation of oath by a public officer, filing false documents, making false statements and writings, conspiracy charges, election interference, obstruction of justice, willful retention of national defense information, false statements and representations, falsifying business records and more. Collectively, these cases add up to 91 felony counts across two state courts and two different federal districts, any of which could result in prison time. Furthermore, he has already lost two defamation cases in which the judge directed Mr. Trump to pay \$88.3 million in damages and is currently struggling to secure a \$454 million bond to appeal the outcome of his civil fraud lawsuit.

I would remind my Republican colleagues who are hurling unfounded accusations of favoritism and influence peddling that the Department of Justice has filed charges against the son of the sitting President of the United States for tax offenses. In fiscal year 2022, there were approximately 10 million taxpayers who, like Mr. Biden, filed a return but failed to pay their taxes in full. However, there were fewer than 700 criminal sentencing that year across all federal tax crimes.

The independence of the Biden Justice Department and stands in stark contrast to the way former President Trump viewed his Administration’s Justice Department and the Judiciary in general.

If House Republicans had integrity, this hearing would be titled, “Influence Peddling: Examining Donald Trump’s Abuse of Public Office,” but you do not have to take my word for it. Former-President Trump’s own former Chief of Staff, John Kelly, has confirmed that while in office Trump exerted political pressure on the justice system in multiple documented instances. 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. Mr. Zelinsky was even told he would be fired if he did not recommend a lower sentence for Mr. Stone. Similarly, reporting indicates that former Attorney General Barr was angry that prosecutors had asked the judge during the trial of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn to consider sentencing him to prison instead of probation. According to a Trump administration official, former President Trump wanted to tap the phones of White House aides he

thought were leaking information. He was barred from doing this by Mr. Kelly. Mr. Kelly has also revealed 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 Mr. Trump.

Furthermore, Trump's own children have made no attempt to hide the immense profitability they have reaped due to their father's time in the White House. 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, last 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.

This Republican-led House has been the least productive Congress in decades. Republicans took 15 initial votes for their first Speaker, and then an additional four votes to elect their second; faced four potential government shutdowns and got the fewest number of bills signed into law in decades. I urge my Republican colleagues to use what is left of the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress and return to their oath to care for the people who elected them to serve.