



CONGRESS

House Ethics panel subpoenas DOJ for Gaetz records

The committee has an ongoing investigation into the Florida Republican over allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor and drug abuse.



Matt Gaetz has characterized the investigation as an attempt to get back at him for his role in spearheading the ouster of Kevin McCarthy last fall. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

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05/16/2024 05:00 AM EDT



The House Ethics Committee has subpoenaed the Justice Department for information tied to the panel's ongoing investigation into Rep. Matt Gaetz, a

person familiar with the congressional investigation told POLITICO.

The panel served the DOJ with the subpoena, which the person familiar noted remains outstanding, earlier this year. House investigators demanded documents and other records to assist with their ongoing ethics investigation into allegations that Gaetz had sexual contact with a minor.

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The subpoena from the notoriously private committee has not been previously reported. The Justice Department closed its investigation into the Florida Republican last year without filing charges.

Gaetz has maintained his innocence and has characterized the investigation by the House panel as an attempt to get back at him for his role in spearheading the ouster of former Speaker Kevin McCarthy last fall. And some of McCarthy's allies [have privately suggested trying to expel](#) Gaetz from the House, depending on the panel's ultimate findings.



Both the Ethics Committee and the Justice Department declined to comment.

The tight-lipped panel, which generally won't comment on an investigation until its conclusion except with occasional non-descript updates, has been quietly moving forward with a long-running investigation into Gaetz. The [committee said in 2021](#) that it would look into a range of allegations, which Gaetz has repeatedly denied, including those involving sexual misconduct and illicit drug use.

The House probe was temporarily paused while the DOJ carried out its investigation, but picked up again last year.

Since then, there have been some signs of significant movement by the Ethics Committee. ABC News reported in mid-February that the panel had subpoenaed a Gaetz ex-girlfriend. CNN also reported in January that the panel had reached out to the Justice Department asking for it to voluntarily hand over information. And the New York Times reported in February that Gaetz's former friend and ally was cooperating with the investigation.

But prosecutors have resisted turning over some information related to that Gaetz probe. The Justice Department, in unrelated investigations during the GOP-led Congress, has repeatedly warned Republicans that it was wary of turning over potentially sensitive law enforcement-related information.

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That issue comes to a head on Thursday, with Republicans pushing forward on efforts to hold Attorney General Merrick Garland in contempt for not turning over certain Justice Department records.

Specifically, the House GOP wants audio of former special counsel Robert Hur's interview with President Joe Biden. DOJ officials have provided a transcript of the interview to House Republicans, but told GOP lawmakers they had not made an adequate case for obtaining the audio. Handing it over could undermine future cooperation with investigations, the officials warned in a lengthy letter.

Both the Oversight and Judiciary committees, the latter of which Gaetz is a member of, will vote Thursday on whether to recommend the Garland contempt vote to the full House.

Speaker Mike Johnson was asked on Wednesday about the Justice Department's resistance to providing both the Hur-Biden interview audio and certain information related to the Gaetz probe in the Ethics Committee. In response, Johnson told reporters that "I haven't paid any attention to that at all," referring to the Ethics Committee's work, before accusing the Justice Department more broadly of being "politicized."