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Todd Blanche tells appropriators payouts for Jan. 6 rioters are possible

The acting attorney general is facing bipartisan criticism about the DOJ's so-called "Anti-Weaponization Fund."

By **HAILEY FUCHS** and **JOSH GERSTEIN**
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Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche is not ruling out making payments to those who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as part of the Justice Department's new, \$1.8 billion "[Anti-Weaponization Fund](#)."

“Anybody can apply,” Blanche said during a Senate appropriations subcommittee hearing Tuesday morning in response to a question from Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.).

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“The commissioners will set rules I’m sure,” Blanche continued. “That’s not for me to set. That’s for the commissioners, and whether an individual, an Oath Keeper as you just mentioned, applies for compensation ... anybody in this country can apply.”

These comments could confirm critics’ worst fears about the rationale behind the account, which the Justice Department unveiled Monday to grant funds to individuals deemed targets of “weaponization and lawfare.”

It came about as the result of a settlement with President Donald Trump, where he agreed to drop his \$10 billion lawsuit against the IRS over the leak of his tax information in exchange for the establishment of such a fund.

Democrats quickly accused the administration of creating a slush fund intended to reward the president’s allies, including potentially those participated in the Jan. 6 riots.

“That is pure theft of public funds, and rewarding individuals who committed crimes is obscene,” said Sen. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, the top Democrat on the Senate appropriations subcommittee overseeing the DOJ’s budget. “Every American can see through this illegal, corrupt, self-dealing scheme.”

While Blanche was invited to testify on his budget request Tuesday, he quickly was in the position of having to defend and explain the new fund to members of both parties.

He faced tough questions from Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-Maine), who wanted to know whether payouts would be publicly reported. She appeared skeptical about oversight of the fund, challenging Blanche’s suggestion that a commission the Justice Department plans to set up to handle the payouts would be impartial.

Blanche said the fund, though “unusual,” was “not unprecedented.” He emphasized there would be “a process that you all will get information, and there’s a FOIA process. So I very much anticipate that the claims that are awarded — the basis and the amount — will for sure be made public along the way.”

The written terms of [the settlement agreement](#) state that these reports would, in fact, be “confidential,” but Blanche further sought to reassure lawmakers by explaining that the weaponization fund would accept claims beyond those stemming from alleged abuses under the Biden administration.

“There’s no limitation on the claims,” he said.

Republicans across the Capitol are also raising concerns.

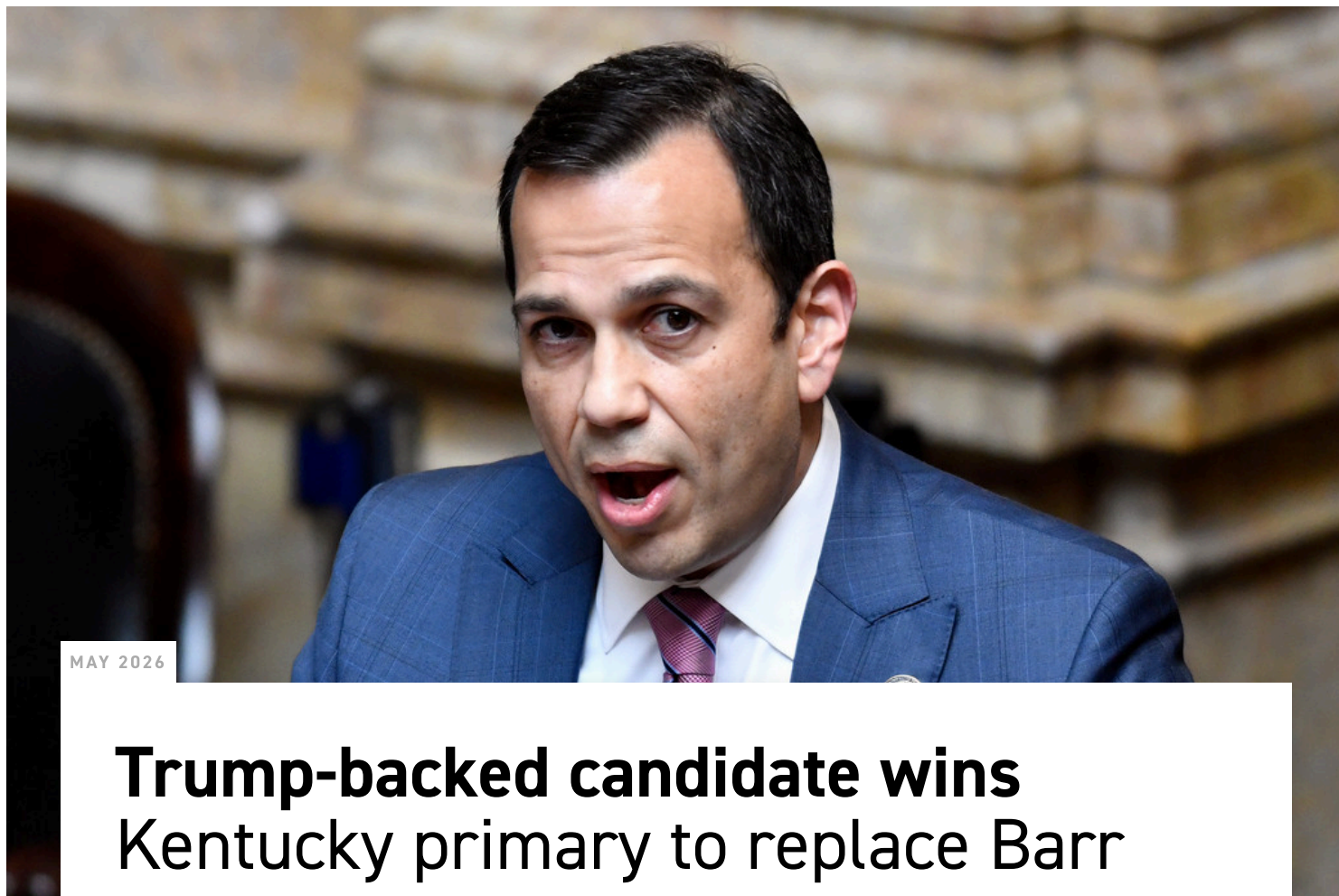
“We have the claimant negotiating with the defense, and the claimant also happens to be the boss of the defense,” Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb.) said of Trump. “It appears like conflict of interest and a partial process. The White House should bring in an independent arbitrator to protect itself from

accusations.”

Meredith Lee Hill contributed to this report.

Lead Art: Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche arrives to testify before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Capitol Hill in Washington, on May 19, 2026. | Francis Chung/POLITICO

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SAMUEL BENSON
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