

## Source: Politifact

Scott Perry stated on January 8, 2023 in ABC This Week interview: "Parents that go to school board meetings" and question the curriculum are being "flagged by the Department of Justice and the FBI for attending a meeting."

### **FBI, DOJ tagged threats against school officials, not parents for attending school board meetings**

House conservatives who held up Rep. Kevin McCarthy's House speaker vote demanded that lawmakers review criminal investigations by the Justice Department and FBI.

Republicans are planning to create a panel that will probe federal investigations related to what [they consider](#) a "violation of the civil liberties of citizens of the United States" and the "weaponization of the federal government."

On [ABC's "This Week"](#) on Jan. 8, host George Stephanopoulos asked U.S. Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., whether he would pledge not to serve on such a subcommittee since he is part of a Justice Department investigation related to events that led up to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Perry did not say he wouldn't serve on such a panel and suggested that federal officials have overreached their power.

"We're talking about parents that go to school board meetings for the schools that they pay for with their taxes and having the temerity to question the curriculum, and then they're put on, you know, the red flagged, they're flagged by the Department of Justice and the FBI for attending a meeting," Perry said. "That's not what America is supposed to be about. That sounds like some tinhorn Third World dictatorship."

Perry echoed a [misleading and false Republican talking point](#) that suggests federal officials target parents for their views about schools.

**Garland's school threat memo set off backlash**

In September 2021, following threats against school officials, the National School Boards Association wrote a letter to President Joe Biden [requesting assistance](#) to address concerns about school employees' and board members' safety.

On Oct. 4, 2021, [Attorney General Merrick Garland](#) sent a five-paragraph memo to the FBI and federal prosecutors acknowledging a "disturbing spike in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence" against school officials. Garland directed the FBI to hold meetings across the country and bring together government leaders to discuss strategies to address those threats.

"While spirited debate about policy matters is protected under our Constitution, that protection does not extend to threats of violence or efforts to intimidate individuals based on their views," [Garland wrote](#).

The memo focused on [criminal conduct](#), not parents' views about COVID-19 policies or school curriculum.

The memo led to misinformation such as the [debunked claim](#) that parents who "challenge school curriculums" were being labeled "domestic terrorists."

A Trump-nominated judge [dismissed a case by parents challenging the memo](#). The judge concluded that the memo does not target protected conduct under the Constitution and covers only criminal conduct.

#### *FEATURED FACT-CHECK*

Kat Cammack stated on March 2, 2023 in a speech at CPAC: "The Justice Department has been "calling parents that are concerned about what their kids are being taught, they are labeling them terrorists."

**Ohio lawmaker said federal officials were using threat tags against parents**  
We contacted Perry's office to ask whether he had evidence that federal law enforcement officials flagged parents for questioning curriculum. We received no response.

An FBI spokesperson told PolitiFact that the agency does not "flag" parents for attending meetings and questioning their children's curriculum.

It's possible Perry's claim is based on a [letter](#) Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, wrote to Garland in November 2021.

Jordan wrote that he had information from a whistleblower showing the FBI was compiling threat assessments related to parents. Jordan's letter said the FBI created a "threat tag" called EDUOFFICIALS.

The FBI uses "threat tags" to track information and spot trends — it does not necessarily signal a full investigation, which occurs if there is evidence of potential violence and violation of federal law, an FBI spokesperson told PolitiFact. The EDUOFFICIALS tag was created to track instances of threats directed against school officials.

House Republicans on the Judiciary Committee published a [report](#) in November that said the FBI had opened investigations with the EDUOFFICIALS threat tag in almost every region of the country, according to a whistleblower. But the report doesn't detail the outcome or full scope of any investigation.

The report cited tips received by the National Threat Operations Center. One tip led to a mother being interviewed by an FBI field office after she allegedly told a local school board, "We are coming for you." The mother, who is a member of the right-wing group Moms for Liberty, told the FBI agent she meant her group would seek to vote school board members out. The House Republicans' report doesn't explain whether that was the end of the FBI's query into the mother.

#### **Our ruling**

Perry said that "parents that go to school board meetings" and question the curriculum are being "flagged by the Department of Justice and the FBI for attending a meeting."

Perry's office provided no evidence and his claim echoes misleading statements about a 2021 Justice Department memo directing federal law enforcement to hold meetings nationwide about criminal threats against school officials.

The memo focused on monitoring criminal conduct; it wasn't about investigating parents who spoke about curriculum at school board meetings.

The FBI created an EDUOFFICIALS "threat tag" as a logistical tool to track threats of violence against school officials, not to flag parents for attending meetings or questioning curriculum.

We rate Perry's statement False.