

Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government
Hearing on the Weaponization of the Federal Government
9:00 AM, Thursday, March 30, 2023
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Rep. Gerald E. Connolly (D-VA)

Today, the Select Subcommittee to Weaponize the Federal Government has an all-star lineup of witnesses – first class election deniers who are here to tell us, “Don’t believe your lying eyes, Donald Trump won the 2020 election, and Joe Biden is leading a vast censorship industrial complex that silences all of the voices with whom we happen to agree and who find common cause with our attacks on American democracy.”

Every single witness on our panel today was an aggressive and active participant in the effort to overturn the results of the 2020 election. As the Attorney General for Missouri, Senator Eric Schmitt signed a brief in support of the disgraceful Texas lawsuit that advanced former President Trump’s election lies and sought to delay certification of the presidential electors in four states. Attorney General Jeff Landry of Louisiana, signed onto the same brief, helped promote the march on the Capitol on January 6th, and refused to condemn the violent insurrection that ultimately took place that day. And D. John Sauer, a Special Assistant Attorney General for Louisiana, helped recruit state attorneys general to the Texas lawsuit. When ask to stand and be counted during one of the most critical tests of our democracy in generations, these three individuals stood on the wrong side of history. That will be their legacy.

This Subcommittee should not let them run away from that legacy unless they choose to disavow their actions. In reading their written testimony, it appears none of them will do so here today. In fact, two of them – Senator Schmitt and Attorney General Landry – will literally run away from accountability and cross examination by refusing to stay for questioning. For two individuals so animated by the issue of censorship, they seem very willing to deprive members of this panel the opportunity to examine and respond to the accusations contained in their testimony.

Conspiracies, attacks on election integrity, and providing aid and comfort to violent insurrectionists – these are the defining features of the Select Subcommittee. Sign up for one and you too can be a witness before this panel. In fact, we will even allow for drive-by testimony. The conspiracy du jour for this hearing is the vast “censorship industrial complex” inherited from the Obama Administration and dutifully maintained by the Biden Administration. Through courageous leaps of logic, the purveyors of this conspiracy connect the dots between private social media companies stemming the flow of beheading videos published by ISIS to Hunter Biden’s laptop, implicating along the way Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates, and even Meghan Markle. The story is entertaining in the way WWE character arcs are entertaining. Suspend disbelief and the experience can be enthralling. But start to second guess the production and ask why a princess came into the arena when we were just talking about terrorism and the whole things starts to look and sound like the farce that it is.

On February 20, 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy entered into the Congressional Record a telegram he sent to President Harry Truman. To fan the flames of his conspiracies about communism in America, Senator McCarthy stated in that telegram, “Despite this State Department black-out, we have been able to compile a list of 57 Communists in the State Department.” In the tradition of Senator McCarthy, Chairman Jordan began the work of this Select Subcommittee with an equally ambiguous and inflammatory statement that “Dozens and dozens of whistleblowers, FBI agents, [are] coming to us talking about what’s going on...at the Justice Department.”

Chairman Jordan will never produce dozens and dozens of whistleblowers, and this Select Subcommittee will never be a fount of truth and fact-finding. It will be what it was always destined to be – a demented reproduction of the honest and groundbreaking work of the January 6th Committee. In fact, the only discernable charge this Subcommittee is faithfully executing is to protect former President Trump from accountability for his actions. From the January 6th attack on the United States Capitol to hush payments paid to cover up an alleged affair with a porn star, Chairman Jordan is all in. Chairman Jordan’s recent interference in the work of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg is a new low, though it is likely we will reach new depths before we bring the shameful work of this Subcommittee to a close.