

Why weren't they released during the Biden administration?

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([NewsNation](#)) — As [tens of thousands of pages](#) of documents related to Jeffrey Epstein continue to be released, Republican leaders continue to question why the previous administration didn't declassify them.

In December, Congress and President Donald Trump passed the [Epstein Files Transparency Act](#), compelling the Department of Justice to release documents related to [Epstein](#) by Dec. 19.

Since then, [several rounds of files](#) have been published by the Department of Justice, though a majority are [heavily redacted](#). A complete timeline for the release of the files is unknown.

Trump is mentioned and pictured in the files, and some [photos featuring Trump were restored](#) to the DOJ's website after Democrats accused prosecutors of trying to shield the president.

In a Dec. 23 statement, the DOJ said some of the new files contain “untrue and sensationalist claims” about Trump, submitted to the FBI before the 2020 election. The department did not clarify which claims — and corresponding files — contained such material.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer [asked the Senate to sue the Justice Department](#) over the unmet deadline and has accused the Trump administration of attempting to “hide the truth.”

Conversely, Republicans have pointed the finger at the previous administration. So, why weren't the [Epstein files](#) released while former President Joe Biden was in office?

Epstein case was an open investigation under Biden

The Epstein case was an open criminal investigation during the Biden administration, Miami Herald investigative reporter [Julie K. Brown](#) explained on social media. Brown's extensive reporting since 2017 has shone a light on the crimes of Epstein and his longtime accomplice Ghislaine Maxwell. Her book about Epstein, titled “Perversions of Justice,” is a New York Times bestseller.

“They had an open grand jury. ... And even after Maxwell's conviction, the case was on appeal — anyone in law enforcement knows you don't open your case file when it's still under appeal,” Brown added.

Victims were still going to the FBI with information during Biden's term, but that changed when President Donald Trump's Department of Justice reviewed the files and closed the case in July, Brown said.

Trump reverses course on Epstein files

Though Trump campaigned last year on the promise he would immediately release the Epstein files if he won the presidency, he switched his narrative earlier this year. Since then, he has received pressure from both sides of the aisle to release the files.

As public pressure mounted, Trump questioned the political rationale for renewed interest in releasing the files.

In a July interview with conservative outlet Real America's Voice, Trump said, "I think in the case of Epstein, they've already looked at it and they are looking at it and I think all they have to do is put out anything credible. But you know, that was run by the Biden administration for four years."

House Speaker Mike Johnson and other Trump allies have echoed that stance.

"The Biden Department of Justice had the files the entire time, and not a single one of the people who were so loud and animated right now ever said anything about it for all those four years," Johnson said during a news conference Tuesday. [Trump eventually reversed course](#) and urged House Republicans to vote to release all files related to the investigation.

"We have nothing to hide," Trump wrote on [social media](#).

NewsNation's Anna Kutz and Ashley N. Soriano contributed to this report.