

House Republicans Open Impeachment Inquiry Into Biden

Oversight committee calls witnesses as government shutdown looms

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WASHINGTON—With [a government shutdown](#) looming, House Republicans held their first hearing in an impeachment inquiry into President Biden, accusing him of lying about family members' business dealings and condoning their trading on the Biden name.

Rep. James Comer (R., Ky.), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said Biden misled the American people when he said he separated his official duties and his family's business dealings. Comer said the president's family members, particularly his son Hunter Biden, were selling "[Joe Biden](#) himself" as they made millions of dollars.

"The door was wide open to those who purchased what a business associate described as 'the Biden brand,'" Comer said.

Ahead of Thursday's hearing, House Republicans released a trove of records that they cast as incriminating and tying President Biden to [his son's business activities](#), but they contained no concrete proof of wrongdoing by the president. Democrats criticized the impeachment inquiry as unwarranted, stressing that Republicans were undertaking it without a full House vote.

"If Republicans had a smoking gun or even a dripping water pistol, they would be presenting it today. But they've got nothing," said Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee. Raskin's staff brought in 12,000 pages of bank records the committee has received so far, with Raskin saying "not a single page shows a dime going to President Biden."

President Biden has long denied wrongdoing and insisted that he has separated himself from his family's business efforts. As the House hearing unfolded Thursday, a White House spokeswoman repeatedly called attention to the prospect of a federal government shutdown, blaming it on "extreme House Republicans' chaos and inability to govern."

"Today, House Republicans wasted hours peddling debunked lies, even as their own witnesses admitted there is no evidence that merits this baseless stunt," the spokeswoman said. "This flop was a failed effort to distract from their own chaos

and inability to govern that is careening the country towards an unnecessary [government shutdown](#) that will hurt American families.”

Comer said his committee had uncovered a “mountain of evidence” that President Biden abused his public office for his family’s financial gain. But even the Republicans’ chosen witnesses for the hearing declined to go so far in their assessment of the materials the House has amassed.

Jonathan Turley, a conservative law professor whom Republicans have looked to as a legal authority, said he didn’t believe the evidence currently supports an article of impeachment against President Biden. But he said the House had passed the “threshold” for opening an impeachment inquiry.

Another Republican witness, forensic accountant Bruce Dubinsky, said there wasn’t enough evidence to conclude that President Biden acted corruptly.

“I am not here today to even suggest that there was corruption, fraud or wrongdoing,” Dubinsky said. “More information needs to be gathered before I can make such an assessment.”

Among the materials Republicans released Wednesday were wire transfers from a Chinese businessman to Hunter Biden in 2019 that listed his father’s address in Wilmington, Del. A lawyer for Hunter Biden, Abbe Lowell, said Republicans were misconstruing the transfer as nefarious when, in fact, it was a loan wired to a new bank account that “listed the address on his driver’s license, his parents’ address, because it was his only permanent address at the time.”

“We expect more occasions where the Republican chairs twist the truth to mislead people to promote their fantasy political agenda,” Lowell said.

Also on Wednesday, the House Ways and Means Committee released more than 700 pages of records related to the tax investigation into Hunter Biden. The records included an email in which a prosecutor in the U.S. attorney’s office in Delaware prohibited investigators from mentioning Hunter Biden’s father, identified as “Political Figure 1” and then the Democratic presidential nominee, in a proposed search warrant in August 2020.

Earlier that year, then-Attorney General William Barr had issued a customary election-year memo instructing prosecutors to use caution in taking overt investigative steps that could have an influence on the race. A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment.

Appearing at the impeachment inquiry hearing Thursday, Republicans pointed to the email as evidence that the Justice Department took steps to keep the spotlight off President Biden.

“The Biden family sold access to Joe Biden’s power; and the Biden Justice Department protected the Biden brand,” said Rep. Jason Smith (R., Mo.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. “We must continue to follow the facts.”