

# First Hearing on 'Weaponization' of Federal Government Is Just Days Away, Here's What to Expect



Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) speaks during an on-camera interview near the House Chambers during a series of votes in the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington on Jan. 9, 2023. (Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

By Tom Ozimek

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The first hearing of the House subcommittee on the “weaponization” of the federal government has been formally scheduled and is just days away, with Republican lawmakers vowing to “follow the truth where it leads” and Democrats arguing the panel is “going to go after every conspiracy theory that’s out there.”

The Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government is is scheduled to convene for the very first time at noon on Feb. 9 on Capitol Hill.

With a broad mandate that includes subpoena power and the authority to investigate ongoing criminal probes, the panel will look into any areas where the federal government may have abused its power and violated the rights of American citizens.

“We will follow the truth where it leads,” Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.), one of the members of the subcommittee, said in a post on Twitter, while sharing the schedule for the panel’s first meeting, which will take place at the Rayburn House Office Building.

Republicans have compared the panel to the Church Committee, a respected Senate select committee that in the 1970s uncovered abuses by U.S. intelligence agencies.

“The American people deserve to have confidence in their government,” Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), chair of the House Rules Committee, said on the House floor earlier in January. “They deserve to know that the broad powers granted to the federal government through the FBI, to the Department of Homeland Security, and to the intelligence agencies, are not being abused.”



Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) during a hearing in the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Dec. 18, 2017. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Democrats have portrayed the subcommittee as a partisan fishing expedition.

“They’re going to go down the rabbit hole, they’re going to go after every conspiracy theory that’s out there,” Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.), a member of the subcommittee, said in an interview Sunday on MSNBC.

Garamendi acknowledged the importance of investigating government abuses and that Congress, which is tasked with oversight, should probe any related allegations. At the same time, he portrayed the panel’s eight Democrats as dedicated to seeking “the truth” while accusing the Republicans of pursuing far-fetched hypotheses.

“We want the truth, we want it to come out, and we’re quite certain that the latest conspiracy thing will be on Mr. Jordan’s agenda for the next two years but you can count on the eight of us on this committee to make sure that the American public knows the truth,” Garamendi said, referring to Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), who chairs the subcommittee.

The talking points made the rounds over the weekend as the nation’s focus turns to the panel’s inaugural meeting in just several days.

“What they’re interested in doing is chasing down rainbow conspiracies and far-right fearmongering to their base,” Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-Virgin Islands), the Democrat ranking member on the committee, told MSNBC in an interview Friday.

Plaskett, who was a manager during the impeachment proceedings of former President Donald Trump, claimed in the interview that Democrats on the panel will be “the truth squad.”

The GOP-controlled House voted on Jan. 10 to establish the subcommittee, with the text of the resolution outlining its various functions.



Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-Virgin Islands) answers questions at a press conference after the conclusion of former President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial in Washington on Feb. 13, 2021. (Win McNamee/Getty Images)

## What to Expect?

The Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government has the power to examine the federal government's broad involvement in investigations of U.S. citizens, including ongoing criminal investigations.

Additionally, the committee has the authority to investigate the way federal agencies communicate with private companies in order to gather information on Americans.

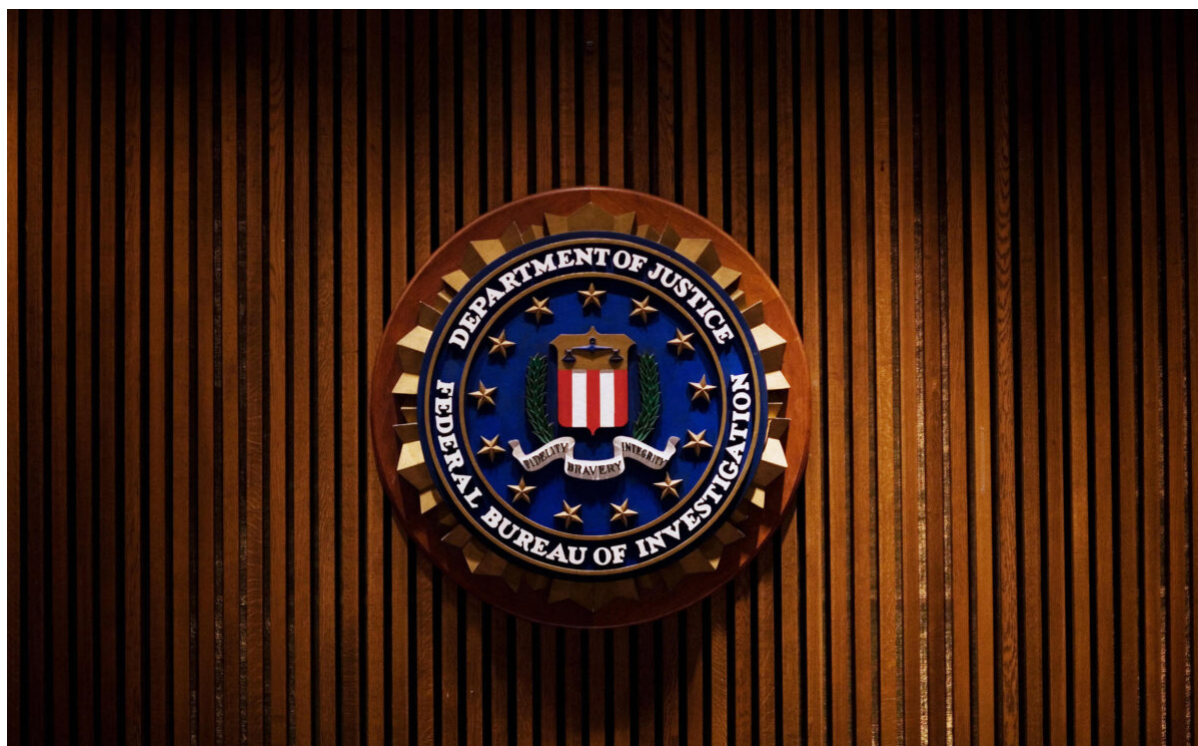
Several members of the subcommittee told The Epoch Times in recent interviews that the panel will specifically focus on alleged abuses by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and FBI, the legality of vaccine mandates, disinformation about conservative-sponsored election integrity laws, and government-directed censorship of Americans by big tech firms.



The proposal for the subcommittee came after Republicans signaled that they want a top-to-bottom investigation of the FBI after the “Twitter Files,” internal company communications that were provided by Elon Musk to several journalists, suggested that the agency pressured Twitter to censor free speech.

The FBI has denied any wrongdoing, and in an emailed statement to The Epoch Times, a spokesperson said the agency regularly notifies private sector entities about “foreign malign influence,” but that any actions are taken independently by companies.

One of the Twitter Files releases included screenshots of FBI requests for Twitter to censor posts on the platform, while other messages showed Twitter complying in a dynamic independent journalist Matt Taibbi described as a “master-canine” relationship.



A crest of the Federal Bureau of Investigation inside the J. Edgar Hoover FBI Building in Washington on Aug. 3, 2007. (Mandel Ngan/AFP via Getty Images)

## ‘Signature Abuse of Power of Our Time’

Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), a member of the panel, told The Epoch Times that the panel will push for accountability for alleged abuses by federal agencies.

“The weaponization of the federal government against the American people is the signature abuse of power of our time, and I see no way Congress can look away and not seek due accountability,” Issa said.

Subcommittee member Rep. Chris Stewart (R-Utah), who also serves on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, told The Epoch Times that his priority is to investigate the now-debunked allegations that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia in election interference during the 2016 campaign.

“My priorities are really a continuation of the work that we’ve been doing through the Intelligence Committee that highlights and recognizes and roots out the corruption that we’ve seen from leadership in some of our most key agencies that just hasn’t been exposed or held accountable, like it should have been,” Stewart told The Epoch Times.

Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.), a member of the panel, told The Epoch Times that the work of the committee will also help make sure abuses by federal agencies don’t happen again.

“Since the beginning of the Biden administration, some federal agencies designed to serve and keep Americans safe have instead been turned against them,” he said.

“This fact is beyond dispute. The Biden administration has used counterterrorism resources against the parents of school children, raided the homes of political opponents, targeted conservative states over their election integrity laws, inflated domestic extremism statistics, and instituted illegal vaccine mandates, just to name a handful of examples,” he added.



Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.) speaks during a hearing of the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington on July 14, 2022. (Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images)

## ‘Deranged Ploy’?

Democrats have raised concerns about the ability of the committee to probe ongoing criminal investigations, which are generally outside the purview of congressional oversight.

“This is a violation of separation of powers, and it’s also very dangerous,” said Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) derided the panel on the House floor on Jan. 10, calling it “nothing more than a deranged ploy by the MAGA extremists who have hijacked the party and want to use taxpayer money to push their far-right conspiracy nonsense.”

Speaking on the House floor, Jordan disputed this characterization.

“A ploy? It’s not a ploy when the Department of Justice treats parents as terrorists—moms and dads simply showing up at a school board meeting to advocate for their son or daughter,” Jordan said. “It’s not a ploy when the FBI pays Twitter \$3 million to censor American citizens.”

“Dozens of whistleblowers have come talked to Republican staff on the Judiciary Committee doesn’t think this is a ploy. That’s why they talked to us. They know how serious this is,” Jordan added.

The FBI told The Epoch Times in an earlier statement that its work is not political and that it’s dedicated to “protecting the American people from terrorism, violent crime, cyber threats and other dangers.” The agency added that, regardless of criticism, “we will continue to follow the facts wherever they lead, do things by the book, and speak through our work.”

*John Ransom and Mimi Nguyen-Ly contributed to this report.*