

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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Opening Statement Vice Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly Subpoena Motions

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Our Committee has a constitutional duty to conduct rigorous oversight of the executive branch. Unfortunately, our Republican counterparts have forsaken that duty.

At our last mark up in November, Republicans blocked our requests to vote on six motions to subpoena documents relating to critical issues.

Since then, we have asked for 13 more subpoenas. We described each and every one of these requests in separate letters. We summarized them again in a letter to the Chairman last week. We understand that the Chairman personally may disagree with our requests.

But our Committee Members deserve an opportunity to debate and vote on these motions. It is true that the House rules provide for the Chairman to issue subpoenas unilaterally. But they also provide that we—as a body—may vote to approve them. That is all we are asking for today.

Some of these requests started out as bipartisan.

For example, last year the Committee sent a bipartisan request to the Trump Organization. Since the President refused to divest his assets or set up a blind trust, it was important for this Committee to know how the Trump Organization was collecting and reporting foreign government payments.

But the Trump Organization refused to produce those documents. They refused to provide the specific sources of foreign government payments and the amounts of those payments. They completely rejected our bipartisan request for these documents.

Now, it used to be that if someone defied this Committee, we would issue a subpoena. But that is not what has happened here. In fact, just the opposite happened. This Committee dropped it. The Republicans said, you don't want to give us those documents? Ok, that's fine with us.

So last month, every Democratic member of this Committee signed a letter to the Chairman asking him to either issue a subpoena or allow us to vote on one. Having heard nothing, we have been forced to request today's motions on subpoenas.

Our list of subpoena motions also includes government-wide issues that are central to our jurisdiction, like our request for copies of each agency's plans to downsize their workforce.

Our subpoena requests are for a wide variety of agencies, including the White House, OMB, DHS, HHS, DOJ, FDIC, and outside entities on a wide variety of issues within our core jurisdiction.

For all of these reasons, I hereby move that this Committee authorize and issue subpoenas for documents on 13 topics as described in my letter with Ranking Member Cummings to the Chairman last week.

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