

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
MINORITY (202) 225-5074
<https://oversight.house.gov>

November 7, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

Hunter Biden, the President's 51-year-old son, has made a new career for himself as an artist.¹ The fact that Mr. Biden is listing his paintings for prices that range between \$75,000—more than the median annual American income—and half a million dollars² raises ethical questions about the access of those purchasing Mr. Biden's art to the White House and the President. The White House created levels of secrecy around the identity of Mr. Biden's patrons and has provided little in the way of clarity.³ For months, ethics experts from former Democratic and Republican administrations have voiced concerns about this arrangement.⁴ Since this Committee has a history of inquiring about possible White House ethics violations,⁵ we call on you to schedule a hearing to review this scheme and shed light on this suspicious activity.

Mr. Biden's entanglements in foreign business transactions are well-documented.⁶ The Biden family's history of capitalizing on President Biden's former public positions of trust is clear.⁷ Foreign governments using "transactions involving high-value art to evade sanctions imposed on them by the United States" is also well-established.⁸ These facts alone present enough of an appearance of impropriety by Mr. Biden to merit a hearing before the Committee.

Mr. Biden's accomplices in this burgeoning enterprise—including the White House—should raise the matter beyond partisan loyalties as it implicates possible national security

¹ Graham Bowley and Robin Pogrebin, *A Gallery Sells Hunter Bidens. The White House Says It Won't Know Who's Buying.*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 13, 2021).

² *Id.*

³ Ben Schreckinger, 'Hiding the Ball': Hunter Biden Complicates White House Anti-Corruption Push, POLITICO (Oct. 12, 2021).

⁴ Matt Viser, *Deal of the art: White House grapples with ethics of Hunter Biden's pricey paintings*, WASH. POST (Jul. 8, 2021). See also, Brett Samuels, *Hunter Biden artwork attracts ethics scrutiny: report*, THE HILL (Jul. 8, 2021).

⁵ See, e.g., Letter from the Hon. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member, H. Comm. on Oversight & Gov't Reform, to Donald F. McGahn II, White House Counsel (Mar. 9, 2017).

⁶ *Hunter Biden: What Was He Doing in China and Ukraine*, BBC NEWS (Apr. 6, 2021).

⁷ Ben Schreckinger, *Biden Inc.: How 'Middle Class' Joe's family cashed in*, POLITICO (Aug. 2, 2019).

⁸ S. Permanent Subcomm. on Investigations, *Staff Report: The Art Industry and U.S. Policies that Undermine Sanctions*, 116th Cong. (July 29, 2020).

concerns. Mr. Biden's gallerist, Georges Bergès, has announced his desire to become the "lead guy in China."⁹ Chinese publications now report on Mr. Biden's gallery.¹⁰ The White House has dealt with Mr. Biden's art career by either ignoring it or adding levels of secrecy by keeping buyers anonymous—even as Mr. Biden attends his art shows with rich, famous, and ambitious potential buyers seeking jobs in the Biden Administration.¹¹ When asked about those who would question this arrangement, Mr. Biden has responded "f--- 'em."¹² When a reporter asked a substantial Democrat donor about his role hosting one of Mr. Biden's art shows, the reporter was called a "piece of s---" and a "nazi jew [sic]."¹³ The identities of those who have already purchased Biden art are not shared with the public, and Mr. Biden has already grossed at least \$375,000 from sales to unknown patrons.¹⁴

The White House for its part does not seem concerned about Mr. Biden's appearance of impropriety and deflects questions regarding the White House's decision not to review purchasers of the art.¹⁵ As Walter Shaub, former chief ethics officer under the Obama Administration, has recently opined, "There is no ethics program in the world that can be built around the head of state's staff working with a dealer to keep the public in the dark about the identities of individuals who pay vast sums to the leader's family member for subjectively priced items of no intrinsic value."¹⁶

The American people deserve answers regarding the nature and profitability of Hunter Biden's art sales. They are also entitled to know the extent to which Mr. Biden interacts with his father and any connections he has or cultivates in the White House. We call on you to hold a hearing to question Mr. Biden and his gallerist, Georges Bergès, as well as White House counsel responsible for crafting the agreements shrouding the purchasers of Mr. Biden's art in secrecy, as well as ethics experts such as Mr. Shaub to evaluate these transactions. This matter is not going away—in fact it appears to be worsening—and it is imperative the Committee on Oversight and Reform evaluate this serious breach of ethics to help guide any potential necessary changes in federal ethics law.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

⁹ George Wayne, *Modern Eye for Modern Art*, RESIDENT (Mar. 2, 2015).

¹⁰ 拜登上任后，代表其儿子的画廊获得巨额新冠疫情援助贷款, English language version accessed through Google translate, available at <https://finance.sina.com.cn/tech/2021-10-10/doc-iktzscyx8856355.shtml>.

¹¹ Matthew Miller, *LA Mayor Eric Garcetti among 200 people to attend Hunter Biden's art show*, WASH. EXAMINER (Oct. 4, 2021).

¹² Nick Niedzwiadek, *Hunter Biden to Critics of His Art: 'F--- 'em'*, POLITICO (Jul. 30, 2021).

¹³ Jack Greenberg, *Billionaire Mega-Donor At Center Of Hunter Biden Art Sales Raises Ethics Concerns*, DAILY CALLER (Oct. 31, 2021).

¹⁴ Kaelan Deese, *Hunter Biden sells five art pieces for \$75,000 each in Los Angeles*, WASH. EXAMINER (Oct. 8, 2021).

¹⁵ Lee Moran, *Ex-Ethics Chief Rips Jen Psaki's 'Disappointing' Brush-Off Of Hunter Biden Art Questions*, HUFFINGTON POST (Oct. 14, 2021).

¹⁶ Tweet by Walt Shaub, @waltshaub, 3:59 PM, Oct. 13, 2021.

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November 7, 2021

Page 3

Sincerely,



James Comer

Ranking Member

Committee on Oversight and Reform



Jody Hice

Ranking Member

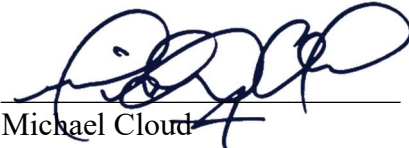
Subcommittee on Government
Operations



Glenn S. Grothman

Ranking Member

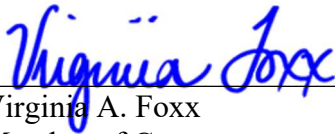
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Michael Cloud

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Economic and
Consumer Policy



Virginia A. Foxx

Member of Congress



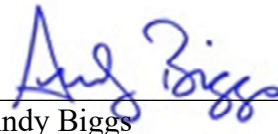
Bob Gibbs

Member of Congress




Pete Sessions

Member of Congress



Andy Biggs

Member of Congress



Scott Franklin

Member of Congress



Byron Donalds

Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy