

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 13, 2023

Mr. William Pittard  
*Transmitted Electronically*

Mr. Pittard:

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is in receipt of your February 6, 2023, letter on behalf of your clients, Mr. Georges Bergès and the Georges Bergès Galleries LLC, the art dealer and gallery, respectively, of Mr. Robert Hunter Biden. Mr. Bergès has refused to provide any information regarding who is buying Mr. Biden’s art. According to your letter, Mr. Bergès has been left “uncertain about how to proceed” because they “implicate the interests of Hunter Biden[.]”<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bergès is completely refusing to cooperate with the Committee’s requests.<sup>2</sup> He has chosen to obstruct in an apparent effort to shield Mr. Biden and/or the purchasers’ of Mr. Biden’s art from congressional oversight.

The Committee seeks information about the unidentified purchasers of Mr. Biden’s artwork and the non-public agreement with the White House concerning the same, among other items.<sup>3</sup> This information will inform our legislation on matters that are within the jurisdiction of this Committee. For instance, the prices of the artwork—reportedly ranging between \$75,000 and \$500,000<sup>4</sup>—even caused the Obama-era head of the Office of Government Ethics, Mr. Walter Shaub, to raise these ethics issues publicly. Mr. Shaub stated the White House has “basically outsourced government ethics to a private art dealer and they’re depending on unknown art purchasers to help keep the secret.”<sup>5</sup> The Committee shares these concerns. Your client’s arrangement with Mr. Biden raises obvious ethical red flags and Mr. Bergès’s purported “safeguards” are insufficient and troubling.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from William Pittard, representing George Bergès and the George Bergès Galleries LLC, to the Hon. James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Accountability, at 1 (Feb. 6, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> See *Watkins v. United States*, 354 U.S. 178, 187 (1957) (“It is unquestionably the duty of all citizens to cooperate with the Congress in its efforts to obtain the facts needed for intelligent legislative action.”).

<sup>3</sup> Letter from the Hon. James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability, to Georges Bergès, at 2 (Jan. 25, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Arwa Mahdawi, *Why would anyone pay \$500,000 for a painting by Hunter Biden?*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 17, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Maegan Vazquez & Sunlen Serfaty, *White House helped form ethics agreement with art gallery that’s selling Hunter Biden’s paintings, sources say*, CNN.COM (Jul. 9, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> *Supra* n. 1, at 1.

The facts belie any claim by Mr. Bergès that the Committee has no legitimate legislative purpose. In February 2022, the Treasury Department studied the use of high-end art as a means to launder money along with other potential illicit financial transactions and published a report related to this topic.<sup>7</sup> The Treasury Department’s report recommended “encouraging the creation and enhancement of private sector information-sharing programs to *foster transparency* among art market participants[,]” and using “FinCEN record keeping authorities to support information collection and enhanced due diligence,” among other policy considerations.<sup>8</sup> Instead of fostering transparency, Mr. Bergès and Mr. Biden struck an opaque arrangement that demands congressional oversight. The Committee is reviewing legislative solutions that address the ethics and money laundering issues raised by certain high-end art deals, and your information is critical to our investigation.

Finally, Mr. Bergès’s reliance upon *Trump v. Mazars*, 140 S. Ct. 2019 (2020), is misplaced given its irrelevance to our request. Mr. Bergès is not the President of the United States. He has not—to our knowledge—communicated with the President of the United States, and we are unaware of Mr. Bergès possessing any documents related to President Biden. As far as we are aware, the Committee is not requesting anything related to President Biden or his papers. Mr. Bergès did not point to one request that would implicate the President of the United States. Notwithstanding his tenuous legal arguments, Mr. Bergès mischaracterizes the purpose of our investigation and fails to acknowledge that the Committee’s requests are “related to, and in furtherance of, a legitimate task of the Congress.”<sup>9</sup>

Although your client has refused to produce *any* documents, the Committee will extend another opportunity for Mr. Bergès and the Georges Bergès Galleries LLC to adequately respond to our request. Please produce the following documents no later than March 27, 2023:

1. All documents and communications between Georges Bergès, the Georges Bergès Galleries (or agents thereof) and the White House;
2. All documents and communications between Georges Bergès, the Georges Bergès Galleries (or agents thereof) and Hunter Biden;
3. All guidelines, agreements, contracts, or other documents executed by Georges Bergès or the Georges Bergès Galleries (or agents thereof) in connection with Hunter Biden;

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Dep’t of Treasury, Study of the Facilitation of Money Laundering and Terror Finance Through the Trade in Works of Art, (Feb. 4, 2022), available at <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0588>, at 1 (Executive Summary) (“Several qualities inherent to art, the high-value art market, and market participants may make the market attractive for ML [money laundering] by illicit actors. Specifically, the high-dollar values of single transactions, the ease of transportability of works of art, the long-standing culture of privacy in the market (including private sales and transactions), and the increasing use of art as an investment or financial asset, all could make trade in high-value art vulnerable to [money laundering].”)

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 30-34 (emphasis added); Fatima Hussein, *Treasury urges closer watch on money laundering in fine art*, AP News (Feb. 4, 2022) (“[T]he department did find evidence of money laundering in the high-value art market. A common theme is that criminals use shell companies to buy art and hide behind a corporate veil.”)

<sup>9</sup> *See Watkins* at 186 (1957).

4. All documents and communications pertaining to setting the prices for Hunter Biden's art;
5. Any ethics guidelines (in final or draft form), created in conjunction with the White House and/or Office of Government Ethics, pertaining to Hunter Biden's art;
6. Documents sufficient to show who attended the opening of Hunter Biden's art shows; and
7. Documents sufficient to show who purchased Hunter Biden's artwork.

The Committee has provided instructions regarding how these materials should be produced and defined certain terms in the accompanying attachment.<sup>10</sup> To schedule the delivery of responsive documents or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074.

Additionally, we ask that Mr. Bergès make himself available for a transcribed interview with Committee staff regarding this matter. Please schedule an interview to appear prior to April 3 2023.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important investigation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Comer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

James Comer  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight & Accountability

cc: The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

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<sup>10</sup> See Attachment A.