

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

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

July 10, 2024

Mr. Edward Siskel  
Assistant to the President and White House Counsel  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Siskel:

Attached to this letter is a subpoena requiring Ashley Williams, Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Oval Office Operations, to appear for a deposition before the Committee on Oversight and Accountability. This subpoena is issued pursuant to Rule XI.2(m)(1)(B) of the Rules of the House of Representatives and Rule 12(g) of the Oversight Committee's rules.

Subsequent to the President's "disastrous"<sup>1</sup> debate performance in June, officials in the House of Representatives,<sup>2</sup> the Senate,<sup>3</sup> and the White House<sup>4</sup> have voiced concerns about the President's ability to lead the country. Recent reporting has revealed a White House in disarray, and one former Biden aide has said that "Annie [Tomasini], Ashley [Williams] and Anthony [Bernal] create a protective bubble around" President Biden, and the President is "staffed so closely that he's lost all independence."<sup>5</sup>

The Committee is therefore investigating the scope of Ms. Williams's responsibilities within the White House. In particular, based on the reporting discussed above, it appears as though Ms. Williams has firsthand knowledge of the extent to which President Biden is personally carrying out the duties of his office and whether he is capable of doing so. The Committee seeks this information to explore whether the time has come for Congress to revisit

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<sup>1</sup> Trevor Hunnicutt et al., *Joe Biden's disastrous debate blamed on bad preparation, exhaustion*, Reuters (July 1, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Ali Velshi, *Rep. Raskin: Democrats are 'having a serious conversation about what to do' after Biden debate*, MSNBC (June 30, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Alexander Bolton, *Durbin: Debate 'raised a lot of questions' about Biden's viability*, The Hill (July 8, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Alex Thompson, *"Freaking the f\*\*\* out": Turmoil in the White House over Biden*, Axios (July 2, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Alex Thompson, *Biden staff "miserable," alarmed as pressure builds*, Axios (July 5, 2024).

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potential legislation to address the oversight of presidents' fitness to serve pursuant to its authority under Section 4 of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment.<sup>6</sup>

The nature and scope of Ms. Williams's duties have long been of interest to the Committee. Ms. Williams was one of several White House employees to enter the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement and, in the case of Ms. Williams, removed boxes of documents shortly before the supposed discovery of classified materials at the same location.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the Committee previously sought testimony from Ms. Williams about President Biden's mishandling of classified materials and whether the White House led an effort to cover up the President's actions or mislead the American people about them.<sup>8</sup> However, the White House has refused to allow Ms. Williams to testify.<sup>9</sup>

Now, the Committee is concerned that Ms. Williams may be running interference on behalf of the President and perhaps doing some of the President's job for him. Howard Dean, the former Democratic National Committee Chairman recently stated that "Joe Biden has a very good team around him who knows what they're doing. **They've done a great job running the country**[".]"<sup>10</sup> Given public reporting that White House staff have "aggressively stage-managed" the President and are focusing "on minute details" to "minimize signs of how age has taken a toll on the oldest president in U.S. history,"<sup>11</sup> and in light of Ms. Williams's proximity to the President, the Committee seeks to understand the extent of Ms. Williams's influence over the President and her knowledge of whether the President is personally discharging the duties of his office.

The Committee is concerned that Ms. Williams appears to be one of several White House staffers who have taken it upon themselves to run the country while the President cannot. To be clear, the American people did not elect Ms. Williams or any White House staffer to do President Biden's job for him, and the Committee seeks Ms. Williams testimony regarding the matters identified above.

Please contact staff by July 17, 2024, to discuss the deposition. If you have any questions regarding this deposition, please contact James Mandolfo or Jake Greenberg with the Committee at (202) 225-5074. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight

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<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Press Release, Raskin Introduces Bill to Establish Independent Commission on Presidential Capacity, Office of Rep. Jamie Raskin (May 12, 2017); Oversight Commission on Presidential Capacity Act, H.R. 1987, 115th Cong. (2017).

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Hon. James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Accountability to Edward Siskel, White House Counsel, The White House (Oct. 11, 2023); Letter from Hon. James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Accountability, and Hon. Jim Jordan, Chairman, H. Comm. on the Judiciary, to Ms. Ashley Williams (Nov. 13, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> See Oct. 11 Letter, *supra*, fn. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Richard Sauber, Special Counsel to the President, The White House, to Hon. James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight & Accountability (Oct. 18, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Michel Martin, *'I would tell Biden to hang in there,' former DNC Charman Howard Dean says*, NPR (July 1, 2024) (emphasis added).

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Restuccia, et al., *How Biden's Inner Circle Worked to Keep Signs of Aging Under Wraps*, The Wall Street Journal (July 8, 2024); see also Alex Thompson, *Scoop: How Biden's event staffers guide him behind the scenes*, Axios (July 7, 2024).

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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 large, prominent "J" and "C".

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James Comer

Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Accountability

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