

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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May 22, 2025

### Transmitted Electronically

Mr. Anthony Bernal  
Former Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady

Dear Mr. Bernal:

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is investigating the role of former senior Biden White House officials in possibly usurping authority from former President Joe Biden and the ramifications of a White House staff intent on hiding his rapidly worsening mental and physical faculties. While the Committee has been investigating this issue for nearly a year,<sup>1</sup> newfound details regarding President Biden's obvious decline<sup>2</sup> demand renewed scrutiny of White House personnel actions and knowledge of relevant information over the course of the prior administration. The Committee seeks to understand who made key decisions and exercised the powers of the executive branch during the Biden Administration. As former Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady, you were potentially involved in these decisions, and the Committee requests your voluntary appearance for a transcribed interview.

In the immediate months after former President Biden's "disastrous"<sup>3</sup> debate performance in June 2024—where officials in the House of Representatives,<sup>4</sup> the Senate,<sup>5</sup> and the White House<sup>6</sup> voiced concerns about the President's ability to lead the country—questions continued to mount about who in the White House was actually exercising the authority of the President of the United States. These concerns only intensified with reports of Hunter Biden joining staff meetings<sup>7</sup> and First Lady Jill Biden sitting at the head of the table of a Cabinet

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability, to Edward Siskel, Assistant to the President and White House Counsel, The White House (July 10, 2024).

<sup>2</sup> JAKE TAPPER & ALEX THOMPSON, ORIGINAL SIN: PRESIDENT BIDEN'S DECLINE, ITS COVER-UP, AND HIS DISASTROUS CHOICE TO RUN AGAIN (2025); Joel Achenbach, *What to know about Biden's prostate cancer diagnosis*, THE WASH. POST (updated May 18, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> Trevor Hunnicutt, *et al.*, *Joe Biden's disastrous debate blamed on bad preparation, exhaustion*, REUTERS (July 1, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> See Ali Velshi, *Rep. Raskin: Democrats are 'having a serious conversation about what to do' after Biden debate*, MSNBC (June 30, 2024).

<sup>5</sup> See Alexander Bolton, *Durbin: Debate 'raised a lot of questions' about Biden's viability*, THE HILL (July 8, 2024).

<sup>6</sup> See Alex Thompson, *"Freaking the f\*\*\* out": Turmoil in the White House over Biden*, AXIOS (July 2, 2024).

<sup>7</sup> Kristen Welker, *et al.*, *Hunter Biden has joined White House meetings as he stays close to the president post-debate*, NBC NEWS (July 2, 2024).

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meeting.<sup>8</sup> The question of whether former President Biden executed his duties—and, if not, who in fact did—remains an investigative focus of this Committee.

The audio recording from Special Counsel Robert Hur’s interview with former President Biden is a startling reminder of the President’s rapidly deteriorating mental and physical condition.<sup>9</sup> Now, *Axios* reports that members of former President Biden’s Cabinet voiced concerns about his ability to respond to a crisis due to his declining health.<sup>10</sup> This newly released information will be examined by the Committee.

The Committee remains concerned that you, as both Assistant to the President and the First Lady’s confidant, were involved in running interference on behalf of the former President and perhaps performing duties exclusively reserved for the President of the United States. Given public reporting that former White House staff “aggressively stage-managed” the former President and focused on minute details to “minimize signs of how age has taken a toll on the oldest president in U.S. history,”<sup>11</sup> the Committee seeks to understand the extent of your influence over the former President and your knowledge of whether the former President was personally discharging the duties of his office.

The Committee originally sought your voluntary cooperation on October 11, 2023,<sup>12</sup> and then compelled your appearance with a subpoena for a deposition on July 10, 2024,<sup>13</sup> but the former White House obstructed the Committee’s investigation and prevented your testimony. The Committee renews our request for your testimony regarding these and other matters concerning former President Biden.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform 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. Accordingly, we request you make yourself available for a transcribed interview on June 11, 2025. Please confirm your appearance as soon as possible but no later than May 29, 2025. To ask any related follow-up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

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<sup>8</sup> Steven Nelson, *Jill Biden leads one of lame-duck husband’s last cabinet meetings before hosting Rose Garden party without him*, N.Y. POST (Sept. 20, 2024).

<sup>9</sup> Marc Caputo & Alex Thompson, *Exclusive: Prosecutor’s audio shows Biden’s memory lapses*, AXIOS (May 16, 2025), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugM76taxz2E&t=1s>.

<sup>10</sup> Alex Thompson, *New Book: Biden Cabinet members worried about his capacity in a crisis*, AXIOS (May 14, 2025).

<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).

<sup>12</sup> Letter from James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability, to Edward Siskel, White House Counsel, The White House (Oct. 11, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> *Supra* n. 1.

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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 Government Reform

cc: The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform