



To: Interested Parties
From: David Brock, Facts First President
Re: Guide to House GOP Investigations for the 4th Republican Presidential Primary Debate
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023

Ahead of the fourth Republican Presidential Primary Debate, Facts First is releasing an updated guide to House Republicans' abuse of government oversight to settle partisan scores. This report will provide you with the facts and the truth behind the lies and fevered conspiracy dreams of House Speaker Mike Johnson and Congressmen James Comer and Jim Jordan that will be echoed by the other MAGA extremists on stage in Tuscaloosa, AL.

House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer's Own Family Business History "Actually Borders A Conflict Of Interest"

While serving as a member of Congress, James Comer engaged in land swaps with his brother, including one deal that involved around \$200,000 and Comer's LLC. Following another land swap between Comer and his brother, his brother applied for a special agricultural tax break in Tennessee. Not only that, but Comer also intentionally obscured the value of a piece of land he swapped with his brother in another transaction, writing "exempt" where the value should have been. It was also reported that for years Comer has served in high-level agricultural oversight positions, including in Congress, while he and his family have run a multi-million-dollar farming business. That's not all! The names of Comer's and his family's widely reported agricultural businesses – Comer Land & Cattle, James Comer Jr. Farms – don't appear in public Kentucky business filings.¹ When confronted with the facts about his own business dealings, Comer resorted to personally attacking one of his colleagues.²

House Republicans' Impeachment Inquiry Is A Self-Interested, Politically-Motivated, Evidence-Free Stunt Designed To Placate MAGA Republicans

Don't just take it from us. The witnesses James Comer invited to testify at his first impeachment hearing told him and House Republicans they do not have evidence to impeach President Biden. It was so embarrassing that Republicans described the hearing as a "an unmitigated disaster" and an "amateurish clownshow."³ Some Republican lawmakers even publicly floated replacing Comer as the head of their inquiry.⁴ Comer and House Republicans have presented no evidence of wrongdoing by President Biden⁵ and even Republican lawmakers have said they have no evidence to justify impeachment.⁶ House Republicans have also blatantly used their power to try

¹ Daily Beast, [11/9/23](#)

² USA Today, [11/14/23](#)

³ Twitter, Melanie Zanona, [9/28/23](#); Twitter, Andrew Feinberg, [9/28/23](#)

⁴ Politico, Playbook, [9/30/23](#)

⁵ CNN, [9/13/23](#)

⁶ CNN, [8/28/23](#); Huffington Post, [9/5/23](#); The Hill, [9/12/23](#); Politico, [9/16/23](#); Mediaite, [11/28/23](#)

to protect former President Trump.⁷ House GOP lawmakers, including Marjorie Taylor Greene and Elise Stefanik, reportedly briefed Trump on a strategy to impeach President Biden before former Speaker Kevin McCarthy launched the impeachment inquiry.⁸ Clearly, this is just about protecting Trump and settling partisan political scores.

House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer's Investigation Is An Embarrassing Spectacle

James Comer started his investigation by lamenting the fact that he could not try to prosecute Beau Biden, President Biden's son who passed away from cancer⁹. Then, Comer allowed Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene to show nude photos of a private citizen during a House committee hearing¹⁰, after which she proceeded to distribute the photos from her official email list potentially violating state and federal laws¹¹. Later, Greene went on to give Comer "high praise" for his "investigation."¹²

In another embarrassing display, Comer claimed his informant was "missing"¹³ and that others were in court or in jail¹⁴. Then, the "lost" informant who Comer insisted was "very credible" was indicted by the Justice Department and accused of being an unregistered foreign agent for China, an international arms trafficker, violating U.S. sanctions on Iran, and lying to investigators¹⁵. This series of events was so embarrassing it prompted House Oversight Committee Democrats to send Comer a letter expressing concerns that Republicans had been "manipulated" by "an apparent con man" and "fugitive from justice."¹⁶

Finally, House Republicans don't even know what their own conference has been doing. Newly elected Speaker Mike Johnson claimed the impeachment inquiry was justified because the federal government has allegedly obstructed their document requests¹⁷, but Comer admitted himself back in June that he had received 100 percent of what he'd requested through subpoenas.¹⁸ It's been eleven months and Comer's credibility is nowhere to be found. Even MAGA Rep. Matt Gaetz called Comer's performance "failure theater."¹⁹

James Comer Admitted His Investigation Is All About Politics and Revenge

Comer and House Republicans also have a habit of saying the quiet part out loud. Like in May, when Comer suggested his probe was responsible for former President Trump being ahead of

⁷ MSNBC, [4/6/23](#); NBC News, [9/7/23](#)

⁸ New York Times, [9/13/23](#)

⁹ Daily Beast, [2/28/23](#)

¹⁰ Washington Post, [7/19/23](#)

¹¹ New Republic, [7/20/23](#)

¹² NBC News, [8/31/23](#)

¹³ The Hill, [5/16/23](#); Twitter, House Oversight Committee Democrats, [9/8/23](#)

¹⁴ Daily Beast, [5/14/23](#)

¹⁵ Daily Beast, [7/10/23](#)

¹⁶ The Independent, [7/12/23](#)

¹⁷ Truth Be Told with Mike and Kelly Johnson, [8/31/23](#)

¹⁸ The Hill, [8/22/23](#)

¹⁹ The Messenger, [9/24/23](#); Mediaite, [10/3/23](#)

President Biden in some polls²⁰, then tried to claim he'd never suggested such a thing²¹. Even earlier in April, Comer admitted his investigation was about revenge when he claimed county attorneys in Kentucky and Tennessee called him and asked how they could investigate President Biden as a response to Trump's indictment in New York²². Then, NBC News reported on how Comer's "investigation" is boosting his national profile, which is especially evident on Fox News. Since the beginning of 2023, Comer has appeared on Fox News more than 200 times, the most of any Member of Congress this year.²³ Comer has even admitted he decided against running for Kentucky Governor again so he could seek glory in a high-profile DC committee assignment.²⁴ House Republicans know this is political theater; they've told us themselves.

James Comer Has No Evidence For His Allegations Against President Biden – And He Knows It

Time and time again, James Comer has claimed his investigation is about Joe Biden, but with every new, big announcement, Comer has presented no proof of wrongdoing by the president²⁵. Comer has even admitted more than once that he has no proof, only innuendo²⁶. Comer's own witnesses have debunked Republican conspiracy theories about President Biden,²⁷ which Comer would know except he didn't bother to show up to the interview with his star witness and then he lied about his attendance²⁸. It's not the first time Comer and his staff have made false statements about the committee's interactions with witnesses. In September, a spokesperson for Oversight Committee Republicans told Fox News the committee "never interviewed" Eric Schwerin. Except, the committee had talked to Schwerin. Ranking Member Jamie Raskin said that while Schwerin's interview was not transcribed, he "spent hours" answering questions from Republican and Democratic Staff.²⁹

Further, in testimony to Congress, David Weiss and multiple witnesses have disputed allegations made by an IRS whistleblower about the Hunter Biden investigation. In November, Weiss told Congress that he was never blocked or otherwise prevented from pursuing charges or taking necessary steps by others in the Justice Department.³⁰ Two U.S. attorneys testified to Congress disputing allegations that they blocked David Weiss from pursuing charges in their districts. They both said that while they declined to formally partner with Weiss on the case, they believed he had full authority to do what he wanted in their districts and even offered Weiss logistical support should he chose to pursue charges.³¹ Multiple witnesses from the FBI and IRS told Congress they did not think the Hunter Biden investigation had been politicized. They also disputed an IRS whistleblower's allegations that, during an October 2022 meeting, Weiss said he

²⁰ Washington Post, [5/22/23](#)

²¹ Daily Beast, [5/24/23](#)

²² MSNBC, [4/6/23](#)

²³ Mediaite, [10/20/23](#)

²⁴ NBC News, [8/31/23](#)

²⁵ New York Times, [5/10/23](#); Huffington Post, [5/11/23](#); Washington Post, Philip Bump, [8/9/23](#); USA Today, [8/9/23](#);

²⁶ Mediaite, [4/18/23](#); Verdict with Ted Cruz, [7/20/23](#); The Independent, [8/2/23](#); Twitter, Ben Siegel, [9/18/23](#)

²⁷ NBC News, [8/3/23](#); New York Times, [8/4/23](#); Reuters, [8/14/23](#)

²⁸ Daily Beast, [8/2/23](#); The Independent, [8/3/23](#); Daily Beast, [8/9/23](#)

²⁹ Huffington Post, [9/19/23](#)

³⁰ CNN, [11/7/23](#)

³¹ CNN, [10/13/23](#); Associated Press, [10/25/23](#)

was not the deciding person on whether to file charges in the case – all three said they did not remember Weiss saying that. They also said they did not recall Weiss bringing up any discussion of special counsel authority during the meeting.³²

What Comer seems most interested in doing is recycling debunked conspiracy theories leftover by former Trump advisor Rudy Giuliani³³. House Republicans have made these conspiracy theories the heart of their baseless inquiry even though “almost every element” of their claim is untrue.³⁴ This was especially evident when Comer dramatically threatened to hold FBI Director Christopher Wray in contempt of Congress,³⁵ just because he could, over a form that Comer admitted to having already seen that contained unverified tips³⁶. Then, Senator Chuck Grassley admitted the truth: Republicans did not care if the allegations in the form were true or not, they just wanted to publicize them³⁷. The whole embarrassing saga ended with Comer caving on his contempt threat. To top it all off, three of the Ukrainian associates who helped Rudy Giuliani with his conspiracy fueled dumpster dive were recently accused, in Ukraine, of assisting a Russian effort to interfere in the 2020 U.S. presidential election.³⁸

House Republicans have shown no evidence of wrongdoing by President Biden and when confronted with the facts Comer shows his true colors and resorts to personal attacks against a White House staffer³⁹.

James Comer Cherry Picks Information And Then Exaggerates Or Misrepresents His “Findings” To Cover For The Fact That He Is Wasting Time And Taxpayer Money

Even Comer seems to have acknowledged that his “investigation” is in shambles. After his first public hearing Comer said he wasn’t sure about holding more impeachment inquiry hearings and that he thought “you can do more with” closed-door depositions.⁴⁰ Twice now, first with David Weiss and then with Hunter Biden, House Republicans have insisted on conducting closed-door interviews even when the interviewees offered to testify in public hearings.⁴¹ Comer has insisted that Hunter Biden testify behind closed doors even though Comer earlier said that the people he called to testify could choose to speak either in public or private.⁴² When testimony is private though it allows House Republicans to cherry-pick what gets released publicly.

All of Comer’s bluster, innuendo, and embarrassing events has earned him three “Pinocchio’s” from the Washington Post fact checker who knocked Comer for making hyperbolic claims about his investigation on social media and conservative TV despite hedging claims in official

³² The Independent, [7/19/23](#); Reuters, [8/14/23](#); New York Times, [9/15/23](#); CNN, [9/19/23](#)

³³ Talking Points Memo, [6/6/23](#); Huffington Post, [7/11/23](#); Axios, [7/18/23](#)

³⁴ CNN, [12/4/23](#)

³⁵ Washington Post, Philip Bump, [6/1/23](#); Daily Caller, [6/1/23](#)

³⁶ FBI Letter to House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer, [5/10/23](#); Axios, [5/3/23](#); Politico, [5/24/23](#); CNN, [6/2/23](#); NBC News, [6/5/23](#); Washington Post, [6/7/23](#)

³⁷ New Republic, [6/1/23](#); Business Insider, [7/20/23](#); Associated Press, [7/22/23](#); The Hill, [7/25/23](#)

³⁸ CNN, [11/6/23](#)

³⁹ Washington Free Beacon, [3/3/23](#); Mediaite, [8/10/23](#)

⁴⁰ The Messenger, [10/27/23](#)

⁴¹ Huffington Post, [11/8/23](#); USA Today, [11/28/23](#)

⁴² Daily Beast, [11/29/23](#)

reports.⁴³ Comer then earned four “Pinocchio’s” from the same fact checker for making “nonsensical” and misleading claims about a 2016 email from President Biden to his son.⁴⁴

The fact checker has also dinged Comer for publishing highly partisan memos that ignore or downplay contrary information. A fact House Oversight Committee Democrats have frequently pointed out. Comer has been caught misrepresenting bank records in the committee’s possession more than once. Most recently, Comer falsely claimed that car payment reimbursements from Hunter Biden to his father, which had previously been reported, were evidence President Biden participated in his family’s business deals.⁴⁵ He repeatedly claimed that a \$200,000 loan repayment from James Biden to Joe Biden was not a loan repayment even though the check image he shared says “loan repayment” in the memo line.⁴⁶ He did this even though the committee also reportedly has records showing that Joe Biden sent his brother \$200,000 a little over a month earlier.⁴⁷ Even the conservative Washington Examiner reported that records in Comer’s possession showed the opposite of his claims.⁴⁸ He’s also suggested that Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) are “major bank violations” that showed evidence of lawbreaking,⁴⁹ when SARs are “merely tips” that need to be vetted and do not constitute evidence of wrongdoing on their own.⁵⁰

House Oversight Committee Ranking Member Jamie Raskin previously accused Comer of being on a “lost-in-the wilderness fishing expedition.”⁵¹ In April, Raskin accused Comer of misrepresenting the committee’s progress to Americans and deliberately stonewalling committee Democrats in the investigative process.⁵² Raskin previously accused Comer of withholding a transcript of an interview the committee did with an FBI supervisory agent that “directly undermined” the Republican narrative of political interference with Weiss’ investigation.⁵³ Raskin accused Comer of timing the release of committee interview transcripts to distract from former President Trump’s indictments.⁵⁴ Oversight Committee Democrats also caught Comer lying when he claimed the National Archives was refusing to turn over information to the committee.⁵⁵ Comer says bank records don’t lie, but he certainly does.

2024 GOP Presidential Candidates Will Likely Use The House GOP Investigation To Score Partisan Political Points, But They Should Address Their Own Abuses Of Power Instead

- First, we have newcomer Vivek Ramaswamy, who has never held public office, but is no stranger to scandal. A new profile reported that two of his former employees filed

⁴³ Washington Post, Fact Checker, [8/17/23](#)

⁴⁴ Washington Post, Fact Checker, [9/6/23](#)

⁴⁵ Washington Post, [12/4/23](#)

⁴⁶ The Messenger, [10/26/23](#)

⁴⁷ Huffington Post, [10/23/23](#); Factcheck.org, [10/26/23](#)

⁴⁸ Washington Examiner, [11/8/23](#)

⁴⁹ U.S. House Republican Leadership Stakeout, [9/13/23](#)

⁵⁰ Washington Post, Fact Checker, [10/19/22](#); CNN [9/13/23](#)

⁵¹ Huffington Post, [8/16/23](#)

⁵² Washington Post, [4/6/23](#); Axios, [4/6/23](#)

⁵³ Axios, [7/28/23](#)

⁵⁴ Huffington Post, [8/16/23](#)

⁵⁵ Twitter, House Oversight Committee Democrats, [9/8/23](#)

separate lawsuits alleging he asked them to violate securities laws by using unapproved marketing materials and pitching investors on his company's ETF before they were legally able to. One former employee also alleged that executives at Ramaswamy's company did nothing to investigate sexual harassment allegations.⁵⁶ Ramaswamy once worked for a hedge fund firm that made a large investment in a biotech company run by convicted fraudster and "pharma bro" Martin Shkreli. Ramaswamy had previously called Shkreli "brilliant" and questioned why the Justice Department went after him so aggressively⁵⁷. Ramaswamy also reportedly hired a Wikipedia editor to scrub his page before he announced his presidential campaign⁵⁸.

- Scandals run deep in Ron DeSantis' tenure as governor of Florida. From his abuse of government to take advantage of vulnerable migrants⁵⁹, to changing state law so he can hold on to power while running for president⁶⁰, DeSantis frequently weaponizes government for his own political benefit⁶¹. One thing DeSantis should have to address though is his time as a legal advisor at Guantanamo Bay, during which he reportedly advised an officer that they could force-feed detainees, something that is considered torture by the international community⁶².
- If we're talking about corruption, we have to mention Chris Christie. His tenure as governor was full of scandals⁶³, so much so that when Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign vetted him as a potential vice-presidential nominee, they concluded his background was "littered with potential landmines."⁶⁴ Then there was Bridgewater and Beachgate⁶⁵, questions over his use of Hurricane Sandy relief funds⁶⁶, using a state police helicopter to travel to his son's baseball game⁶⁷. We could go on and on.
- We must move on to Nikki Haley though, who abruptly resigned as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations after an ethics watchdog requested that the State Department investigate her acceptance of seven free private jet flights from three South Carolina businessmen – flights she likely grossly undervalued. Those businessmen had also previously donated about \$40,000 to Haley's gubernatorial campaign⁶⁸.

It's Been Almost One Year And James Comer Failed To Put Up, Now It's Time To Shut Up

⁵⁶ Business Insider, [9/15/23](#)

⁵⁷ Politico, [5/23/23](#)

⁵⁸ Mediaite, [5/3/23](#)

⁵⁹ Bloomberg, [9/20/22](#)

⁶⁰ Business Insider, [5/24/23](#)

⁶¹ Washington Post, [8/14/23](#)

⁶² Miami Herald, [3/7/23](#); Washington Post, [3/19/23](#); The Guardian, [4/28/23](#)

⁶³ Politico, [10/27/16](#); NPR, [10/28/16](#); Business Insider, [7/5/17](#); The Week, [6/4/23](#)

⁶⁴ Vox, [5/14/15](#)

⁶⁵ New York Times, [7/3/17](#)

⁶⁶ CNN, [1/13/14](#); Politico, [1/15/14](#)

⁶⁷ Politico, [1/15/14](#); The Week, [6/4/23](#)

⁶⁸ Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Press Release, [10/8/18](#); Business Insider, [10/9/18](#); New York Times, [10/9/18](#); Washington Post, [10/10/18](#)

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Facts First is a bipartisan organization focused on ensuring that our national discourse is grounded in facts and honest debate. Facts First USA will keep the focus on facts in the face of abuse of government oversight being used to settle partisan scores. Learn more at FactsFirstUSA.org