



NANCY PELOSI  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

FROM SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE NANCY PELOSI  
SPEAKER.GOV

## TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OBSTRUCTION: UNPRECEDENTED, UNWARRANTED, UNCONSTITUTIONAL

Last week, President Trump declared he would “fight all the subpoenas” – taking the unprecedented step of issuing a blanket policy of refusing to respect Congress’ constitutional authority to conduct oversight of the Executive to ensure Washington is working for the people. By stonewalling Congress, Trump is refusing to allow the American people to make an independent judgment about his Administration’s policies and his personal conduct in office.

President Trump’s stonewalling has metastasized from refusing to release his tax returns or divest his assets to the Trump Administration now refusing to cooperate on every level of government, from sabotaging Americans’ health care to protecting our elections.

### *The Trump Administration is Defying Congress’s Authority to Obtain Information on Issues That Matter in the Lives of the American People*

**Blanket, Unprecedented Stonewalling** – The President has made clear that he will broadly defy requests for information from Capitol Hill. Trump’s obstruction extends to Democrats’ inquiries on issues that address the challenges facing American families from the Administration’s efforts to sabotage Americans’ health care to its cruel family separation policy. The Trump Administration has denied or delayed the release of information sought by Democratic committees on dozens of occasions, and half a dozen Administration officials have refused to appear before House panels.

- Sabotaging Americans’ Health Care: DoJ and HHS refuse to respond to Congressional inquiries on their decision to ask the courts to strike down the preexisting conditions benefits of the ACA and the entire law.
- Cruel Family Separation Policy: The Secretary of HHS has repeatedly [refused to testify](#) before Congress about the Administration’s child separation policy to provide accountability on the program. The White House has also refused to allow Stephen Miller to testify regarding the Administration’s other cruel and reckless immigration policies.
- Unlawful Census Question: The Justice Department [is refusing to comply](#) with a subpoena for testimony on the 2020 Census, which has critical implications for the results of elections and for the allocation of federal funding.
- Improper Lobbying on Veterans’ Policy: The Administration is stonewalling the [Veterans’ Affairs Committee’s investigation](#) into allegations that Mar-a-Lago club members “asserted influence over” policy at the Department of Veteran’s Affairs.
- Undermining National Security: Under the Trump Administration, the FBI and other intelligence agencies stopped the decade-long practice of providing monthly classified threats briefings to the Homeland Security Committee, fundamentally damaging Congress’s ability to understand and counter threats against the country.

## ***What is President Trump Hiding?***

President Trump is taking extraordinary and unprecedented measures to conceal information about himself and to cover-up his Administration's dangerous and secretive activities from the public. This is part of a massive, unprecedented and growing pattern of obstruction.

- Lying to Congress, Lying to the Special Counsel, Lying to the American People: The Mueller report painted a picture of a President whose behavior is immoral, unethical, corrupt and unpatriotic. There was an extensive and troubling pattern of calculated efforts by President Trump to interfere with and obstruct the Special Counsel's investigation, and subsequent repeated attempts to cover it up through lies.
- Trump Concealing Truth from the Public: The President is ordering White House and federal officials to defy Congressional subpoenas even those issued on a bipartisan basis and stonewalling Congressional inquiries. He has gone so far as to demand that White House officials – and even interns – sign non-disclosure agreements to hide their activity from the public. The President's behavior has consequences for the country:
  - *Threatens National Security*: Trump announced that he will not allow current or former White House aides to testify before Congress – the former official who was in charge of security clearances was ordered to [defy a Congressional subpoena](#).
  - *Weakens the Integrity of Our Democracy*: Attorney General William Barr [ordered John Gore](#), Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, to defy a bipartisan subpoena to appear at a deposition related to the Administration's decision to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census.
  - *Abuse of Power*: The White House is preventing the American people from hearing the truth about the President's attempts to obstruct justice by threatening to [prevent Don McGahn, former White House Counsel, from testifying](#) before Congress.
  - *Violates 30 years of Presidential Precedent*: U.S. tax code Section 6103 provides Congress the legal authority to request tax returns, yet Trump's Treasury Department is refusing to provide the Ways and Means Committee the President's tax returns. The law is explicit: "the Secretary **shall** furnish such committee with any return or return information..." requested by the Chairman of the Committee. To date, no requests under 6103 have been denied.
- Trump Takes Desperate Legal Action to Suppress the Truth: Trump and his personal businesses took the extraordinary step of [suing](#) a Congressional Chairman and Mazars, the accounting firm that manages Trump Organization finances, to prevent the release of his financial records pursuant to a subpoena. His lawyers have made it clear they will use every legal option to "[quash](#)" multiple other oversight efforts.

## ***The American People Deserve Answers, Trump's Defiance Stands in the Way***

**Consequences of Trump's Obstruction** – The Constitution enshrines Congress as a co-equal branch, with the authority to conduct oversight of the Executive branch to ensure that government works for the people and that the American people get the answers they deserve. The President's disdain for rule of law and the Republicans' complicity in his abuses of power are doing lasting damage to American democracy.

- The American People Deserve the Truth: The President was elected to serve the people, not rule behind closed doors. Transparency is critical to a healthy democracy and every American should be alarmed by the President's behavior.

- Sabotaging Checks & Balances: Congress is a co-equal branch of government, intended to serve as a check on executive power and prevent the rise of a tyrant. Preventing Congress from exercising any oversight as the President intends fundamentally impairs the balance of power.
- Ensuring that Government Works For the People: Democrats have the constitutional obligation to conduct oversight of the Executive branch to ensure that government functions properly, efficiently and effectively to address the needs of all Americans and works For the People.

***Congressional Republicans Demanded Transparency to Benefit Trump's Political Interests, Reverse Course in the Face of Trump's Unprecedented Stonewalling and Wrongdoing***

**Republican Hypocrisy** – When it suited their partisan purposes, House Republicans used every ounce of their oversight power to demand the release of sensitive documents on ongoing and closed investigations into the President's political enemies, but now their silence in the face of Trump's obstruction and defiance is deafening.

- Shaking Down of Department of Justice for the Public Release of Highly Sensitive Materials: Republicans, with the backing of the President, pushed the DoJ for the past two years to turn over highly-classified and compartmented material as part of their effort to validate Trump's "deep state coup" talking points.
- Threatening Impeachment of DoJ Officials: When DoJ refused to release hundreds more documents to House Republicans, in violation of the Department's long-standing policy, they threatened to impeach Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein.
- Republicans Were in Favor of Transparency Before They Were Against It:
  - Chuck Grassley, GOP Senate Chairman: "The Executive branch must recognize that it has an ongoing obligation to respond to Congressional inquiries in a timely and reasonable manner."
  - Jim Jordan, GOP Ranking Member of the House Oversight Committee: "The only remedy we have to get to the truth is to use every tool at our disposal" and "the only route to the truth is through the House of Representatives."
  - Michael McCaul, GOP Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee: "I call on the Administration to immediately comply with the requirements of the law, and to provide Congress with the information required"