



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 27, 2012

AG Holder Could Be Jailed for Ongoing Fast & Furious Cover-up

The Justice Department missed another deadline earlier this month to hand over key information to congressional investigators, asking — yet again — for more time to consider the requests and produce the documents. The media barely noticed. But after a year of stonewalling and cover-ups, House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) has had just about enough.



In a letter dated February 14, Rep. Issa warned Holder (above) that failure to comply with a congressional subpoena is a violation of federal law. About two thirds of the document categories sought by investigators have been unlawfully withheld without any proper justification, he said, noting that much of what has been handed over was so heavily redacted as to be rendered useless.

As such, the letter ordered the nation's top law enforcement officer to appoint a DOJ representative who will "serve as the conduit for dealing with the contempt proceedings, should the Department continue to ignore the Committee's subpoena." If convicted, Holder could face jail time and hefty fines.

"The Justice Department's request for additional time has, unfortunately, not been followed by efforts to bridge the significant differences between its legal obligation to Congress and the reality of its stonewalling," Chairman Issa said in a [statement](#) blasting the DOJ. The Committee declined Holder's request for more time.

Rep. Issa emphasized that, in light of the ongoing DOJ cover-up, Congress had no choice but to take action. "If the Justice Department cannot commit to providing, at a minimum, a detailed description of documents it is withholding, and the legal basis for doing so, then the Committee has no other option than to move forward with the contempt process against Attorney General Holder," he said in the statement.

Holder and other top officials have already been caught [repeatedly lying to Congress under oath](#) — itself a criminal offense. They were originally being investigated for [trafficking thousands of high-powered firearms to Mexican drug cartels](#). Some of those weapons were later linked to murders of federal officers including Border Patrol agent Brian Terry, as well as the deaths of hundreds of Mexican citizens.

Now, however, Congress has expanded its probe to include the DOJ's efforts to interfere with the congressional investigation, too, Rep. Issa said in the letter. "Virtually all congressional requests



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regarding Fast and Furious have gone unanswered and even unacknowledged,” Issa noted. “Complying with the committee’s subpoena is not optional. Indeed, the failure to produce documents pursuant to a congressional subpoena is a violation of federal law.”

In the letter, Rep. Issa said Congress was seeking to find answers to a broad array of questions. Did the DOJ retaliate against whistleblowers who exposed the deadly operation? Why have top officials continued to lie? Are senior Obama administration officials responsible for the criminal schemes going to be held accountable?

Rep. Issa also demanded to know what information Patrick Cunningham, the chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Arizona, might have uncovered. Cunningham recently [asserted his Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination](#) to avoid testifying and complying with another subpoena.

Another top DOJ official, Deputy Assistant Attorney General Jason Weinstein, testified that Cunningham had provided false information. So, if the allegation is true, Rep. Issa asked whether Cunningham was being criminally investigated for obstruction of the congressional investigation.

“The Department appears to be more concerned with protecting its image through spin control than actually cooperating with Congress,” Issa stated in the letter. “Nearly four months have passed since I authorized your subpoena. During that time, the Department’s progress has been unacceptably slow.”

Beyond the gun trafficking operation and the ensuing violence — which official documents later [revealed were being used](#) by the Obama administration to push for more infringements on the right to bear arms — is another, almost certainly related issue. And again, DOJ is stonewalling in the critical congressional inquiry.

According to Issa’s most recent letter, the Committee is concerned that its investigation into [U.S. government money-laundering operations for drug cartels](#) is being ignored, too. Despite the fact that the probe was initiated more than two months ago — shortly after the Drug Enforcement Administration’s drug-money laundering schemes were exposed in the *New York Times* — DOJ has failed to even schedule briefings with congressional investigators.

But despite Holder’s refusal to cooperate, it does not appear that the pressure is going to ease any time soon. The growing scandals and the resulting cover-ups have led to over 100 members of Congress calling on Holder to step down.

Instead of submitting his resignation or even just cooperating with investigators, the Attorney General has exhibited what critics called a defiant and petulant attitude throughout the investigation. Almost incredibly, Holder has repeatedly lashed out at Congress for investigating Fast and Furious — an operation virtually everyone acknowledges was wrong and must be punished. The Attorney General has even attacked the media for daring to report on the scandal and the ensuing uproar.

But Rep. Issa did note that the behavior was unacceptable. “The attitude with respect to a legitimate congressional inquiry, which seems to have permeated the Department’s ranks, is deeply disappointing,” Issa wrote in the letter, criticizing Holder’s wildly inappropriate outbursts attempting to impugn the motives of investigators.

“Had the department demonstrated willingness to cooperate with this investigation from the outset — instead of attempting to cover up its own internal mismanagement — this investigation likely would have concluded well before the end of 2011,” Issa noted, responding to Holder’s sinister suggestion that



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politics and the election year played a role in the probe.

Sources [cited](#) earlier this month by Mike Vanderboegh, a gun-rights activist and blogger whose work was instrumental in exposing the federal gun trafficking scandal, stated that House Speaker John Boehner planned to make a deal with the Obama administration. The alleged agreement would have reportedly allowed a few lower-ranking DOJ figures to take the fall while top officials got away scot-free — essentially allowing everyone to save face.

The news sparked an instant [public outcry](#). A spokesman for Rep. Boehner, however, disputed the claims. He told *The New American* that the reports were false and that the Speaker fully supported Rep. Issa and the Fast and Furious investigation.

Families of the Fast and Furious victims are [charging ahead](#), too. And Rep. Issa and even Democrats on the Oversight Committee seem dedicated to finding out what exactly was going on so responsible officials can be held accountable for the blood-drenched fiasco.

“The committee is determined to know what happened in Operation Fast and Furious and how the Justice Department responded when it was publicly confronted with evidence of reckless conduct after Agent Terry’s death,” Rep. Issa said. “I want to make it clear that Congress will not give up until ... accountability has been achieved.”

Numerous law-enforcement experts have [called](#) for a [special prosecutor](#) to [investigate and prosecute](#) federal officials involved in Fast and Furious. The state of Arizona, meanwhile, is conducting its own independent investigation into the deadly scheme.

Whether those responsible for the operation will actually be held accountable for their criminal actions remains to be seen — but as the body count continues to rise, the outcry is still growing as well. And the victims’ families and advocates for honest government have vowed to keep the pressure on until justice is finally served.

Photo of Attorney General Eric Holder: AP Images

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