



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 13, 2012

AG Wants Compromise after Contempt Vote Scheduled

Attorney General Eric Holder is finding himself in an increasingly precarious position as House Republicans have scheduled a [vote](#) to hold him in [contempt](#) of Congress over his failure to comply with the Fast and Furious investigation. Now Holder is attempting to work out a deal in which he releases documents related to the investigation in the hopes that it may stop the congressional process.



The 2009 and 2010 Fast and Furious program, run by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, involved the release of 2,000 guns in the hopes that the guns could be traced to Mexican cartels. In the process, however, a number of guns went missing, while others turned up at a number of crime scenes, including the murder of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.

Congress has been investigating the Fast and Furious operation for well over a year, and have grown infuriated with Holder's refusal to adequately comply with the investigation. *The New York Post* explains, "Holder has provided 7,600 documents while the [House Government and Oversight] Committee has issued subpoenas asking for tens of thousands more over a botched federal program that resulted in guns getting into the hands of Mexican criminals."

Holder has defended his refusal to hand over documents for the congressional investigation by asserting that it would violate the "separation of powers."

Congress did receive thousands of documents from the DOJ, many of which were irrelevant to the investigation, and others which were redacted. As noted by *The New American's* Alex Newman, the DOJ supplied less than 10 percent of the documents that were requested for the investigation.

"It appears as though we're being stonewalled and there's something that's being hidden," [said](#) Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) during the hearing. "You're hiding behind something here that will not stand up, so you ought to give us the documents." Holder appeared unmoved and responded to Representatives in what critics [described as](#) a "petulant, angry, and defiant" manner.

Rep. Darrell Issa, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, grew frustrated with Holder's unwillingness to comply and announced on Monday that his panel would hold a contempt vote on June 20. Issa's spokesman stated that Issa would not negotiate until the requested documents have been turned over to Congress.

"Discussion about Fast and Furious have been ongoing for nearly a year and a half," Issa's spokesman, Frederick Hill, said.

"The Justice Department, however, did not express interest in reaching a workable solution until after the committee announced it had obtained detailed wiretap applications from a source and scheduled a vote on contempt."

[Testifying](#) before the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday, however, Holder's tune changed a bit. Holder stated that he is willing to turn over the records that the House Government and Oversight Committee has been requesting.



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Holder said, "I am prepared to make compromises with regard to the documents that can be made available."

"I want to make sure it is very clear that I'm offering — I myself — to sit down with the [House] speaker, the chairman, with you and work our way through this in an attempt to avoid a constitutional crisis and come up with ways, creative ways, in which to make these materials available," Holder said.

Republicans have said that they would be willing to negotiate with Holder if he in fact turned over the requested documents. In response to Holder's announcement, Issa wrote, "Let me be clear — if the Department of Justice submits a serious proposal for how it intends to alter its refusal to produce critical documents subpoenaed by the Committee, I am ready and willing to meet to discuss your proposal."

Just what sort of negotiations would result from Holder's compliance remains to be seen. Republican lawmakers are insisting, however, that Holder submit all 80,000 requested documents.

Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa said, "If [Holder's] willing to produce those documents in the next 10 days, I would say yes, it has avoided the confrontation that he's created."

When asked what concessions would be made in the event that Holder turns over all 80,000 documents, Grassley said he would be comfortable accepting "restrictions" on the use of those documents.

Tuesday's Senate hearing grew quite heated, with members of the Senate once again asking Holder to turn in his resignation.

Senator John Cornyn of Texas said, "I've afraid we've come to an impasse," adding that Holder has "violated the public trust."

"Americans deserve an attorney general that will be honest with them, they deserve an attorney general who will uphold the basic standards of political independence and accountability. You've proven time and time again, sadly, that you're unwilling to do so," he said.

"With regret, you've left me with no choice but to join those who call for you to resign your office," declared Cornyn.

"I don't have any intention of resigning," Holder fired back.

At a press conference on Monday, White House Press Secretary Jay Carney reiterated the White House's usual defense of Attorney General Holder, and read from a statement on the White House's position on the contempt hearing.

"The White House view — as you know — fighting criminal activity along the Southwest border, including the illegal trafficking of guns to Mexico, remains a priority of this administration," Carney said. "The attorney general has also made clear that he takes the allegations that have been raised very seriously, and that is why he asked the Inspector General to investigate the matter. It is also why you see the Department cooperating with congressional investigators, including producing 7,600 pages of documents, and including testimony at hours and hours of congressional hearings."

According to Holder, Republicans are playing politics and are guilty of "breathing" inaccuracies.

Photo: Attorney General Eric Holder appears before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, June 12, 2012.: AP Images



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