



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 13, 2020

Democrats Call for Investigation Into Trump's Alleged Interference in Roger Stone Sentencing

With time on their hands now that the faux Trump investigation has fizzled. House Democrats now have an opportunity to [open a new investigation](#) into the president's alleged misbehaviors.

During Donald Trump's presidential campaign, Roger Stone created "back-channel" communications with WikiLeaks in order to learn more about the stolen e-mails that were damaging to Hillary Clinton's campaign. When the Mueller investigation uncovered Stone's efforts, it turned its focus on him. In November Stone was convicted on seven counts, including witness tampering and lying to the investigators.

He is due to be sentenced next week.

The Department of Justice prosecutors had recommended that Stone be imprisoned for seven to nine years for his crimes. Stone's defense attorneys argued that the guideline for first-time offenders is 15 to 21 months.

When the president learned of the matter, he tweeted late Monday night: "This is a horrible and very unfair situation. The real crimes were on the other side, as nothing happens to them. Cannot allow this miscarriage of justice!"

The next day a spokesman for the Department of Justice said the department was overriding the recommendations of the prosecuting attorneys, saying that they "did not accurately reflect the Department of Justice's position on what would be a reasonable sentence" and that the initial recommendation "would not be appropriate or serve the interests of justice in this case."

This was all that the Democrats needed to call for another investigation of the president. It didn't matter that the spokesman said the decision to override had been made long before the president tweeted his disapproval. It didn't matter that others who had been investigated and convicted of various crimes stemming from the Mueller investigation received sentences of just a few weeks in prison for lying to investigators or other crimes. It didn't matter that a DOJ official, speaking off the record to *USA Today*, characterized the initial recommendation as "extreme, excessive and disproportionate," adding that they "differed" from what the prosecutors had previously told the department they were going to recommend.

It just didn't matter. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tweeted: "By tweet [the president] engaged in political interference in the sentencing of Roger Stone. It is outrageous that DOJ has deeply damaged the rule of law by withdrawing its recommendation. Stepping down of prosecutors should be commended & actions of the DOJ should be investigated."





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Predictably, other Democrats jumped on board. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) immediately asked the Justice Department's inspector general to investigate just "how and why" those recommendations "were countermanded" and which officials from the department and the White House were involved in the decision. Wrote Schumer: "This situation has all the indicia of improper political interference in a criminal prosecution", adding:

The American people must have confidence that justice in this country is dispensed impartially. That confidence cannot be sustained if the president or his political appointees are permitted to interfere in prosecution and sentencing recommendations in order to protect their friends and associates.

Representative Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, denounced the DOJ's decision to override the initial recommendations, declaring that his committee — having ended its investigation of the president last month — will now have the time to "get to the bottom of this."

Representative Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee — also free now to turn its attention to the next investigation — said that the Justice Department is sending "an unmistakable message" that it has now joined the president in protecting those who lie to Congress in order to protect him.

Two legal analysts for NBC/MSNBC, Mimi Rooah and Glenn Kirschner, have already declared the president guilty: "This is about [Trump's] attorney general and [Trump's] political appointees reversing decisions of career prosecutors without cause.... There can be little doubt that this dramatic turnabout in the prosecution's sentencing recommendation was the product of political meddling.... The fact that a presidential tweet can result in a reduced sentence is a sign that the criminal justice system is being corroded from the inside out. It is a move that smacks of cronyism, favoritism and exploitation."

It doesn't matter that the decision to override was made long before the president knew about it or that a U.S. president is allowed to even pardon altogether the crimes of those he feels were wrongly convicted. The Democrats and their sycophants in the press see only what they want to see: another opportunity to investigate the president.

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