



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on May 15, 2022

Jan. 6 Panel Threatens Subpoenaed GOP Lawmakers With Criminal Contempt

The Democrat-led congressional panel probing the January 6, 2021 protest at the U.S. Capitol is leaving open all options for enforcement — including [criminal contempt](#) — for Republican lawmakers who do not cooperate with the probe.

The Jan. 6 select committee has already held two members of the Trump administration, former advisor Stephen Bannon and former chief of staff Mark Meadows, in criminal contempt for failure to cooperate with the panel's formal summons to testify.

A day after the committee issued subpoenas for five sitting House Republicans, including Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), leading members of the committee said those GOP members of Congress would not receive special immunity simply because they are elected representatives.

"Members of Congress are citizens of the United States, so it would be the same options that are available to us generally," committee member Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) said Friday regarding the consequences of noncompliance.

Raskin swept away any doubts about whether criminal contempt is on the table for members of Congress. He added that lawmakers are open to even greater disciplinary measures than anyone else because they are subject to House ethics rules.

"We have all of the options that would be available to us, or someone like Steve Bannon or Mark Meadows," he said, "and then additional options because they're members of Congress."

Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.), who chairs the select committee, said he still hopes the subpoenaed Republicans will change their minds and cooperate with the investigation. But, as did Raskin, he asserted the panel will not shy away from using enforcement tools in the case of noncooperation.

"There are options. Obviously, we could make a referral to Ethics," Thompson said, referring to the House Ethics Committee. "We'll discuss it. But look, all we're saying is these are members of Congress who've taken an oath."

The Hill reports:

Thompson, along with Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.), the select committee's vice chair, announced the subpoenas on Thursday following weeks of internal negotiations over the wisdom of targeting sitting members of Congress so aggressively. The move was an unprecedented step, one marking an extraordinary escalation in the wide-ranging probe into



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the Capitol attack of Jan. 6, 2021, when a violent mob stormed the building in a failed bid to overturn President Biden's election victory.

The subpoenas target five GOP lawmakers: Reps. [Kevin] McCarthy [Calif.], Jim Jordan (Ohio), Scott Perry (Pa.), Andy Biggs (Ariz.) and Mo Brooks (Ala.). All of them are close allies of former President Trump who have promoted the lie that Trump won the 2020 election. All of them also have unique insights into the former White House's effort to thwart Congress's certification of Biden's victory. And they've all refused to cooperate in the investigation voluntarily.

"There are some things that we found out that either need clarification on their part, or we're left with ... what our investigation has shown us," Thompson said. "They are an integral part of that investigation, as far as I'm concerned."

Republicans have blasted the Jan. 6 committee as a tool of political persecution wielded by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) to damage former President Donald Trump and the GOP.

"The border is in crisis, inflation is skyrocketing, crime is rampant, and Democrats are focused on fabricating their own facts to take down Republican leaders," Biggs said after the announcement of the subpoenas.

Although the subpoenaed Republicans have spoken out defiantly, they have not gone so far as to definitively state they would refuse to comply. Some of the lawmakers have said they haven't seen it, a claim Thompson challenges — saying he signed each one.

"My understanding is they were served," Thompson declared.

Republicans argue that the Democrats' actions will set a dangerous precedent by which the majority party can politically persecute the minority. Democrats counter that they are trying to uphold the "rule of law."

"The basic principle of our rule of law is that everybody owes his or her truthful testimony to the government when a crime has been committed, or you know, when they're subpoenaed," Raskin said. "That's not a complicated proposition."

The New American has frequently [reported](#) on [evidence](#) suggesting that the riot aspect of the Jan. 6 protest was a case of entrapment orchestrated by federal agents. The Democrat-led congressional panel, however, has stuck to the narrative that Jan. 6 was an insurrection led by Trump supporters.



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