



POLITICS

Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland testifies before contentious House Judiciary panel



Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland, shown at a news conference, testified Wednesday before a congressional oversight hearing about the Justice Department. (Patrick Semansky / Associated Press)



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WASHINGTON — Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland stressed his independence from the White House and Congress during a contentious hearing on Capitol Hill Wednesday.

“Our job is not to take orders from the president, from Congress, or from anyone else, about who or what to criminally investigate,” Garland said. “As the president himself has said, and I reaffirm here today: I am not the president’s lawyer. I will add that I am not Congress’ prosecutor. The Justice Department works for the American people.”

Garland appeared before the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday for what would normally be a routine oversight hearing, but is instead expected to serve as a forum for Republicans to attempt to bolster their new impeachment inquiry against President Biden. Republican lawmakers are set to air grievances about the charges brought against former President Trump and the ongoing special counsel investigation of the president’s son, Hunter Biden.

The committee, led by House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), said the hearing would “examine how the Justice Department has become politicized and weaponized under the leadership of Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland.”

Jordan started the hearing, which is expected to last several hours, by comparing the investigation of Hunter Biden by special counsel David Weiss to the two cases brought against Trump by special counsel Jack Smith.

“There’s one investigation protecting President Biden, there’s another one attacking President Trump,” Jordan said. “Justice Department’s got both sides of the equation covered.”

New York Rep. Jerrold Nadler, the highest-ranking Democrat on the committee, criticized Republicans for wasting time on fruitless investigations into Hunter Biden’s laptop rather than oversight of the Justice Department or passing spending bills.

“I implore the public to see through the sham. I have no doubt that you will hear a deluge of conspiracy theories and baseless accusations,” Nadler said.



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