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## Merrick Garland expected to forcefully rebuke congressional Republicans at Wednesday hearing

By Jeremy Herb and Hannah Rabinowitz, CNN  
Sep 20, 2023



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Republicans who have accused  
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“I am not the President’s lawyer,” Garland is expected to say, according to the excerpts obtained by CNN. “I will also add that I am not Congress’s prosecutor. The Justice Department works for the American people.”

He will say that the Justice Department’s job is “to pursue justice, without fear or favor” and not to “do what is politically convenient” or “take orders from the President, from Congress, or from anyone else about who or what to criminally investigate.”

Garland will deliver the statement as he faces vitriol from Republicans, who accuse him of failing to protect the department from politicization, and dissatisfaction from Democrats, who say the department has been too timid in going after former President Donald Trump.

Republicans on the panel are expected to grill Garland with questions about the investigation into President Joe Biden’s son Hunter Biden and his now-scuttled plea deal, as well as special counsel Jack Smith’s two indictments of Trump.

Against that backdrop, Garland will tell lawmakers that the department welcomes “public scrutiny, criticism, and legitimate oversight,” but “singling out individual career public servants who are just doing their jobs is dangerous – particularly at a time of increased threats to the safety of public servants and their families.”

“We will not be intimidated,” he’ll say. “We will do our jobs free from outside interference. And we will not back down from defending our democracy.”

# Preview of impeachment inquiry

Wednesday's hearing is likely to offer a preview of the House Republican's impeachment inquiry into the president – which will have its first hearing next week – and the partisan brawling that will accompany it.

The bulk of the allegations Speaker Kevin McCarthy said Republicans are investigating in the impeachment inquiry relate to Hunter Biden's business dealings, though Republicans have uncovered no evidence to date that the president personally received any money. The House Judiciary Committee has also been probing allegations from an IRS whistleblower that the Justice Department investigation into Hunter Biden was politically tainted.

Despite the partisan rancor of the political probes and the looming impeachment inquiry, Garland is unlikely to say much about either the Hunter Biden or Trump investigations because they are ongoing.

Rep. Jerry Nadler of New York, the panel's top Democrat, charged that Republicans had "poisoned" the committee's oversight role.

"They have wasted countless taxpayer dollars on baseless investigations into President Biden and his family, desperate to find evidence for impeachment and desperate to distract from the mounting legal peril facing Donald Trump," Nadler plans to say, according to a copy of his prepared remarks.

## Investigation into plea deal

House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan started an investigation into Hunter Biden's now-scuttled plea deal in July, and he's asked US Attorney-turned special counsel David Weiss, who negotiated the plea agreement with Hunter Biden, to testify before the committee in October.

The IRS whistleblower, Gary Shapley, has alleged that Weiss said at an October 2022 meeting that he was not the deciding authority on whether to bring charges against Hunter Biden. Weiss, however, denied he made that assertion, and others in the meeting have testified they don't remember him saying that, either.

Weiss' June plea agreement with Hunter Biden on tax and gun charges – in which the president's son agreed to plead guilty to federal tax charges and was likely to avoid jail time – fell apart in July amid scrutiny from a federal judge. Weiss subsequently requested special counsel status from Garland and indicted Hunter Biden on gun charges last week. Hunter Biden told the court Tuesday he will plead not guilty.

In addition, Jordan, a top Trump ally on Capitol Hill, has started an investigation into Smith's twin probes of the former president. Jordan has also proposed budget cuts to the FBI and DOJ over the investigations.

Several House Republicans – including McCarthy – have floated an impeachment of the attorney general, although those calls have quieted down as House Republicans have turned their impeachment lens on President Joe Biden himself.

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