

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary

Washington, DC 20515–6216
One Hundred Sixteenth Congress

February 12, 2020

The Honorable William Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

We are writing to confirm your agreement to testify before the House Judiciary Committee on March 31, 2020.

In the interest of transparency, we wish to be candid about one set of concerns we plan to address at the hearing. Since President Trump took office, we have repeatedly warned you and your predecessors that the misuse of our criminal justice system for political purposes is both dangerous to our democracy and unacceptable to the House Judiciary Committee.¹ Our Republican colleagues have warned the Department of the same.² We have been consistent—and bipartisan—in this message for years.

In your tenure as Attorney General, you have engaged in a pattern of conduct in legal matters relating to the President that raises significant concerns for this Committee.³ In the past

¹ See, e.g., Letter from Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr., et al., to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Mar. 17, 2017 (“Given the Trump Administration’s wide-ranging and ongoing conflict-of-interest troubles . . . we wonder if the wiser course of action would have been to allow these [U.S. attorneys] to stay on and act as an independent voice on matters that might directly impact President Trump.”); Letter from Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler to Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker, Nov. 13, 2018 (“I write with growing concern over President Trump’s repeated attacks on the integrity of the Department of Justice and the FBI—including, but not limited to, his decision to fire former Attorney General Jeff Sessions, his frequent statements about ongoing criminal investigations, and his personal attacks on senior Department officials.”); Letter from Chairman Jerrold Nadler, et al., to Attorney General William Barr, Mar. 25, 2019 (“Each of our committees is currently engaged in oversight activities that go directly to the President’s conduct, his open attempts to obstruct federal investigators . . . and other alleged instances of misconduct.”).

² See, e.g., Letter from Chairman Robert Goodlatte, et al., to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, July 27, 2017 (“We need to enable these agencies to perform their necessary and important law enforcement and intelligence functions fully unhindered by politics.”).

³ Carol E. Lee, Ken Dilanian, & Peter Alexander, *Barr takes control of legal matters of interest to Trump, including Stone sentencing*, NBC NEWS, Feb. 11, 2020.

week alone, you have taken steps that raise grave questions about your leadership of the Department of Justice. These include:

- The ongoing developments following the removal of U.S. Attorney Jessie Liu, who oversaw the prosecutions of President Trump’s deputy campaign chairman Rick Gates, President Trump’s former national security advisor Michael Flynn, and President Trump’s longtime political adviser Roger Stone.⁴
- The creation of a new “process” by which President Trump’s personal attorney Rudy Giuliani can feed the Department of Justice information, through you, about the President’s political rivals.⁵
- The decision to overrule your career prosecutors and significantly reduce the recommended sentence for Roger Stone, who has been convicted for lying under oath, at the apparent request of the President—a decision that led to all four prosecutors handling the case to withdraw from the proceedings in protest.⁶

These are not the only issues that our Committee intends to discuss with you when you appear, but they are enough to require our immediate attention.

We look forward to your testimony.

Sincerely,



⁴ Spencer S. Hsu, et al., *Trump withdraws Treasury nomination of former U.S. attorney for D.C. Jessie K. Liu after criticism of her oversight of Mueller prosecutions*, WASH. POST, Feb. 11, 2020.

⁵ Matt Zapotosky and Devlin Barrett, *Barr acknowledges Justice Dept. has created ‘intake process’ to vet Giuliani’s information on Bidens*, WASH. POST, Feb. 10, 2020.

⁶ Matt Zapotosky, *Prosecutors quit amid escalating Justice Dept. fight over Roger Stone’s prison term*, WASH. POST, Feb. 11, 2020.

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cc: Honorable Doug Collins, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary