The New York Times Give this article **POLITICS** Divided House Approves G.O.P. Inquiry Into 'Weaponization' of Government Œ The 118th U.S. Congress New House Rules House G.O.P. Investigations Looming Debt Ceiling Standoff A Pay Bump for Lawmakers? Divided House Approves G.O.P. Inquiry Into 'Weaponization' of Government Republicans pushed through a measure to create a powerful new committee to scrutinize what they have charged is an effort by the government to target and silence conservatives. Give this article Representative Jim Jordan, Republican of Ohio, will lead the Select Committee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government. Kenny Holston/The New York Times By Luke Broadwater and Catie Edmondson Jan. 10, 2023 Sign Up for On Politics, for Times subscribers only. A Times reader's guide to the political news in Washington and across the nation. <u>Try the</u> On Politics newsletter for 4 weeks. WASHINGTON — A divided House voted on Tuesday to launch a wide-ranging investigation into federal law enforcement and national security agencies, as Republicans promised to use their new power in Congress to scrutinize what they said was a concerted effort by the government to silence and punish conservatives at all levels, from protesters at school board meetings to former President Donald J. Trump. On a party-line vote of 221 to 211 with all Democrats opposed, the House approved the formation of the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, which is to be chaired by Representative Jim Jordan, Republican of Ohio, the incoming chairman of the Judiciary Committee and a staunch ally of Mr. Trump. Mr. Jordan, who was deeply involved in Mr. Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election, has for months been investigating what he says is a bias in federal law enforcement against conservatives. Now that Republicans have the majority, he plans to use his gavel and his subpoena power to escalate and expand that inquiry, including searching for evidence that federal workers have become politicized and demanding documents about ongoing criminal investigations. In a floor speech, Mr. Jordan said that his goal was not to target Democrats or law enforcement officers who have scrutinized Mr. Trump's behavior. He said his interest was merely in "protecting the First Amendment" at a time when he said the right was being unfairly targeted. The New York Times | All Access Five Times experiences. One Times subscription. \$6.25 \$1.50/week for your first year. Neoking **SUBSCRIBE NOW** "We don't want to go after anyone," he said. "We just want it to stop." Still, the panel has such broad reach that it appeared positioned to become a main instrument for Republicans to go after the Biden administration, potentially prompting showdowns over access to highly classified information and the details of criminal inquiries. The subcommittee will have open-ended jurisdiction to scrutinize any issue related to civil liberties or to examine how any agency of the federal government has collected, analyzed and used information about Americans. It also has authority to obtain some of the most sensitive secrets in the government, including information about covert actions that is usually the exclusive territory of the congressional intelligence committees. Dig deeper into the moment. **Special offer: Subscribe for \$1 a week for the first year.** While Republicans have traditionally styled themselves as the party of law and order, in recent years they have contended that law enforcement has treated Mr. Trump unfairly, citing the F.B.I. search of his Mar-a-Lago property for classified White House documents he did not return for more than a year after leaving office, as required by law. They have added other complaints to their ledger to investigate, including allegations that the federal government encouraged Twitter to discriminate against Republicans and the treatment of conservative or right-wing protesters at school board meetings and abortion clinics. **A Divided Congress** After a dayslong spectacle over the House speakership, the 118th Congress is underway, with Republicans controlling the House and Democrats holding the Senate. • A Wide-Ranging Inquiry: The House approved the <u>creation of a</u> committee to scrutinize what Republicans say is the "weaponization" of government against conservatives. Democrats and historians see dark historical parallels. • **Abortion:** As part of an anti-abortion rights effort, House Republicans pushed through a bill that could <u>subject doctors who perform abortions to</u> <u>criminal penalties</u>. • I.R.S. Funds: Republicans in the House voted to <u>cut funding for the</u> Internal Revenue Service, as conservative lawmakers try to kneecap President Biden's \$80 billion overhaul of the agency. • Nebraska: Former Gov. Pete Ricketts of Nebraska, a Republican, was appointed as the state's next senator, replacing Ben Sasse, who resigned to become president of the University of Florida. They say they have modeled the new subcommittee after the wellrespected Church Committee, referring to a 1970s investigation by Senator Frank Church, Democrat of Idaho, that uncovered decades of intelligence and civil liberties abuses, including the surveilling of civil rights groups. But Representative Jim McGovern, Democrat of Massachusetts, said the panel was more akin to the notorious House Un-American Activities Committee, which demonized Americans suspected of being sympathetic to communism. "I call it the McCarthy committee, and I'm not talking about Kevin; I'm talking about Joe," Mr. McGovern said, adding: "This committee is nothing more than a deranged ploy by the MAGA extremists who have hijacked the Republican Party and now want to use taxpayer money to push their far-right conspiracy nonsense." Representative Jerrold Nadler, Democrat of New York, echoed that sentiment, arguing the goal of the panel was to "enable the House Republicans to interfere with the free operation of businesses they do not like, to inhibit the fight against domestic terrorism and to settle political scores on behalf of Donald Trump." How Times reporters cover politics. We rely on our journalists to be independent observers. So while Times staff members may vote, they are not allowed to endorse or campaign for candidates or political causes. This includes participating in marches or rallies in support of a movement or giving money to, or raising money for, any political candidate or election cause. Learn more about our process. Did you find this information helpful? Yes No The Justice Department has <u>traditionally resisted making</u> information about open criminal investigations available to Congress, suggesting that legal and political fights over subpoenas and executive privilege are most likely looming. It remains to be seen who else will serve on the panel. Speaker Kevin McCarthy made numerous concessions to a far-right faction of his party to win the speakership, and the full extent of his promises is not known. Both Mr. Jordan and Mr. McCarthy have spoken for months about their desire for such an investigation and pledged to voters during the 2022 campaign to carry one out. Democrats repeatedly emphasized that both Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Mr. Jordan refused to comply with subpoenas from the House committee investigating Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. Haiyun Jiang/The New York Times "It is undeniable that in recent years, the executive branch of the federal government has abused its authority and violated the civil liberties of American citizens often for political purposes," said Representative Tom Cole, Republican of Oklahoma, in endorsing the legislation on the floor. Late last year, Mr. Jordan, then the top Republican on the Judiciary Committee, oversaw a 1,000-page staff report — which was mostly a collection of letters mailed by his committee — that claimed that the F.B.I. had "spied on President Trump's campaign and ridiculed conservative Americans" and that the "rot within the F.B.I. festers in and proceeds from Washington." The resolution appears to enable Mr. Jordan to issue subpoenas to the Justice Department for information about the special counsel inquiry into Mr. Trump's attempts to overturn the 2020 election and his handling of classified documents, along with other politically charged matters like an open tax investigation into President Biden's son Hunter Biden. While Mr. Jordan's inquiry will be housed within the Judiciary Committee, its 13 members — eight of whom would be Republicans — will not be limited to lawmakers on that panel. That could result in lawmakers trying to scrutinize a Justice Department investigation while the department examines some of those same lawmakers' conduct concerning the events of Jan. 6. As the House debated the select committee's creation on Tuesday, Democrats repeatedly emphasized that both Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Jordan had <u>refused to comply with subpoenas</u> from the committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, an inquiry that they both sought to block. Mr. Jordan <u>strategized with Mr. Trump</u> about an effort to disrupt the certification of the results of the 2020 election on the floor of the House. "The primary purpose of this special subcommittee is to interfere with the special counsel's ongoing investigation into a conspiracy to overturn the 2020 election," said Representative Dan Goldman, Democrat of New York, who was a top aide to Democrats who led the first impeachment of Mr. Trump in 2019. "This is a shocking abuse of power. But it's not just the usual efforts by members on the other side of the aisle to once again do Donald Trump's dirty work; this time they're trying to protect themselves." Republicans have made little secret of the fact that they plan to shower the Biden administration with investigations, some of them overtly political in nature. But they won bipartisan support on Tuesday for the formation of a separate select committee focused on the strategic competition between the United States and the Chinese government. On a vote of 365 to 65, the House formed a special committee to investigate the Chinese government's "economic, technological and security progress, and its competition with the United States." The panel is set to be led by Representative Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, a Marine veteran known as a sober-minded national security hawk. Its mission is to examine a slew of topics, including the economic dependence of the United States on Chinese supply chains, the nation's security assistance to Taiwan, and lobbying efforts by the Chinese government to influence local and state government, as well as academic institutions. Mr. Gallagher said the two countries are "in the early stages of a new Cold War." "We see this aggression here at home, where the party has stolen American intellectual property, technology and industrial capacity, undermining our economy and good paying American jobs," he said, referring to the Chinese Communist Party. Most Democrats supported the panel, but some had reservations. Representative Judy Chu, Democrat of California and the chairwoman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, said that while there were "legitimate concerns" about the actions of the Chinese government, she opposed forming the committee because "of the known risks of xenophobic rhetoric intensifying anti-Asian hate here in the United States." Republicans on Monday also approved a third wide-ranging investigation to look into the coronavirus pandemic, including the origins of the virus, so-called gain-of-function research, the production of vaccines and the conduct of **Dr. Anthony S. Fauci**, Mr. Biden's former chief medical adviser, whom Republicans have pledged to call before them for questioning. © 2023 The New York Times Company NYTCo Contact Us Accessibility Work with us Advertise T Brand Studio Your Ad Choices Privacy Policy Terms of Service Terms of Sale Help Subscriptions

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