january6th.house.gov (202) 225–7800

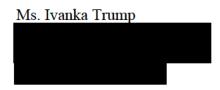




One Hundred Seventeenth Congress

Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capital

January 20, 2022



Dear Ms. Trump:

On June 30, 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted House Resolution 503, establishing the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol (the "Select Committee"). The Select Committee is investigating the facts, circumstances, and causes of the January 6th attack and issues relating thereto. On January 6th, you were serving as Advisor to the President and head of the White House Office of Economic Initiatives and Entrepreneurship, and were present in the West Wing of the White House. We write to request your voluntary cooperation with our investigation on a range of critical topics, including the four specific matters outlined below. We respect your privacy, and our questions will be limited to issues relating to January 6th, the activities that contributed to or influenced events on January 6th, and your role in the White House during that period.

First, the Select Committee is investigating efforts by President Trump to impede the count of certified electoral votes by Congress on January 6, 2021. Under our system of government, the people of the states choose who will be President. When the people of each state have spoken, and the certified results of the Presidential election in all the states identify the winning candidate, Congress cannot select a different President by refusing to count certain electoral votes. In advance of January 6th, President Trump and his supporters had litigated and lost dozens of election challenges in state and federal courts. On December 14, 2020, consistent with our Constitution, the Electors of the Electoral College met and confirmed the outcome of the election. Rather than respecting the rulings of the courts or accepting the outcome of the Electoral College vote, President Trump and his legal team planned to change the outcome of the election by enlisting Vice President Pence, as the presiding officer of the January 6th Congressional proceedings, to unilaterally reject certain states' votes, or to delay the counting of those votes until an unknown future date. A lawyer, John Eastman, with whom the President was apparently consulting in planning for January 6th, has since invoked his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination

¹ "Ivanka Trump," The White House (Archived), https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/people/ivanka-trump/; Carol Leonnig and Philip Rucker, *I Alone Can Fix It* (New York: Penguin Press, 2021) 475.

because he fears criminal prosecution. Mr. Eastman has, on that basis, refused to give testimony regarding his conversations with President Trump and others on these topics.²

As January 6th approached, President Trump attempted on multiple occasions to persuade Vice President Pence to participate in his plan. One of the President's discussions with the Vice President occurred by phone on the morning of January 6th. You were present in the Oval Office and observed at least one side of that telephone conversation. General Keith Kellogg was also present in the Oval Office during that call, and has testified about that discussion, as follows:

- Q: It's been reported that the President said to the Vice President..., "you don't have the courage to make a hard decision." And maybe not those exact words but something like that. Do you remember anything like that?
- A: Words and I don't remember exactly either, but something like that, yeah. Being like you're not tough enough to make the call.
- Q: Another report of this phone call is that Trump said, "Mike, it's not right. You can do this. I'm counting on you to do it. If you don't do it, I picked the wrong man four years ago. You're going to wimp out." Do you remember anything like that?
- A: Words like that, yes. I can't exactly I can't it's tough, yeah.³

General Kellogg also testified regarding your remarks at the close of the call: "[Ivanka Trump] turned to me and said, 'Mike Pence is a good man.' I said: 'Yes, he is.'"

The Select Committee wishes to discuss the part of the conversation you observed between President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence on the morning of January 6th. Similarly, the Select Committee would like to discuss any other conversations you may have witnessed or participated in regarding the President's plan to obstruct or impede the counting of electoral votes. For example, the Committee has information suggesting that President Trump's White House Counsel may have concluded that the actions President Trump directed Vice President Pence to take would violate the Constitution or would be otherwise illegal. Did you discuss those issues

² Of course, Mr. Eastman's memoranda are public, and he has also made a number of public statements on these issues. Mr. Trump was also advised during this period by Rudy Giuliani. Mr. Giuliani's license to practice law in New York has now been suspended, as has his license to practice law in the District of Columbia. The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York explained that Mr. Giuliani had "communicated demonstrably false and misleading statements to courts, lawmakers and the public at large in his capacity as lawyer" in connection with President Trump's failed effort at reelection in 2020. *See In re Rudolph W. Giuliani*, 2021 NY Slip Op. 04086 [1st Dept. June 24, 2021]; *see also In re Rudolph W. Giuliani*, Order, App. D.C., No. 21-BG-423 (July 7, 2021) (suspending Mr. Giuliani from practicing law in the District of Columbia). https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/ad1/calendar/List_Word/2021/06_Jun/24/PDF/Matter%20of%20Giuliani%20(2021-00506)%20PC.pdf, page 2.

³ Testimony of General Keith Kellogg to the Select Committee.

⁴ Testimony of General Keith Kellogg to the Select Committee.

⁵ Documents on file with the Select Committee.

with any member of the White House Counsel's office? To your knowledge, were any such legal conclusions shared with President Trump? Similarly, in the days before January 6th, a member of the House Freedom Caucus with knowledge of the President's planning for that day sent a message to the White House Chief of Staff with this explicit warning: "If POTUS [meaning President Trump] allows this to occur ... we're driving a stake in the heart of the federal republic..." Did you discuss that or similar concerns with the White House Chief of Staff? Or with the Vice President or his staff? Likewise, when a former senior White House official with daily contact with President Trump was asked whether Vice President Pence did the right thing on January 6th, that official stated, "I believe, yes, it was the right thing to do..." Was President Trump apprised of these or other views held by his senior White House staff, or by the lawyers for his campaign or others?

Second, the Committee is investigating President Trump's response to the attack on the Capitol on January 6th. The President's speech on the Ellipse ended around 1:10 p.m., and a large crowd proceeded (as the President had directed) to march to the Capitol. Elements of the crowd began to march to Capitol Hill earlier than 1:10 p.m.; others were already present at the Capitol. The crowd approaching the Capitol from the West did not stop in the areas permitted for protest. Instead, rioters immediately began violently confronting police, breaching Capitol Hill security lines and illegally entering restricted areas. At that point, it was already apparent that this would not be a lawful or peaceful protest. At 1:49 p.m., the Metropolitan Police Department officially declared a riot on Capitol Hill. According to information obtained by the Select Committee, White House staff who were aware of the escalating lawlessness and violence on Capitol Hill during this time period were alerting senior White House officials, including the White House Chief of Staff. Television news coverage, social media, and many other news sources identified the lawlessness at or around that time, and continually reported on the violence for several hours thereafter.

The Select Committee is aware of the motivation of many of the violent rioters from their posts on social media, from their contemporaneous statements on video, and from the hundreds of filings in federal court.¹¹ Moreover, evidence before the Committee also demonstrates the specific

⁶ Documents on file with the Select Committee.

⁷ That senior White House official also believed that the outcome of the election was determined once election-related litigation ended and that the final decisions of the courts were due respect. Documents on file with the Select Committee.

⁸ The President asked the crowd to walk to the Capitol during his January 6th speech, but none of the necessary permits for such a march to the Capitol were ever sought or granted. Mark Meadows states in his recent book that the President never intended to walk to the Capitol, and was just making a symbolic point. Mark Meadows, *The Chief's Chief* (2021) 259. The testimony and contemporaneous notes of a former senior White House official contradict Mr. Meadows' account; that former senior official explained that the President genuinely did wish to walk or drive with the protestors to Capitol Hill at the close of his speech on January 6th. Documents on file with the Select Committee.

⁹ U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs and Committee on Rules and Administration, "Examining the U.S. Capitol Attack," June 8, 2021, https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/HSGAC&RulesFullReport ExaminingU.S.CapitolAttack.pdf, page 24.

¹⁰ Documents on file with the Select Committee.

¹¹ For example, many defendants in pending criminal cases identified President Trump's allegations about the "stolen election" as a motivation for their activities at the Capitol; a number also specifically cited President

impact on the riotous crowd of President Trump's 2:24 p.m. tweet. During his speech on the Ellipse, the President said: "I hope Mike is going to do the right thing. I hope so, because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election." However, in his 2:24 p.m. tweet, the President informed the already riotous crowd that Mike Pence had refused to take the action President Trump requested:

"Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!" ¹³

The message from President Trump's 2:24 p.m. tweet spread through the crowd. Rioters described what happened next as follows:

"Once we found out Pence turned on us and that they had stolen the election, like officially, the crowd went crazy. I mean, it became a mob. We crossed the gate." ¹⁴

"Then we heard the news on pence...And lost it...So we stormed." ¹⁵

"They're making an announcement right now saying if Pence betrays us you better get your mind right because we're storming that building." ¹⁶

We are particularly interested in discussions inside the White House and with the President before and after his 2:24 p.m. tweet. Testimony obtained by the Select Committee indicates that members of the White House staff requested your assistance on multiple occasions to intervene in an attempt to persuade President Trump to address the ongoing lawlessness and violence on Capitol Hill. Published reports indicate that Senator Lindsay Graham called you during this period, pleading that the President "ask people to leave." In his sworn testimony, General Keith Kellogg explained that White House staff wanted the President to take some immediate action to quell the

Trump's tweets asking that supporters come to Washington, D.C. on January 6th. *See, e.g., United States of America v. Ronald L. Sandlin* https://www.justice.gov/opa/page/file/1362396/download: "I'm going to be there to show support for our president and to do my part to stop the steal and stand behind Trump when he decides to cross the rubicon." *United States of America v. Marshall Neefe and Charles Bradford Smith*

https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/case-multi-defendant/file/1432686/download: "Trump is literally calling people to DC in a show of force. Militias will be there and if there's enough people they may fucking storm the buildings and take out the trash right there." *United States of America v. Caldwell et al.* https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/case-multi-defendant/file/1369071/download: "Trump said It's gonna be wild!!!!!!! It's gonna be wild!!!!!!! He wants us to make it WILD that's what he's saying. He called us all to the Capitol and wants us to make it wild!!! Sir Yes Sir!!! Gentlemen we are heading to DC pack your shit!!"

¹² "Transcript of Trump's speech at rally before US Capitol riot, *Associated Press*, January 13, 2021, https://apnews.com/article/election-2020-joe-biden-donald-trump-capitol-siege-media-e79eb5164613d6718e9f4502eb471f27.

¹³ Tweet by President Donald J Trump, 2:24 p m., January 6, 2021.

¹⁴ See United States of America v. Joshua Matthew Black, https://www.justice.gov/opa/page/file/1354806/download.

¹⁵ See United States of America v. Marhsall Neefe and Charles Bradford Smith, https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/case-multi-defendant/file/1432686/download.

¹⁶ See United States of America v. Derrick Evans, https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/press-release/file/1351946/download.

¹⁷ Leonnig and Rucker, I Alone Can Fix It, 477.

unrest. The President was, according to one account, "stubborn," and staff recognized that you may be the only person who could persuade him to act:

- Q: Did you think that she [Ivanka Trump] could help get him [President Trump] to a place where he would make a statement to try to stop this?
- A: Yes

...

- Q: So you thought that Ivanka could get her father to do something about it?
- A: To take a course of action.

. . .

- Q: He didn't say yes to Mark Meadows or Kayleigh McEnany or Keith Kellogg, but he might say yes to his daughter?
- A: Exactly right.

The testimony also suggests that you agreed to talk to the President, but had to make multiple efforts to persuade President Trump to act:

- Q: And so presumably the first time she [Ivanka Trump] went in, it wasn't sufficient or she wouldn't have had to go back at least one more time, I assume. Is that correct?
- A: Well, yes, Ma'am. I think she went back there because Ivanka can be pretty tenacious. . ..¹⁸

In addition, other evidence obtained by the Committee demonstrates that, throughout this period, many supporters of the President were trying to contact the White House to insist that President Trump immediately appear in the media and ask the rioters to stand down and leave the Capitol. These individuals included Donald Trump, Jr., Laura Ingraham, Brian Kilmeade, Sean Hannity, multiple members of Congress and the press, Governor Chris Christie, and many others. One White House staff member had this text exchange with a person outside the White House:

¹⁸ Testimony of General Keith Kellogg to the Select Committee. These particular statements from General Kellogg's testimony were similar in a number of respects to depictions of the events that day in books. Jonathan Karl, *Betrayal* (New York: Dutton, 2021) 299; Leonnig and Rucker, *I Alone Can Fix It*, 475.

¹⁹ While the attack on the Capitol was happening, Sean Hannity texted a senior White House official, "Can he make a statement. I saw the tweet. Ask people to peacefully leave the [Capitol]", and Donald Trump Jr. texted, "We need an oval address. He has to lead now. It's gone too far and gotten out of hand." Documents on file with the Select Committee.

Incoming Text: Is someone getting to potus? He has to tell protestors to dissipate. Someone is going to get killed

Response from White House Staff Member: I've been trying for the last 30 minutes. Literally stormed in outer oval to get him to put out the first one. It's completely insane²⁰

In the midst of the violence, Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy appeared on CBS live, repeating his plea that the President make a live statement asking the crowd to disperse, and indicating that the President's tweets were not sufficient: "I know he [President Trump] had put a tweet out there. I told him he needs to talk to the nation."²¹

We are particularly interested in this question: Why didn't White House staff simply ask the President to walk to the briefing room and appear on live television—to ask the crowd to leave the Capitol? General Kellogg testified he "very strongly recommended [they] do not" ask the President to appear immediately from the press room, "because press conferences tend to get out of control, and you want to control the message." Apparently, certain White House staff believed that a live unscripted press appearance by the President in the midst of the Capitol Hill violence could have made the situation worse.

President Trump ultimately filmed a video statement from the Rose Garden, which was not released until 4:17 p.m. That video finally instructed the rioters to leave the Capitol, but it did not condemn the violence, and instead delivered this message to the rioters, "We love you, you're very special. . .." Public reports suggest that you had been urging President Trump to ask people to leave the Capitol for two hours by that point in time.²³ The Select Committee understands that multiple takes of the video were filmed but not utilized. Information in the Select Committee's possession suggests that the President failed in the initial clips to ask rioters to leave the Capitol.²⁴ The Select Committee has sought copies of those unused clips from the National Archives. President Trump has a pending lawsuit seeking to block release of many Presidential Records on Executive Privilege grounds.²⁵ President Trump also tweeted at 6:01 p.m., and delivered the following message about the violent riot:

These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously and viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly and unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love and in peace. Remember this day forever.²⁶

²⁰ Documents on file with the Select Committee.

²¹ Letter from Chairman Bennie G. Thompson to Leader Kevin McCarthy, January 12, 2022, https://january6th.nuse.gov/news/press-releases/select-committee-seeks-information-minority-leader-mccarthy-0. General Kellogg testified that he also did not believe a tweet would quell the violence. Testimony of General Keith Kellogg to the Select Committee.

²² Testimony of General Keith Kellogg to the Select Committee.

²³ Leonnig and Rucker, I Alone Can Fix It, 479.

²⁴ See Karl, Betrayal, 300.

²⁵ The Supreme Court yesterday rejected President Trump's request to halt disclosure of the first three tranches of this material from the National Archives. *See Trump v. Thompson*, 595 U.S. (Jan. 19, 2022).

²⁶ Tweet by President Donald J Trump, 6:01 p.m., January 6, 2021.

This message provides further insight on the former President's state of mind that day.

As is evident from the events described above, you have knowledge bearing directly on the President's actions or inaction on January 6th, and his state of mind as the violent attack occurred at the Capitol. The Select Committee would very much appreciate your voluntary cooperation with its investigation on these matters.

Third, the Select Committee is evaluating whether the President did or did not give any order to deploy the National Guard to respond to the violence on January 6th. Acting Secretary Chris Miller, who was in the chain of command and reported directly to the President, has testified under oath that the President never contacted him at any time on January 6th, and never, at any time, issued him any order to deploy the National Guard.²⁷ Miller did speak with Vice President Pence on January 6th, but not with President Trump. The Committee is aware that certain White House staff devoted time during the violent riot to rebutting questions regarding whether the President was attempting to hold up deployment of the guard, and that Press Secretary McEnany issued a tweet that afternoon suggesting that the guard would be deployed (this occurred hours later).²⁸ But the Committee has identified no evidence that President Trump issued any order, or took any other action, to deploy the guard that day. Nor does it appear that President Trump made any calls at all to the Department of Justice or any other law enforcement agency to request deployment of their personnel to the Capitol.

The Select Committee respectfully requests that you share any information you may have on this topic.²⁹

Finally, the Select Committee is investigating the former President's activities and conduct in the days after January 6th, including President Trump's state of mind during that period and whether the President took appropriate action regarding the continuing threats of violence. The Committee has information suggesting that White House staff and others were attempting to persuade President Trump to halt his statements regarding a "stolen election" and were working directly with other supporters outside the White House in an effort to persuade President Trump to do so. Sean Hannity appears to have been part of those efforts. Mr. Hannity's texts to both the White House Chief of Staff and White House Press Secretary describe his communications with the President. First, on January 7th, Mr. Hannity texted Ms. McEnany, laying out a five point approach for conversations with President Trump. Items one and two of that plan read as follows:

"1- No more stolen election talk"

"2- Yes, impeachment and 25 th amendment are real, and many people will quit. . . ."

²⁷ Beatrice Peterson and Morgan Winsor, "Former acting secretary testified he was trying to avoid another Kent State on Jan. 6," *ABC News*, May 12, 2021, https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/house-oversight-committee-chair-testify-government-unprepared-capitol/story?id=77639074.

²⁸ Documents on file with the Select Committee.

²⁹ The Committee has a team of investigators specifically devoted to evaluating the Capitol's preparedness for violence, and how and when requests for law enforcement and National Guard were made. The Committee has already interviewed many of the relevant witnesses, including Mayor Bowser, General Walker and others. No line of inquiry is off-limits, and we welcome any submissions of relevant material on this topic.

In response, Ms. McEnany replied:

"Love that. Thank you. That is the playbook. I will help reinforce. ..."³⁰

Ms. McEnany also agreed with Mr. Hannity's text specifically recommending that the White House staff should make an effort to keep Mr. Trump away from certain people: Sean Hannity: "... Key now. No more crazy people." Kayleigh McEnany responded: "Yes 100%." A few days later, on January 10, 2021, Mr. Hannity wrote to the White House Chief of Staff and Congressman Jim Jordan with the following message:

Guys, we have a clear path to land the plane in 9 days. He can't mention the election again. Ever. I did not have a good call with him today. And worse, I'm not sure what is left to do or say, and I don't like knowing if it's truly understood. Ideas?³²

The Select Committee would like to discuss this effort after January 6th to persuade President Trump not to associate himself with certain people, and to avoid further discussion regarding election fraud allegations. We also wish to share with you a memorandum from former White House Counsel Donald McGahn (attached), regarding the legal requirements on White House personnel to turn over to the National Archives any work-related messages from personal devices. We wish to be certain that former White House staff are fully aware of these obligations.

We would like to meet with you soon, but we also want to accommodate your schedule. We propose meeting with you on February 3 or 4, 2022. Please let us know whether one of those dates will fit with your schedule, or connect us with your counsel so we can coordinate on scheduling. If you are unavailable on those dates, we can arrange a time during the week of February 7, 2022.

A full and accurate accounting of what happened on January 6th is critical to the Select Committee's legislative recommendations. And the American people deserve to understand all the relevant details. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Bennie G. Thompson

Chairman

Enclosures.

³⁰ Documents on file with the Select Committee.

³¹ Ms. Katrina Pierson also uses the term "crazies" in her text messages, apparently to describe a number of the President's supporters. Documents on file with the Select Committee.

³² Documents on file with the Select Committee.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 22, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL PERSONNEL

THROUGH: DONALD F. McGAHN II

Counsel to the President

FROM: STEFAN C. PASSANTINO

Deputy Counsel to the President, Compliance and Ethics

SCOTT F. GAST

Senior Associate Counsel to the President

JAMES D. SCHULTZ

Senior Associate Counsel to the President

SUBJECT: Presidential Records Act Obligations

Purpose

To remind all personnel of their obligation to preserve and maintain presidential records, as required by the Presidential Records Act ("PRA").

Discussion

The PRA requires that the Administration take steps "to assure that the activities, deliberations, decisions, and policies that reflect the performance of the President's constitutional, statutory, or other official or ceremonial duties are adequately documented and that such records are preserved and maintained." This memorandum outlines what materials constitute "presidential records" and what steps you must take to ensure their preservation.

What Are Presidential Records?

"Presidential records" are broadly defined as "documentary materials . . . created or received by the President, the President's immediate staff, or a unit or individual of the Executive Office of the President whose function is to advise or assist the President, in the course of conducting activities which relate to or have an effect upon the carrying out of the constitutional, statutory, or other official or ceremonial duties of the President." Presidential records include material in both paper and electronic form.

¹ The PRA applies to the following Executive Office of the President ("EOP") entities: White House Office, Office of the Vice President, Council of Economic Advisors, Executive Residence, Office of Administration, Office of Policy Development (DPC and NEC), National Security Council, President's Commission on White House Fellows, and President's Intelligence Advisory Board.

Some materials that are considered presidential records include:

- Memos, letters, notes, emails, faxes, reports, and other written communications sent to or received from others, including materials sent to or received from persons outside government;
- Drafts, marked-up edits, or comments that are circulated or shown to others;
- Notes or minutes of meetings that are circulated or shown to others;
- Meeting minutes, memos to file, notes, drafts, and similar documents that are created or saved for the purpose of accurately documenting the activities or deliberations of the Administration, even if such materials are not circulated or shown to others;
- PowerPoint presentations, audio recordings, photos, and video footage;
- Emails, chats, and other electronic communications that are created or received in the course of conducting activities related to the performance of the President's duties, but that are sent from or received on non-official accounts; and
- Transition materials, but only if they are used in the course of official government business.

Purely personal records that do not relate to or have an effect upon the carrying out of the President's official duties do not need to be preserved. Similarly, political records need not be preserved unless they relate to or have a direct effect upon the President's official duties. Finally, certain materials that lack historic value are not covered by the PRA – for example, notes, drafts, and similar documents that are not circulated or that are not created or saved for the purpose of documenting the activities or deliberations of the Administration.

What Steps Should Be Taken to Preserve Presidential Records?

Paper Records. You should preserve hard-copy presidential records in organized files. To the extent practicable, you should categorize materials as presidential records when they are created or received. You should file presidential records separately from other material. Paper records are typically collected at the end of your White House service, but may be collected at an earlier point by contacting the White House Office of Records Management ("WHORM"). Any records collected by WHORM remain available to the staff member who provided them.

Electronic Records. You must preserve electronic communications that are presidential records. You are required to conduct all work-related communications on your official EOP email account, except in emergency circumstances when you cannot access the EOP system and must accomplish time sensitive work. Emails and attachments sent to and from your EOP account are automatically archived.

If you ever send or receive email that qualifies as a presidential record using any other account, you <u>must</u> preserve that email by copying it to your official EOP email account or by forwarding it to your official email account within twenty (20) days. After preserving the email, you must delete it from the non-EOP account. Any employee who intentionally fails to take these actions may be subject to administrative or even criminal penalties.

The same rules apply to other forms of electronic communication, including text messages. You should not use instant messaging systems, social networks, or other internet-based means of electronic communication to conduct official business without the approval of the Office of the White House Counsel. If you ever generate or receive presidential records on such platforms, you must preserve them by sending them to your EOP email account via a screenshot or other means. After preserving the communications, you must delete them from the non-EOP platform.

Electronic documents that qualify as presidential records and only exist in electronic format must be saved on your network drive or regularly synchronized to it. You must archive files that you are no longer using; you must not delete them. Your network drive will be captured upon your departure from the EOP, which will secure any presidential records you have saved.

At all times, please keep in mind that presidential records are the property of the United States. You may not dispose of presidential records. When you leave EOP employment, you may not take any presidential records with you. You also may not take copies of any presidential records without prior authorization from the Counsel's office. The willful destruction or concealment of federal records is a federal crime punishable by fines and imprisonment.

