

Republican-Led US Senate Panel Backs Subpoena in Hunter Biden Probe



Hunter Biden, son of former Vice President Joe Biden, President Donald Trump's main rival as he runs for re-election in November.

WASHINGTON - A Republican-led U.S. Senate committee authorized a subpoena on Wednesday for information in an investigation related to Hunter Biden, son of former Vice President Joe Biden, President Donald Trump's main rival as he runs for re-election in November.

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs voted 8-6, with every Republican voting yes, and every Democrat voting no, to approve a subpoena for documents related to work the younger Biden did for the Ukrainian energy company Burisma.

The subpoena was requested by the panel's chairman, Senator Ron Johnson, for information from Blue Star Strategies, a public affairs firm that worked with Burisma. Johnson's investigation intensified after Trump's impeachment trial this year. He plans to issue a report in the coming months.

Trump was impeached on abuse-of-power and obstruction charges in the Democratic-led House of Representatives after he asked Ukraine to investigate the Bidens. He was acquitted by the Republican-controlled Senate.

Democrats say Trump and his party are trying to shore up his re-election prospects by targeting Biden. They have also said Johnson's actions could aid disinformation efforts by Russia as it seeks to influence the 2020 election, after U.S. intelligence determined Moscow sought boost Trump campaign in 2016.

"Senator Johnson should be working overtime to save American lives - but instead he's just trying to save the President's job," said Andrew Bates, a spokesman for Biden's presidential campaign, noting the current health and economic crisis.

Senator Mitt Romney, the only Republican who voted to convict Trump of abuse of power, said in March he thought Johnson's investigation of Hunter Biden appeared political. A no vote would have deadlocked the committee, but Romney joined other Republicans in approving the subpoena.

Senate Judiciary, led by Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, is investigating surveillance warrants in the FBI's probe of Russian meddling in 2016.

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