

To: Interested Parties
From: Kyle Herrig, Congressional Integrity Project Executive Director
Date: September 28, 2023
Re: James Comer's Record of Government Weaponization and Influence Peddling

This week, House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Chair James Comer (R-KY) will hold the first impeachment hearing – that he has already admitted [will not provide any new facts](#). It is another political stunt intended to protect Donald Trump, hurt President Biden, and distract from the MAGA GOP's failure to govern ahead of a likely government shutdown of their own making.

Comer is a curious pick to lead this sham investigation, not only because for nine months he has failed to show any evidence or wrongdoing, but because Comer himself is guilty of the false accusations MAGA Republicans are making against President Biden.

COMER WEAPONIZED GOVERNMENT AGAINST HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS

James Comer has a record of retaliating against his political opponents, even using government resources to open bogus investigations to try and distract from serious accusations being made against Comer himself.

In his failed bid for governor in 2015, James Comer obtained and leaked emails from a local blogger who was publishing accusations that Comer had abused his college girlfriend, a fact Comer recently confirmed to the [New York Times](#). Comer's allies then used those leaked emails to [open a Grand Jury investigation](#) into the blogger as a way to help Comer. The Comer-ally prosecutor in charge of the investigation said, "I do not anticipate that this investigation will be over before the primary, and that is very intentional on my part."

This is not the only time Comer has retaliated against his political opponents. Comer sent a [threatening message](#) to the Clerk of the Kentucky House, Brad Metcalf, suggesting he would be fired after the clerk reported allegations of sexual harassment against a close friend of Comer's. The message, sent by Twitter direct message, [stated](#), "Hey Brad, when the House finally fires your dumbass (which will be very soon) for being a lazy dumb [s***], David Williams can help you find a job cleaning [s***] stains off the commodes at the Corner Pool Room in Burkesville. But I'm sure you won't last long there because everyone hates you and you are dumb and lazy."

COMER'S PAY TO PLAY AND INFLUENCE PEDDLING

James Comer has a record of pay to play – so it's hard to take his investigation of influence peddling seriously when he is the face of it.

One example is Comer's record on casino gambling in Kentucky. As a state legislator, Comer repeatedly voted against legislation that would increase the number of casinos in the state. However, as Comer's aspirations grew and he cozied up to Churchill Downs, the owner of the

Kentucky Derby racetrack and one of the biggest political forces in Kentucky, Comer changed his tune. When he became Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner in 2012, Comer testified in favor of a constitutional amendment to create seven new gambling facilities in Kentucky.

And Comer personally benefited from this change of heart. As the [Daily Beast](#) reported:

In 2013, Comer was still carrying tens of thousands of dollars in debt from his 2011 run, the byproduct of an eleventh hour \$100,000 loan he gave to his own campaign. That spring, one of Kentucky's most influential men held a fundraiser at his Louisville home to retire Comer's debt: Brett Hale, then a senior vice president of Churchill Downs.

Thanks to maximum-level contributions from Hale and other Churchill Downs brass, the event eliminated Comer's outstanding debt of roughly \$28,000 with a haul of \$36,000. Churchill Downs employees accounted for \$5,300 of that total.

Since that campaign debt was owed to Comer himself—and he was not running for any other office at the time—those funds simply went right back into his own pocket.

Coincidentally, as Ag Commissioner, Comer hired Brett Hale's brother for a \$60,000 per year job as his "special assistant."

COMER GAVE AWAY THE GAME: IT'S ALL POLITICAL

Even before Comer became chair of the House Oversight Committee, he said the [quiet part out loud](#) that the real reason he would be investigating President Biden was to damage him politically and hope he would not run for re-election. As this year has shown, for once, he told the truth. Now, the House MAGA majority has gone into overdrive playing defense for Donald Trump and his legal troubles and trying to distract the American people from their inability to govern on the real priorities they face.