

Defend Democracy Project: Top Takeaways from the First Half: Trump and his MAGA allies illegally pressured the Department of Justice to overturn an election Trump knew he lost

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Washington, DC - In the fifth hearing of the January 6th Select Committee, we learned even more about Trump's illegal and unconstitutional attempt to overturn the results of an election he knew he lost, including the involvement of members of Congress determined to overturn the will of the people.

"The committee continues to demonstrate the breadth of the illegal attempt to overturn the election, now laying out compelling evidence that current members of Congress aided in Trump's unconstitutional scheme," **said Defend Democracy Project Communications Director Nicole Haley.** "The pressure campaign at the Department of Justice shows how Trump and his MAGA allies have no respect for the rule of law and will stop at nothing to make sure they have the final say on who leads us."

1. Trump pressured the DOJ to legitimize his lies and conspiracy theories about the election, giving Trump and his allies the pretext to overturn the election they lost.

- Trump had been told over and over that he lost the election, yet he [continued to demand](#) the DOJ investigate claims of election fraud.

- Trump told Former Acting Deputy Attorney General Richard Donoghue: “Just say it was corrupt and leave the rest to me and the Republican congressmen.”

2. DOJ officials refused to validate Trump’s voter fraud claims - even after opening an investigation.

- Former Attorney General Barr said he authorized the DOJ to investigate fraud because if he hadn’t, [“I’m not sure we would’ve had a transition at all.”](#)
- Former Acting Deputy Attorney General Richard Donoghue [detailed a meeting](#) he had with Trump to go “piece by piece” and “correct [Trump] in a serial fashion as he moved from one theory to another” to rebut his false claims. When asked multiple times if the Department of Justice found any of the claims credible, Donoghue answered plainly, “No.”

3. Trump wanted to install Jeffrey Clark as Attorney General solely because Clark was committed to helping overturn the election.

- Trump [believed Clark would](#) “put the full weight of the Justice Department behind the effort to overturn the election.”
- Witnesses detailed a letter Clark intended to send which would encourage states to submit illegal slates of electors.
- Trump lawyer Pat Cipollone called Clark’s letter a “murder-suicide pact,” and former White House attorney Eric Herschmann [recalled telling Clark](#), “How about you go back to your office, and we’ll call you when we need to handle an oil spill.”

4. MAGA Republicans in Congress echoed Trump’s false claims and were directly involved in the scheme.

- The committee played a video highlighting [members of Congress that amplified Trump’s lies](#) leading up to the January 6th attacks, including MAGA Republican Representatives Louie Gohmert (TX-1), Andy Biggs (AZ-5), Paul Gosar (AZ-4), Matt Gaetz (FL-1), Jim Jordan (OH-4), and Mo Brooks (AL-5).
- The committee detailed a [meeting of members of Congress](#) in the White House [including](#) Marjorie Taylor Greene and Scott Perry.
- Rep. Perry introduced Jeff Clark to Trump, and [later urged](#) Mark Meadows to elevate Clark in the Department of Justice.