

Donald Trump files lawsuit to block release of Capitol riot records



Former President Donald Trump is fighting a congressional investigation of his conduct on January 6th

Miami, October 19 (RHC)-- Former U.S. President Donald Trump filed a lawsuit in federal court on Monday in an attempt to block the U.S. Congress from obtaining White House records on the deadly January 6th Capitol insurrection.

Trump is challenging a decision by President Joe Biden and the U.S. National Archives to turn over his presidential records to the House of Representatives Select Committee on January 6, which has demanded them.

In the lawsuit, Trump claims the House committee's request "is almost limitless in scope," and seeks records with no reasonable connection to that day.

Thousands of pro-Trump supporters gathered in Washington on January 6, 2021 for a so-called "Stop the Steal" rally to prevent Congress from certifying Biden's win in the 2020 election. Many stormed into the U.S Capitol, searching for members of Congress with the express intent to kill them and vandalizing the premises. More than 600 have been charged related to the rioting.

President Biden declined to assert "executive privilege" on behalf of his predecessor and has instead supported the House investigation. "In a political ploy to accommodate his partisan allies, President Biden has refused to assert executive privilege over numerous clearly privileged documents requested by the Committee," Trump's court filing said.

Executive privilege is a controversial legal doctrine that some presidents, including Trump, have sought to use to shield their White House activities from public view. U.S. courts have historically interpreted presidential claims of executive privilege narrowly.

The January 6 committee is seeking the documents as part of its investigation into how a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol building on January 6 in an effort to halt the certification of Biden's win. Trump is asking the court to declare the committee's request for documents invalid and unenforceable.

Meanwhile, the House committee investigating January 6th is set to meet on October 19 to advance criminal contempt charges against a former top political adviser to ex-President Donald Trump.

Trump adviser Steve Bannon refused to comply with a subpoena – a legal demand – by the committee to be interviewed and supply documents. Bannon's lawyer told the committee he would not sit for an interview because the former president would be asserting "executive privilege" over his contacts with the former aide.

Members of the Democrat-led House committee have made clear they are serious about enforcing the subpoenas issued to several Trump aides and about a dozen people involved in organizing his January 6th rally that turned violent.

"This potential criminal contempt referral – or will-be criminal contempt referral for Steve Bannon – is the first shot over the bow," Representative Adam Kinzinger, one of two Republicans on the committee, told CNN on October 17.

"It says to anybody else coming in front of the committee, 'Don't think that you're gonna be able to just kind of walk away and we're gonna forget about you. We're not'," Kinzinger said.

Committee Chairman Representative Dennie Thompson had sent a letter to Bannon's lawyer last week warning that "willful refusal" of the committee's subpoena constitutes "a violation of federal law", according to The Washington Post newspaper.

Much of the information the committee seeks from Bannon is about discussions with members of Congress, Trump campaign officials and "other private parties ... that could not conceivably be barred by a privilege claim," Thompson said in the letter.



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