

March 3, 2005 - Reps. Slaughter, Conyers, Waxman, Rangel and Thompson Author Resolution of Inquiry..

Reps. Slaughter, Conyers, Waxman, Rangel and Thompson Author Resolution of Inquiry on GannonGate

Ranking Members Determined to Get Answers

Resolution Will Force Cooperation, Unless Blocked by House Republicans

Washington, DC - The Ranking Members for House Committees on Rules, Judiciary, Government Reform, Homeland Security and Ways and Means have authored a Resolution of Inquiry, which would require the Justice Department and Department of Homeland Security to turn over all documentation regarding James Guckert's (AKA Jeff Gannon) regular access to the White House.

The resolution comes on the heels of repeated requests by Rep. Louise Slaughter and Rep. John Conyers that the White House and the Department of Homeland Security, which has jurisdiction over the Secret Service, turn over any and all materials related to the GannonGate issue. To date, the White House, the Secret Service, The Department of Homeland Security, and the Justice Department have all failed to respond to such requests.

"We cannot allow the White House to stonewall the United States Congress and the American people on an issue of such importance. This is a matter of national security and unethical White House media manipulation. Everyday more questions are raised and so far, the White House is not providing any answers. We intend to find out what the White House is hiding." stated Congresswoman Slaughter.

"We had hoped that the half dozen congressional and senate requests for information would have been sufficient. However, to date, they have not even merited a response from the White House or its agencies. We hope that this resolution gets to the bottom of whether any processes were abused in favoring Mr. Guckert, a fake reporter from a fake news organization," Rep. Conyers said.

The Resolution of Inquiry would force the Justice Department and Department of Homeland Security to cooperate with Congressional leaders in determining the nature of Gannon/Guckert's regular access to the White House and whether or not Secret Service security protocols were violated and if so, by whom.

The resolution must be considered by the Judiciary Committee within 14 legislative days and, unless blocked by the Republicans on the Committee, will be put before the full House for consideration.

The included Dear Colleague letter was distributed to Members this morning and the following Members of Congress have already signed on as Original Co-Sponsors. A copy of the Resolution is also included below.

ORIGINAL COSPONSORS

Rep. John Conyers, Jr. (MI-14), Judiciary Committee, Ranking Member

Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (NY-28), Rules Committee, Ranking Member

Rep. Bennie Thompson (MS-02), Homeland Security Committee, Ranking Member

Rep. Charles Rangel (NY-15), Ways and Means, Ranking Member

Rep. Henry Waxman (CA-30), Government Reform Committee, Ranking Member

Rep. Howard Berman (California, 28th)

Rep. Rick Boucher (Virginia, 9th)

Rep. Michael Capuano (Massachusetts, 8th)

Rep. Peter DeFazio (Oregon, 4th)

Rep. Alcee Hastings (Florida, 23rd)

Rep. Maurice Hinchey (New York, 22nd)

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (Texas, 18th)

Rep. Barbara Lee (California, 9th)

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (California, 16th)

Rep. Jim McDermott (Washington, 7th)

Rep. James McGovern (Massachusetts, 3rd)

Rep. Jerrold Nadler (New York, 8th)

Rep. Linda Sánchez (California, 39th)

Rep. Adam Schiff (California, 29th)

Rep. Bobby Scott (Virginia, 3rd)

Rep. Adam Smith (Washington, 9th)

Rep. Chris Van Hollen (Maryland, 8th)

Rep. Maxine Waters (California, 35th)

Rep. Dianne Watson (California, 33rd)

Rep. Anthony Weiner (New York, 9th)

Rep. Robert Wexler (Florida, 19th)

Dear Colleague:

Please join us in introducing the attached resolution, which requires the Justice Department and Department of Homeland Security to turn over all documentation in their possession about how James Guckert (also known as Jeff Gannon) gained access to White House press events.

For nearly three years, the White House has been granting Mr. Guckert, a right-wing activist with no press credentials, access to the White House briefing room and presidential press conferences. This appears to violate long standing practices of carefully screening contacts with the president.

This special access not only raises security concerns, but calls into question the fundamental fairness of the White House press corps. Mr. Guckert's efforts as a propaganda machine for the White House may have even violated laws banning the Administration from using appropriated money for propaganda purposes. It further appears that Mr. Guckert had access to classified information, in violation of laws that protect the identity of undercover agents.

Because of these concerns, we will be introducing this resolution to inquire how the Justice and Homeland Security Departments were used to forward this agenda and whether any processes were abused in favoring Mr. Guckert and his ultra-conservative organization. We had hoped that the half dozen congressional and senate requests for information would have been sufficient. However, to date, they have not even merited a response from the White House or its agencies.

To cosponsor, or if you have questions, please contact Michelle Richardson (x56906).

Sincerely,

John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Judiciary Committee

Louise M. Slaughter
Ranking Member
Rules Committee

Bennie Thompson
Ranking Member
Homeland Security Committee

Henry Waxman
Ranking Member

Government Reform Committee

Charles Rangel

Ranking Member

Ways and Means Committee

RESOLUTION

Directing the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution documents in the possession of those officials relating to the security investigations and background checks relating to granting access to the White House of James D. Guckert (also known as Jeff Gannon).

Resolved, That the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security are each directed to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution all documents in their possession relating to the security investigations and background checks relating to granting access to the White House of James D. Guckert (also known as Jeff Gannon) and any requisite instructions for handling such documents, including

(1) all records setting forth or discussing whether an individual granted access to the President or to the White House briefing room may use a false name;

(2) all records setting forth or discussing policies, procedures, or guidelines discussing security clearances and background checks relating to granting access into the White House briefing room;

(3) all records indicating how the policies, procedures, or guidelines referred to above were communicated to Mr. Guckert;

(4) all records indicating the officer or office responsible for requesting that the Secret Service carry out a security investigation or background check with respect to an individual seeking access to the President or to the White House briefing room;

(5) all records setting forth the standards for security investigations or background checks with respect to "day pass" credentials;

(6) all records indicating or discussing whether and to what extent an individual who is cleared for a day pass for a given date is required to receive further security clearance for a day pass for a later date;

(7) all records setting forth or discussing which officer or officers, if any, has the authority to exempt an individual seeking access to the President or to the White House briefing room from the standards for security investigations or background checks that otherwise apply; and

(8) all records of communication between the Secret Service and Mr. Guckert, including not only postal correspondence but also electronic mail correspondence, facsimile correspondence, records of telephone conversations, and any other records of communication.