

PARTISAN HOUSE REPUBLICAN BENGHAZI INVESTIGATIONS

Bypassing Committee Rules for Adopting Official Reports

House Committees have [longstanding rules](#) governing the adoption of official reports, requiring that all Committee Members receive drafts several days prior to Committee consideration, that Committees approve reports at official business meetings, and that Members have the ability to file minority views. These rules ensure that House reports are subjected to at least a minimal level of debate and factual review. House Republicans have abandoned these procedures in favor of releasing “staff reports” with no input from Democrats and no official Committee vetting, resulting in highly partisan and often wildly inaccurate conclusions.

- Republican Staff Report, Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, the Judiciary, and Intelligence (Apr. 23, 2013). [Interim Progress Report for the Members of the House Republican Conference on the Events Surrounding the September 11, 2012 Terrorist Attacks in Benghazi, Libya](#)
- Republican Staff Report, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Sept. 16, 2013). [Benghazi Attacks: Investigative Update Interim Report on the Accountability Review Board](#)
- Republican Staff Report, Committee on Foreign Affairs (Feb. 7, 2014) [Benghazi: Where is the State Department Accountability?](#)
- Republican Staff Report, Committee on Armed Services (Feb. 10, 2014) [Majority Interim Report: Benghazi Investigation Update](#)

Withholding Documents Obtained by the Committee

House Rule X clause 9(g) provides that the Minority “shall be accorded equitable treatment with respect to ... the accessibility of committee records.” House Republicans have withheld Committee documents from Democrats in the Benghazi investigation.

- On October 2, 2012, Chairman Issa and Representative Chaffetz sent a public letter to the State Department with unverified allegations from an interview less than 12 hours earlier. The letter said they possessed “information provided to the Committee by individuals with direct knowledge of events in Libya.” Despite multiple requests, Democrats were never provided copies of these documents.
- On October 19, 2012, three days before a presidential debate, Chairman Issa and Representative Chaffetz sent a [10-page public letter](#) with cherry-picked transcript excerpts and 166 pages of documents. Despite multiple requests, Democrats were not provided copies of many of these documents until they were made public.
- Chairman Issa released these [166 pages of sensitive documents](#) without any security review. Ten days earlier, Chairman Issa had dismissed State Department security warnings as “[crap](#).”

Denying Equal Access to Hearing Witnesses

Rep. Trey Gowdy, who has been named by Speaker Boehner to lead the new Select Committee on Benghazi, [stated](#): “My goal is to conduct an inquiry that is rooted in fairness, is fact-driven, and worthy of the trust of the American public, regardless of one’s political affiliation.” The Oversight Committee investigation he has helped lead, however, has been highly partisan, particularly with respect to witnesses.

- The identity of a witness at an Oversight Committee hearing on May 1, 2014, Brigadier General Robert Lovell, was withheld from Democrats until less than 72 hours before the hearing. After the hearing, House Armed Services Chairman McKeon issued a [public statement](#) challenging the credibility of the witness.
- The identity of a witness at an Oversight Committee hearing on October 10, 2012, Lt. Col. Andrew Wood, was withheld from Democrats until October 5, 2012, when he appeared on [CBS Evening News](#). Multiple requests from Democrats to make Lt. Col. Wood available to before the hearing were rejected.
- Another witness, Mark Thompson, was shielded entirely from Democrats in advance of an Oversight Committee hearing on May 8, 2013. Democrats were excluded from all discussions with Mr. Thompson and his attorney prior to the hearing.

Campaign Fundraising Off Benghazi Deaths

During an interview on May 7, 2014, Rep. Gowdy [called on](#) his fellow Republicans to join him in not seeking to “raise a single penny on the backs of four murdered Americans.” He explained: “There are still, even in a culture of hyper-partisanship, certain things that ought to be above politics, like the murder of our four fellow Americans.”

- Thirty minutes before his interview, the National Republican Congressional Committee sent out a [fundraising email](#) with a photo of President Obama and former Secretary Clinton, accompanied by bold text proclaiming “BENGHAZI WAS A COVERUP” and “DEMAND ANSWERS” and seeking political donations.
- The Republican National Committee also launched a [fundraising drive](#), stating: “Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama lied about the Benghazi attacks to protect their political future. Join our fight to stop the liberals’ lies: contribute to the GOP right now.”
- In February, Oversight Committee Chairman Darrell Issa traveled to New Hampshire to attend a [Republican political event and fundraiser](#), where he [suggested](#) that that the military’s response to the attacks in Benghazi was deficient because former Secretary Clinton ordered former Defense Secretary Panetta to “stand down”—ignoring a [report](#) issued a week earlier by Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee finding no such order.
- Senator Ted Cruz [sent a fundraising email](#) in January after the President’s State of the Union, noting that the President “failed to mention Benghazi, the IRS, or the NSA.”

- On May 8, 2014—a day *after* Rep. Gowdy called on Republicans to stop using Benghazi for political fundraising—Republican Richard Hudson stated on a national radio program: “This is not a political issue. This is not a fundraising issue.” At the same time, he urged listeners to [go to his campaign website](#), which urges visitors to “Demand Answers!” on Benghazi and to “Donate Now!”

Excluding Democrats from Fact-Finding Delegations to Libya

In 2011, Speaker Boehner issued rules for Congressional travel that state: “Every effort should be made to ensure the travel is bipartisan. If the lead of the delegation cannot find a Member of the Minority, documentation of efforts to make the travel bipartisan must be provided to the chairman.” House Republicans have ignored these rules in the Benghazi investigation.

- In October 2012, Oversight Committee Republicans went on a delegation to Libya, but did not inform Democratic Members [until 24 hours before they departed](#).
- In September 2013, Oversight Committee Republicans planned a second delegation to Libya without contacting Democratic Members at all. [Ranking Member Cummings requested](#) that the trip be postponed to allow Democrats to join, but his request was denied.

Making Numerous Unsubstantiated Public Allegations

Chairman Issa has received [12 Pinocchios in the last 12 months](#) from the *Washington Post* Fact Checker for inaccurate claims about Benghazi.

- He received [four Pinocchios](#) when he went on national television and accused former Secretary of State Clinton of making false statements to Congress about authorizing security reductions in Libya, citing her “signature” on a cable in 2012, even though hundreds of thousands of cables leaving the State Department every year are stamped with her name.
- He earned [four more Pinocchios](#) when he suggested at a political fundraiser in New Hampshire that the military’s response was deficient because former Secretary Clinton ordered former Defense Secretary Panetta to “stand down”—ignoring a [report](#) issued a week earlier by Republicans on the House Armed Services Committee finding no such order.
- He was awarded [four more Pinocchios](#) when he appeared on [Fox News Sunday](#) and defended his previous two accusations—first by claiming the “cable” accusation was from “somebody else’s report” when in fact it was [his own](#), and then by claiming he did not use the term “stand down” in “some sort of explicit way.”