

# [***House GOP skeptical Biden inquiry leads to impeachment as election draws near***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7P-D8N1-DY7V-G023-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

A growing number of senior House Republicans are coming to terms with a stark realization: It is unlikely that their monthslong investigation into Joe Biden will actually lead to impeaching the president.

Top Republicans are not expected to make an official decision on whether to pursue impeachment articles until after a pair of high-stakes depositions later this month with Hunter Biden and the president's brother, James. But serious doubts are growing inside the GOP that they will be able to convince [*their razor-thin majority*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/29/politics/speaker-mike-johnson-narrow-majority/index.html) to back the politically perilous impeachment effort in an election-year, according to interviews with over a dozen Republican lawmakers and aides, including some who are close to the probe.

While no formal whip count ahas been conducted, one GOP lawmaker estimated there are around 20 House Republicans who are not convinced there is evidence for impeachment, and Republicans can only lose two votes in the current House margins.

Even conservative GOP Rep. Scott Perry of Pennsylvania, who serves on the House Oversight Committee and supports impeaching the president, acknowledged that it has been hard for the investigation to break through: "While I think that it's pretty clear, I don't know that the case has been made adequately to the American people."

And with a Biden impeachment expected to go nowhere in the Democratic-controlled Senate and the 2024 presidential election coming into focus, others say the best-case scenario at this point would be to leave it up to voters.

"Let the American people decide in November if they want to take this country in a different direction," GOP Rep. Nicole Malliotakis of New York told CNN. "I think that's probably most likely, considering the ***politics*** of the Senate."

The prospect of their inquiry not culminating in impeachment has prompted some internal frustration among Republicans, with finger-pointing already underway in GOP circles about what went wrong - and who is to blame - even as the Republican-led committees continue to push on with their probe. Some of the ire has been directed at House Oversight Chairman James Comer, who has spearheaded the investigation into Biden family business records.

"You'd be hard pressed to say it's going well," said a GOP source closely following thatinvestigation. "It's a jumbled mess."

When the impeachment inquiry was launched four months ago under former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, the conference was motivated to seize a top priority of their agenda and get to the bottom of accusations that the president was central to a family influence peddling scheme through his son's foreign business dealings.

But Republicans have struggled to articulate a clear, tangible case that rises to the level of an impeachable offense, multiple GOP lawmakers told CNN. In many cases, some of the GOP's most damning claims about the president's role in his son's foreign business deals, put forward by Comer, have been undercut by their own witnesses. And the trio of committees leading the investigation have at times offered conflicting answers about what they think their most compelling piece of evidence is, sending mixed signals to the conference about the direction of their probe.

Now, many feel that their window to capitalize on the inquiry is slipping away as they march closer to the November election.

"I don't think it goes anywhere," one Republican lawmaker said of the Biden impeachment inquiry.

"The window to impeach is rapidly closing," another GOP source added.

But investigators vowed it is too soon to make final judgements or promises about how the ongoing investigation ends up and praised the strategy and process so far. One senior GOP impeachment inquiry aide said it would be "a win too in our eyes" if the probe ended with legislative proposals to reform federal ethics laws, regardless of the decision on impeachment.

"We are not trying to sell any case. We want to collect the facts and tell people what the facts are. And until we've gotten all the facts, it's not the time or place to claim that we got something that we don't have," a senior GOP investigator told CNN.

Meanwhile, attention has shifted inside the GOP conference to [*impeaching Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/30/politics/impeaching-dhs-secretary-mayorkas-committee/index.html) over his handling of the southern border, where impeachment articles against are expected to hit the House floor as soon as next week.

House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan, who is co-leading the investigation, acknowledged a Biden impeachment is not a forgone conclusion.

"We don't know. I mean that depends on the conference in the House of Representatives," Jordan told CNN.

The GOP committee chairmen, however, are still determined to make their case. This week, Jordan, Comer and Ways and Means Chairman Jason Smith, a Republican from Missouri, presented an update to the conservative Republican Study Committee on their probe, and there are regular meetings between the committees and the speaker's office.

For his part, Comer has [*long said*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/14/politics/james-comer-impeachment-interview/index.html) that his job is not to impeach Biden - it's to investigate.

"I would vote to impeach him, but I'm not going to lose any sleep whether he gets impeached or not because we know the Senate's not going to convict," Comer said last month of the Democratic-controlled Senate.

A number of GOP lawmakers praised Comer's work, including House Majority Leader Steve Scalise.

"Chairman Comer has worked tirelessly to conduct a thorough investigation into President BIden's involvement in the Biden family's shady business dealings and his Administration's efforts to impede the criminal investigation into Hunter Biden," Scalise said in a statement to CNN.

'We don't have the votes right now'

Republicans have struggled to get the full support of the conference behind their impeachment inquiry into Biden.

"We don't have the votes right now," one GOP lawmaker told CNN.

A number of lawmakers said that is because they still don't see the evidence or are waiting for the investigation to conclude to make a final decision.

GOP Rep. Mike Kelly of Pennsylvania, who is not on any of the committees conducting the probe, told CNN, "I have seen nothing. I really see nothing. I know what people say. And I watch the news," when asked if any evidence uncovered by the committees rose to the level of impeachment.

GOP Rep. David Schweikert, who represents an Arizona district Biden won in 2020, said, "When the report is done, I'll read it."

Another swing district Republican, Rep. Mike Garcia of California, who is waiting to see what the committees produce before making a final judgment, told CNN that when the committee chairs leading the investigation presented to a subsection of the conference this week they each gave updates on their work, but none said explicitly they had evidence of an impeachable offense.

Pointing to the House Oversight Committee's bank memos about Biden family business dealings, a senior GOP investigator said that the evidence is there, but "we need to maybe do a better job from a communications perspective at dumbing those memos down and turning them into graphics."

Others say it has not been a big focus of their already crowded agenda.

"Nobody is talking about that," said GOP Rep. Dan Newhouse of Washington state, when asked for his thoughts on the Biden impeachment inquiry.

Another swing district Republican, Rep. David Valadao of California, said: "I spend zero time on this."

Reflecting on balancing the different perspectives in the GOP conference, a senior GOP investigator said, "In today's political environment, when you don't have an instant conclusion and you're not immediately able to forecast precisely what you're going to do, members get a little frustrated."

Blame game heats up

As the future of the probe remains uncertain, Republicans are unclear what their next move will be after Hunter Biden's closed-door interview on February 28, with one GOP lawmaker calling that the "big decision point."

One senior GOP investigator said that while they want to continue to talk to witnesses, they want to be "mindful of wrapping this investigation up as quickly as we can" and hope to be in a position at the end of February to help members understand what they have found.

While it is possible testimony from the president's son changes the dynamics of the investigation, the blame game of what went wrong up until this point is already heating up.

As Republicans fought to interview the president's son in a closed-door setting, some GOP sources were frustrated that prior to sending the subpoena, Comer had previously gone on television and offered the president's son the ability to testify in public, which Hunter Biden's lawyers repeatedly referenced. He surprised Republicans involved in the probe when he [*told CNN*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/14/politics/james-comer-impeachment-interview/index.html) his final report would have criminal referrals in it, a GOP source said. Comer also has gotten in hot water for his [*handling*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/19/politics/kevin-morris-republicans-response/index.html) of witness transcripts and has held only one public hearing on his probe, which one senior GOP aide called [*at the time*](https://x.com/MZanona/status/1707434463674671558?s=20) an "an unmitigated disaster."

A senior GOP impeachment inquiry aide defended Comer's handling of the president's son subpoena, saying they ultimately got what they wanted with an agreement on a closed-door deposition, and said the point of the first hearing was to establish a basis for the inquiry, not to determine whether there was evidence to impeach. Another senior GOP impeachment inquiry aide said Comer gets almost daily requests from members to go to their districts and speak about his committee's work, and receives positive feedback when he updates the conference on the investigation.

Still, there have been differences of opinion on what the committees should focus on and confusion for members trying to follow their work.

"It makes it a little bit harder when you have a process that is very fragmented," GOP Rep. Victoria Spartz of Indiana, who serves on the House Judiciary Committee said, referring to the many committees involved. "It's becoming much more difficult."

CNN's Haley Talbot contributed to this report.

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