

# [***Republicans in Damage Control Mode As Biden Impeachment Implodes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCY-YMP1-DY68-117R-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 549 words

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**Highlight:** Prominent Republicans have rowed back on comments they made on Alexander Smirnov's allegations against Joe Biden.

**Body**

Prominent [*Republicans*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/republicans?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) dramatically shifted their position on the importance of the evidence provided by former [*FBI*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fbi?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) informant Alexander Smirnov after he was [*charged with lying to the agency*](https://www.newsweek.com/trump-appointed-attorney-delivers-big-win-bidens-1870438?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and manufacturing falsified records last week.

Smirnov had claimed Ukrainian energy company Burisma paid [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) and his son [*Hunter Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hunter-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) "$5 million each" in exchange for political favors and his testimony formed a significant part of the [*impeachment inquiry*](https://www.newsweek.com/maga-republicans-force-kevin-mccarthys-hand-1826415?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) into the president which then speaker [*Kevin McCarthy*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/kevin-mccarthy?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) launched in September 2023. President Biden has vehemently denied any involvement in his son's business activities.

On Tuesday, a court memo filed by the [*Department of Justice*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/department-justice?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) claimed Smirnov had [*"extensive and extremely recent" contact*](https://www.newsweek.com/james-comer-resignation-calls-grow-after-russian-intel-bombshell-1871862?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) with "officials affiliated with Russian intelligence" who were involved in a campaign to "spread misinformation about a candidate of one of the two major parties in the United States." The filing added Smirnov was "actively peddling new lies that could impact U.S. elections after meeting with Russian intelligence officials in November."

On Wednesday, House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer, a Republican who is leading the impeachment investigation, played down Smirnov's importance claiming he "wasn't an important part of this investigation because I didn't even know who he was" during an interview with [*Newsmax*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/newsmax?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships).

A clip of this was posted on X, formerly [*Twitter*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/twitter?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), by the 'Acyn' account which shares US ***politics***-related footage where it received more than 2.3 million views.

In response, the official House Judiciary Committee [*Democrats*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/democrats?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) X account shared a video compilation of prominent Republicans, including Comer, previously emphasizing the significance of Smirnov's testimony. In the historic footage of Comer, taken from a [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) interview on May 7 and 9, 2023, the senior Republican described "the whistleblower," in reference to Smirnov, as "extremely credible" and claimed his testimony would be "judgment day for the White House."

The compilation also included a clip of Representative [*Jim Jordan*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/jim-jordan?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships), chair of the House Judiciary Committee, claiming Smirnov was "an incredible source" for the FBI. However on Wednesday, Jordan insisted Smirnov's indictment, and his alleged connection to Russian intelligence officers, "doesn't change the fundamental facts" about the Biden impeachment bid.

In response to a request for comment Russell Dye, a spokesperson for the committee who works for Jordan, said: "Nothing has changed. We have plenty of evidence that shows impeachable conduct. It would be nice if *Newsweek* covered some of that evidence instead of running crisis communications for the Biden administration."

In July 2023 Rep. Pat Fallon, a Republican member of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, shared a document the committee shared on X concerning Smirnov's allegations [*adding*](https://twitter.com/RepPatFallon/status/1682084911295913985): "This is damning evidence that Biden is compromised.

"Remember when Democrats and their pals in the media went as far as to question whether this document even exists?"

However [*speaking to Fox Business on Wednesday*](https://www.rawstory.com/pat-fallon-texas-biden-impeachment/), referring to the FD-1023 form containing the allegations, said: "Well the FD-1023 is in the periphery, it's ancillary from the topic."

*Newsweek* has reached out to the offices of Rep. Comer and Rep. Fallon for comment by email.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2352695/james-comer-jim-jordan.jpg)

**Graphic**

James Comer and Jim Jordan

Kevin Dietsch/Win McNamee/GETTY

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan (left) pictured in Capitol Hill on December 5, 2023 and House Oversight and Accountability Committee Chairman James Comer (right) speaking to the media on December 13, 2023 in Washington, DC.

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