

# ‘Efforts to ... erase the insurrection’: Deletion of Jan. 6 database by Trump administration appears to violate federal law, watchdog says

CHRIS PEREZ | Jan 30th, 2025, 6:57 pm

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*Left: Jan. 6 rioters during the 2021 Capitol attack (Department of Justice). Right: President-elect Donald Trump arrives to speak at a meeting of the House GOP conference, Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2024, in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon).*

The Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a federal watchdog group, has penned an open letter to the Inspector General of the Department of Justice and the Archivist of the United States, urging them to “take action” and investigate the DOJ’s removal of its Jan. 6 database — detailing criminal charges and convictions related to the 2021 Capitol attack — which they call a “likely violation” of federal law.

“The Department of Justice’s removal of this vital information about its prosecutions arising from the January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol is consistent with President Trump’s ongoing efforts to rewrite or erase the insurrection,” the CREW letter reads. “We request that you promptly investigate this matter and take appropriate corrective action if necessary.”

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The DOJ's database removal first came to light last week after President Donald Trump issued his Jan. 6 pardons on his first day in office, with CNN reporting Sunday that only parts of the database were still accessible through the Internet Archive, while everything else was scrubbed clean.

"This is a huge victory for J6ers," wrote pardoned Jan. 6 rioter Brandon Straka on X.

"This site was one of countless weapons of harassment used by the federal government to make life impossible for its targets from J6," Straka said. "The site included every accusation, and every charge leveled against people, including the ones they were not convicted of and were never substantiated in court, and would appear as the top ranking search result. In other words, every time a potential employer, landlord, new social or business contact, etc, would search somebody targeted for J6 they would read a dossier on each person filled with FBI and FOJ accusations and narratives that were never proven, along with links to documents with even more damaging allegations."

According to CREW's letter, removing the Jan. 6 database appears to be a violation of 44 U.S.C. § 3106 — the unlawful removal or destruction of records — which requires the head of each federal agency to notify the Archivist of the United States of "any actual, impending, or threatened unlawful removal, defacing, alteration, corruption, deletion, erasure, or other destruction of records in the custody of the agency," per CREW.

"Implementing this requirement, NARA regulations provide that an "agency must report promptly any unlawful or accidental removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of records in the custody of that agency to NARA," the group's letter says. "The regulations also specify certain details the agency 'must include' in its report to NARA. The

knowing and willful destruction of federal records is a crime punishable by fines and up to three years of imprisonment.”

CREW claims that the Jan. 6 database “clearly qualifies as a federal record” as it documented the DOJ’s functions and decisions related to investigations and prosecutions related to the 2021 Capitol attack.

“The database must be managed as a federal record and its deletion is subject to the § 3106 notice requirements,” the letter to the DOJ says. “Despite the agency’s requirement to notify the archivist of the deletion of these records, there is no indication that they reported this matter to NARA, and a list of open ‘unauthorized disposition cases’ on NARA’s website does not reveal any such reporting.”

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While there may not be an online record anymore, at least one Jan. 6 judge — Bill Clinton appointee [Paul Friedman](#) — has decided to take matters into his own hands by creating his own 138-page list of Capitol riot defendants, which he attached to his most recent ruling granting a DOJ dismissal to rioter [Christopher Warnagiris](#).

“Department of Justice chart documenting sentences in Capitol breach cases,” the list’s title reads.

In addition to the DOJ database, the FBI’s online record of individuals who were still wanted in connection with Jan. 6 also no longer exists. Attempts by Law&Crime to reach the DOJ and FBI for comment on Thursday were unsuccessful.

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