



Rep. Tom Emmer on Congressman Emmer questions CFPB Director Rohit Chopra about the agency's hiring practices

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****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** I have a lot to get on, so I'm going to jump right into it. Director Chopra, Ranking Member McHenry referred to reports that former acting director Wiggo unlawfully removed career CFPB staff to make room for your handpicked replacements. Here's the specific allegation, in case anyone missed it. This is from a story that appeared in GovExec on June 14, 2021. It states, quote, the Biden administration is taking unusual steps to ensure it can install its own hires into top career positions at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and push out officials who served under President Trump, according to several current and former employees. CFPB in recent months has offered separation incentives, including early retirement, and launched investigations into career senior executives to sideline them, targeting about a half dozen of the highest ranked nonpolitical staffers at the Bureau, close quote. These are serious allegations. If the inspector general finds these allegations to be true, it is clear that President Biden's political team violated a law stating that discrimination based on political affiliation is prohibited. The Supreme Court held that the president can remove the director of the CFPB for any reason or for no reason at all. But let me be clear, the Supreme Court did not exempt the CFPB from laws that prohibit removing career civil servants based on their political affiliation. Mr. Chopra, were you aware of the Biden administration's plan to push out career officials who were hired during the Trump administration?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** I don't believe there was a plan to do that, but with respect to the allegations, well, I couldn't be aware if there wasn't a plan. So it's no.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Did anyone at the White House ever discuss CFPB personnel with you, sir?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** I was a nominee, so I was nominated, and that was through presidential personnel.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Again, I'm trying to be very clear, and I have a limited amount of time. Did anyone at the White House, who I'm assuming you've had communications with before you were nominated, once you were nominated, and since you've been confirmed, before you were actually confirmed, did you have anyone at the White House ever discuss CFPB personnel with you?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**



** There has never been any discussions with the White House about career civil servants or any indications of that matter. Since I took office, I've begun to get briefings about...

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Thank you very much. If I could move on to my next question. Sir, I'll reclaim my time. Did you discuss the CFPB workforce with Leandra English at any time since the election last November?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** No. The workforce?

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Director, no, I'll say it again. People that work at the CFPB, I think it's pretty self-explanatory. Did you ever discuss people who work at the CFPB with Leandra English at any time since the election last November?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** I don't recall ever speaking to her about personnel issues.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Thank you. Director Chopra, if there are people on your senior political team who hired or fired career staff because of their political affiliation, I expect you'll take some sort of corrective action. And my question to you, sir, will you rehire the people who were wrongfully terminated?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** If there are findings of any prohibited personnel practice, we will take appropriate disciplinary action.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Would you rehire anyone who was wrongfully terminated because of their political affiliation?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** Well, if there is a finding of that, which I have no indication to suggest there will be, I will take all the steps that I am required to under the law, including if required, rehiring.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** I hope that, yes, thank you. I also think it will be important to know whether any of the actions and questions occurred with your knowledge or at your direction. If so, I think you may need to consider whether to recuse yourself from any decisions related to this matter. If it turns out, sir, that you are implicated in the scheme to remove career staff based on their perceived political affiliations, can I have your commitment that you will recuse yourself from any decision, any decision making related to corrective action?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** I will not be implicated in it because I did not engage in that behavior.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** But if you were, you would recuse yourself, correct?



****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** If on any directive about law findings, of course I will adhere to that, but you can trust me, I did not engage in the allegations you are suggesting.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** Thank you. Will you fully cooperate with the IG's investigation in this matter?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** I will always cooperate with the Inspector General of the Federal Reserve System.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** And will you instruct the agency's political staff to cooperate with the investigation?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** Everyone must cooperate with the IG.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** And you'll tell them that they must, right?

****DIRECTOR CHOPRA:**

** Yes, and I've also told them that they must adhere to all ethics rules as well. We need to make sure that all of those are being followed and that they're not preferred.

****REP. TOM EMMER:**

** I see my time has expired. We'll wait and see what the IG finds in this case. I yield back, thank you.

****COMMITTEE CHAIR:**

** Once time has expired, we will now hear from.

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