



## **Dem Bill Would Require ‘Good Cause’ for FBI Director Dismissal**

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WASHINGTON – Rep. Anthony G. Brown (D-Md.) last week introduced legislation that would require “good cause” for the president to dismiss the director of the FBI, while calling President Trump’s decision to fire James B. Comey “disturbing.”

Trump on May 9 dismissed the FBI director, subsequently producing memos from Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein on Comey’s job performance. Rosenstein criticized Comey’s handling of the investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s use of a private email server in 2015, stating that the FBI director had made serious mistakes.

Comey’s firing came six days after he briefed senators on a criminal investigation exploring potential collusion between Trump and Russia during his presidential campaign. Rosenstein has since appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller as special counsel to lead the Russia investigation.

Brown’s legislation - the Fighting for Intelligent, Rational, and Ethical Dismissal Act - would amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 in requiring “good cause.” The bill requires evidence of inefficiency, neglect of duty or malfeasance in office in order to carry out any future dismissals.

“We need to be certain the FBI director can perform his or her duties free from threats from the Oval Office or partisan politics. If the FIRED Act were in place, Mr. Comey would still be leading the FBI investigation into Michael Flynn and the President’s ties with Russia,” Brown said in a statement on May 17. “As more information about the FBI’s Russia investigation comes to light, it is clear that President Trump has made disturbing decisions raising serious questions.”

Brown called Mueller’s appointment “the right choice,” which will allow for an independent investigation free from “political pressure exerted by President Trump and Attorney General Sessions.” The congressman said that the Russia investigation, however, still needs an independent commission.

“The American people deserve answers and the truth regarding Russian meddling in our democracy and President Trump’s ties to Russia,” he said in a statement.

Patrick Eddington, a Cato Institute policy analyst, described Brown's legislation as an "ill-considered, feel-good messaging bill." He added that there is no legal agreement that he's aware of that defines "good cause" to fire a Senate-confirmed official not guilty of dereliction or criminal conduct.

"Was Trump's dismissal of Comey legal?" Eddington asked in an email. "That's a question Mueller will examine vis a vis potential obstruction of justice allegations."

Richard Painter, chairman of the board for Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, in a recent interview said that he would fully support Brown's legislation.

"Put together with all the other evidence, it seems quite clear that it was motivated by the desire to slow down or end the Russia investigation, and if that's true, I think that amounts to obstruction of justice, but that's where the evidence is pointing in my view," Painter said.

Trump in an interview with NBC admitted that "this Russia thing" was on his mind when he dismissed Comey, a statement that is inconsistent with recommendations from Sessions and Rosenstein, who highlighted the mishandling of the Clinton emails. Painter said that Trump's motivations were stated more strongly when the president told Russian officials earlier this month that he was relieved after firing Comey, whom he described as "a real nut job," according to reports