



## **Sen. Ted Cruz requests oversight hearing of FBI after agents' rule-breaking exposed**

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Sen. Ted Cruz, Texas Republican, wants the Senate Judiciary Committee to pursue more aggressive oversight of the FBI after an internal audit revealed agents broke rules during investigations involving politicians, candidates, religious groups, the news media and others.

The 2019 FBI audit first reported by The Washington Times showed agents violating the FBI's own rules 747 times in 18 months while conducting sensitive investigations.

Mr. Cruz wrote to the Judiciary Committee Chairman Dick Durbin to request that the Illinois Democrat convene a hearing with FBI Director Christopher A. Wray, Justice Department Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz, and any division directors with knowledge of the violated rules detailed in the 2019 FBI audit.

Mr. Durbin joined with Sen. Charles E. Grassley, Iowa Republican, earlier this week to ask Mr. Horowitz to review the FBI's record and to request Mr. Wray hand over an unredacted copy of the audit.

"I commend you and Ranking Member Grassley for your efforts in calling on the FBI and the DOJ Inspector General to provide further transparency on this topic, but I am concerned about Director Wray's FBI and its pattern of stonewalling," Mr. Cruz wrote to Mr. Durbin on Thursday. "For example, the FBI declined to provide responsive information regarding its 2016 probe of Concerned Women for America as requested by Chairman Grassley and similarly declined to provide simple answers in my recent questioning of Director [Jill] Sanborne, regarding the FBI's degree of involvement" in the January 6 assault on the Capitol.

The 2016 probe of Concerned Women for America involved an assessment by the FBI that was uncovered by Cato Institute Senior Fellow Patrick Eddington in response to a Freedom of Information Act inquiry. Mr. Eddington also unearthed the 2019 FBI audit in litigation against the bureau for access to government records.

The FBI revealed last year that it determined in July 2016 that there was nothing to pursue at the CWA. In December 2021, the bureau declined to answer Mr. Grassley's questions about its assessment of the conservative women's group.

Various congressional committees are looking at fresh oversight of the FBI. Mr. Durbin's office did not respond to request for comment on the hearing requested by Mr. Cruz.

While Mr. Durbin and Mr. Grassley made a bipartisan push for answers from the FBI and the Justice Department this week, three House Judiciary Committee Republicans are also seeking answers. Reps. Jim Jordan, Ohio Republican; Andy Biggs, Arizona Republican; and Mike Johnson, Louisiana Republican, wrote to Mr. Wray in March and demanded that he answer questions about the audit.

During a House Judiciary Committee hearing earlier this week, Mr. Biggs said the trio received no response from Mr. Wray and he questioned Bryan Vorndran, assistant director in FBI's cyber division, about the lawmakers' letter on the 2019 audit. Mr. Vorndran said he was not prepared to answer but assured Mr. Biggs he would tell Mr. Wray the Republicans want a response.

The House Oversight and Reform Committee is also scrutinizing the FBI's domestic operations. The Government Accountability Office is reviewing the FBI's use of assessments in response to a request from two oversight committee members, Reps. Jamie Raskin, Maryland Democrat, and Nancy Mace, South Carolina Republican.

The FBI referred The Washington Times to its previous comments when asked about Mr. Cruz's letter.. Previously, the FBI has said the 2019 audit's findings were unacceptable, that it made changes to agents' training in an effort to fix the rule-breaking, and that the bureau has acknowledged that it received the lawmakers' letters requesting more information.