

DOJ disclosed 'damning evidence' about Trump's procurement of classified documents, top Democrat says

A Jack Smith memo suggested Donald Trump took sensitive documents accessible to only a handful of people in government and others pertaining to his business interests, Jamie Raskin said.



Attorney General Pam Bondi, left, heads President Donald Trump's Department of Justice, which Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., said has released some documents from former special counsel Jack Smith's classified documents case against Trump to the House Judiciary Committee. Kevin Dietsch / Getty Images file

The Justice Department released documents to Congress that included "damning evidence" about President Donald Trump's procurement of highly sensitive documents, including some related to his business interests, when he left office after his first term, Rep. Jamie Raskin, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, said Wednesday.

In a [letter to Attorney General Pam Bondi](#), Raskin alleged some of the documents, which had been sought by then-special counsel Jack Smith in his now-defunct classified documents case against Trump, were accessible only to a handful of people in the government, and that the documents seemed to be relevant to the then-former president's business interests.

"These new disclosures suggest that Donald Trump stole documents so sensitive that only six people in the entire U.S. government had access to them, that the documents President Trump stole pertained to his business interests, and that Susie Wiles, then the CEO of Donald Trump's super PAC, witnessed President Trump showing off a classified map to passengers on his private plane," wrote Raskin, D-Md.

The Justice Department's release of documents from Smith's investigation to the Republican-run House committee for its probe into the past investigations into Trump might have violated U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon's order barring public disclosure of materials from the special counsel probe, Raskin said.

Cannon issued the order after [she dismissed the case](#) on the grounds that the DOJ's appointment of Smith was "unlawful."

The Justice Department under Biden appealed the ruling by Cannon, who had previously been reversed on appeal after she attempted to appoint a special master to review the classified documents seized from Mar-a-Lago; three Republican-appointed judges found Cannon "[improperly exercised equitable jurisdiction](#)" in the latter issue.

Smith, who moved to dismiss the separate Jan. 6 related case against Trump after Trump's 2024 victory, told Congress that in that case, his team had gathered "[proof beyond a reasonable doubt](#)" that Trump engaged in a criminal scheme to overturn the 2020 election.

In his letter to Bondi, Raskin accused the Justice Department of being "blinded by the frenzied search to find any scrap of evidence" to attack Smith, adding that the department has, "quite amazingly, missed the fact that some of the documents you provided include damning evidence about your boss's conduct and may well violate the gag order your DOJ and Donald Trump demanded from Judge Aileen Cannon."

The memo, obtained by NBC News, provides a summary of what prosecutors were working on as of January 2023 related to the classified documents case.

"Trump had in his possession some highly sensitive documents — the type of documents that only presidents and officials with the most sensitive authority have," the memo said. That included one document that was previously "accessible by only 6? people, including the president."

"That document is one we will need," prosecutors said in the memo.

Smith's team also wrote, "Trump had many documents in his possession — so many and in so many different places that it is hard to fathom that he was not aware."



Rep. Jamie Raskin said a DOJ release of documents to his committee included materials related to Jack Smith's classified documents investigation. Graeme Sloan / Bloomberg via Getty Images

The Justice Department said in [a post to X](#) that Raskin, “much like Jack Smith, is blinded by hatred of President Trump.”

The statement called Raskin’s allegations “baseless” and “a cheap political stunt,” saying “Smith’s team was desperate to prosecute [then-President Joe] Biden’s top political opponent, so it is no surprise that his files contain salacious and untrue claims about President Trump.” The Justice Department also asserted that Cannon’s order was not violated.

Reached for comment, White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson echoed the DOJ's post, saying it was “pathetic that Democrats with zero credibility like Jamie Raskin” were “clinging” to Smith.

“President Trump did nothing wrong, which is why he easily defeated the Biden DOJ’s unprecedented lawfare campaign against him and then won nearly 80 million votes in a landslide election victory,” Jackson said.

NBC News has reached out to Smith's representative for comment.

Raskin said the information released by the Justice Department indicated Trump “apparently took classified documents on a flight to his golf club in Bedminster, NJ” in 2022. Quoting from the DOJ disclosures, the lawmaker wrote that prosecutors believed Trump might have shown a

classified map to people on the plane, noting that they believed this was witnessed by Wiles, who is now the president's chief of staff.

Cannon, a Trump appointee, [blocked the public release](#) of Smith's report outside of the Justice Department earlier this year and specifically blocked it [from being sent to Congress](#) last year.

Raskin wrote that without access to Smith's report or other investigative materials, lawmakers did not have details about the classified map and other information disclosed by the DOJ.

"Without access to Volume II of the Special Counsel's final report or the investigative files, we do not know what that classified map contained, nor can we determine from this memo the relationship between the classified documents President Trump stole and their pertinence to his 'business interests,'" Raskin wrote.

Raskin submitted a series of questions to Bondi, asking for further information about who Trump allegedly showed the classified map to, what the map detailed, and information about the document allegedly only accessible by six people. He also requested details about documents "improperly" retained by Trump that were "pertinent to his business interests."

Raskin asked that Bondi respond to the questions by the end of this month. He also said that the Justice Department "must cease cherry-picking investigative materials" and release all information prepared by Smith's office by April 14.