

[After No Reply Or Public Explanation To Previous Request, Top Senate & House Democrats Demand In-Person Briefing From DOJ's Chief Ethics Official On Whether He Has Advised Mr. Whitaker To Recuse Himself From Overseeing The Mueller Investigation](#)

Dec 06 2018

Washington, D.C. – Top Senate and House Democrats today sent a new letter to the Department of Justice's Chief Ethics Official, Assistant Attorney General Lee J. Lofthus, demanding an in-person meeting and renewing their November 11, 2018, request—to which they received no reply—to immediately be notified in writing as to whether he or any other ethics officials at the Department of Justice have advised Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker to recuse himself from the Special Counsel investigation, and to be provided with all ethics guidance Mr. Whitaker has been given to date. Despite the serious ethical considerations that should preclude any involvement by President Trump's handpicked Attorney General Matthew Whitaker with Special Counsel Mueller's investigation, the Democrats note that 14 months after joining the DOJ, Mr. Whitaker's ethics review is still incomplete.

The Democrats' previous [letter](#), signed by Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer, House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Dianne Feinstein, House Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Jerrold Nadler, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Vice Chairman Mark Warner, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Ranking Member Adam Schiff, and House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Elijah Cummings, included a number of examples of Mr. Whitaker's many conflicts of interest and hostile statements toward Special Counsel Mueller's investigation. These examples include Mr. Whitaker's televised statement suggesting that the investigation be defunded or subjected to strict limitations on its scope, a published online opinion piece referring to the investigation as a witch hunt,

and a statement in which he clearly pre-judged the outcome of the investigation.

Senate and House Democrats' second letter to Assistant Attorney General Lee J. Lofthus renewing their request can be found [here](#) and below:

The Honorable Lee J. Lofthus
Assistant Attorney General for Administration
and Designated Agency Ethics Officer

Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Assistant Attorney General Lofthus:

On November 11, 2018, we wrote to request that you immediately notify us in writing as to whether you or any other ethics officials at the Department of Justice have advised Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker to recuse himself from the Special Counsel investigation, and that you provide to us all ethics guidance Mr. Whitaker has been given to date. A copy of our earlier letter is attached.

It is our understanding that, 14 months after Mr. Whitaker joined the Department, his ethics review is still incomplete. The Department has offered no public explanation for this extraordinary delay, nor have we received any reply to our letter. This is unacceptable.

We therefore write to renew our November 11, 2018 request, and we ask that you also make yourself available to brief us and answer our questions in person. Our staff will contact you to schedule a time for this meeting.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer

Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate

Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate

Jerrold Nadler
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives

Mark R. Warner
Vice Chairman
Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. Senate

Adam B. Schiff
Ranking Member
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives

Elijah Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight & Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

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