

Hunter Biden indictment, Biden impeachment inquiry mark intensification of US political crisis

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On Thursday, federal prosecutors led by Special Counsel David C. Weiss revealed that a federal grand jury in Wilmington, Delaware, would be charging President Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, with three felonies related to his purchase of a Colt Cobra revolver nearly five years ago, on October 12, 2018. This is the first time the US Department of Justice has charged the son or daughter of a sitting US president.

Hunter Biden is being charged with lying to a federally licensed gun dealer, making a false claim on the firearms application and possessing an illegally obtained gun for 11 days. The government alleges that Hunter, a recovering drug addict who has struggled with alcohol and crack cocaine, lied on his 2018 application to purchase the weapon when he falsely stated he was not using drugs.

"Hunter Biden possessed a firearm while knowing he was an unlawful user of or addicted to any stimulant, narcotic drug or any other controlled substance, in violation of federal law," prosecutors wrote in their indictment. If convicted of all three counts, Biden could face up to 25 years in prison. However, as a first-time offender who did not commit any violent crimes with the revolver while it was in his possession, it is highly unlikely he would receive any significant prison time if convicted.

Earlier this year as part of a plea deal that has since imploded, Hunter Biden had agreed under a "pretrial diversion agreement" to admit he was using drugs at the time he purchased the gun in order to avoid prosecution. As part of the deal to drop the gun charge, he would have agreed to be drug-free for two years and not own a firearm.

Republicans, beginning with ex-President Donald Trump, were furious over the terms of the plea deal, which would have resulted in Hunter Biden pleading guilty to misdemeanor tax crimes.

After the indictment against Hunter Biden was announced, Trump took to his social media platform to complain it was not enough, because "the gun charge, is the only crime that Hunter Biden committed that does not implicate Crooked Joe Biden."

Claiming the Democrats were bringing indictments against himself

as retribution for the prosecution of Hunter Biden, Trump said Democrats "have started a process that is very dangerous for our Country. They have opened the proverbial Pandora's Box, and it is possible that the USA will never be the same again."

The charging of Hunter Biden marks an intensification of the US political crisis that has only become more acute in the wake of four indictments released earlier this year against Trump and some of his January 6 coup co-conspirators. There is the distinct possibility that in the months leading up to the 2024 presidential election, the Republican presidential candidate and the incumbent Democratic president's son will both be in courtrooms fighting felony charges.

The charges against Hunter come two days after Republican Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy announced the launching of an impeachment inquiry into Joe Biden for his alleged role in Hunter's corrupt business dealings. And it takes place only two weeks before Congress must pass appropriations bills before the end of the fiscal year, September 30, in order to avert a government shutdown. Many Republicans actively desire a shutdown, as part of their campaign to destroy federal social programs, since the military is excluded from the shutdown. Some Democrats want to see a shutdown, either because they share the goals of the Republicans or because they think it would undermine the Republican campaigns in the 2024 elections.

Trump, seeking vengeance against his political enemies, has demanded that Republicans do everything in their power to "go after the Biden crime family," up to and including shutting down the government.

Seeking to flip the script on the Democrats who accused him of being a "Russian agent" and "stooge" of Vladimir Putin, in his campaign speeches and in interviews Trump regularly accuses Joe and Hunter Biden of corrupt business dealings with the Communist Party of China and of being "Manchurian" agents.

On Wednesday, the *New York Times* reported that Trump "has talked regularly by phone with members of the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus and other congressional Republicans who pushed for impeachment. ... Trump has encouraged the effort both privately and publicly."

Under conditions of a growing strike wave and rebellion against the labor bureaucracies in the United States and faltering support among broad sections of the population for unending war in Ukraine against Russia, sections of the ruling class are sharply divided over how to best attack the working class at home and abroad.

The Democratic Party—which above all desires “unity” with its “Republican friends” to carry out their shared class agenda of enriching the financial oligarchy and destroying their rivals abroad at the expense of workers—is more than willing to let far-right sections of the Republican Party dictate extreme spending cuts, which they will largely accede to.

Trump and the most fascistic and rapacious sections of the ruling class are demanding not only the impeachment of Biden, but massive spending cuts on all social programs that benefit the working class. Speaking from the floor of the House Tuesday following McCarthy’s announcement of the impeachment inquiry into Biden, top Trump ally Florida Representative Matt Gaetz threatened to file a motion to vacate the speakership if McCarthy fails to exact enough domestic spending cuts from the Biden administration.

While these measures must also pass the Democratic-controlled Senate and be signed into law by Biden, making them unlikely to be adopted in the form demanded by the Freedom Caucus, Gaetz & Co. are nonetheless setting the political agenda for capitalist politics and the 2024 election campaign.

In his speech attacking McCarthy, Gaetz said, “We have had no vote on term limits or on balanced budgets, as the agreement demanded and required,” adding “and instead of cutting spending to raise the debt limit, you relied on budgetary gimmicks ... to underwrite Biden’s debt and advance his spending agenda.”

Gaetz, speaking on behalf of Trump, tied any vote for a continuing resolution to keep the government operating with massive spending cuts and the ending of Special Counsel Jack Smith’s federal investigations into Trump. “Our leadership right now is asking us to vote for a continuing resolution, a vote for a continuing resolution is a vote to continue the green new deal, a vote to continue inflationary spending, and the most troubling .. a vote to continue the election interference of Jack Smith.”

As part of the debt ceiling agreement announced earlier this year, if all 12 spending bills included in the continuing resolution are not passed by Congress by January 1, 2024, something that has not happened since 1997, there will be a 1 percent across-the-board cut in domestic spending.

Calling for an end to the investigations of Trump and for more charges to be filed against Hunter Biden, Gaetz attacked McCarthy for not allowing House Republicans to “zero out the salaries of the bureaucrats who have broken bad, targeted President Trump or cut sweetheart deals for Hunter Biden.”

Following his speech on Tuesday, Gaetz was interviewed extensively by Ari Melber on MSNBC where he again reiterated his threats to file a motion to vacate the speaker if McCarthy does not agree to massive spending cuts.

“We are about to hit the moment in time where we are going to run \$2 trillion annual deficits at a time when much of the world is de-dollarizing, from BRICS to the African Union to more energy being sold in the yuan due to the energy deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia,” Gaetz told Melber. “So as the world de-dollarizes, I think that it’s really dangerous for us to be running up these deficits. If Speaker McCarthy brought us individual spending bills over the year, he would not be facing the challenge.”

Melber did not challenge Gaetz to articulate why exactly the working class should be made to suffer massive spending cuts to social programs, while billionaires and the Pentagon get unlimited tax breaks and funding.

In this way, the ruling class and their media mouthpieces use fascistic Republicans to create the conditions for massive attacks on the working class, while at the same time trying to keep them out of power due their sharp differences over foreign policy.

While Gaetz, Trump, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene and other far-right Republicans are focused on annihilating China first, the Democratic Party, the CIA and large sections of the Republicans, including “anti-Trump” presidential candidates Nikki Haley, Mike Pence and Chris Christie, side with Democrats in prosecuting regime change against Russia first. Both capitalist parties and the entire ruling class see no path out of the current crisis without war abroad, paid for by austerity for workers and their family “at home.”

For the working class, the task is not to side with one or another faction of the ruling class as they seek to plunge workers and their families further into poverty in furtherance of prosecuting World War III. Workers and youth must forge an independent path against all the capitalist parties and the corrupt trade unions, aimed at uniting workers in the US and around the world in social and political struggle against the capitalist system and for socialism.



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