

Trump administration targets Gavin Newsom in latest weaponization of Justice Department

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On Monday, California Governor Gavin Newsom released a video claiming that federal agents were investigating him and his family at the behest of President Donald Trump. The investigation appears to be the latest example of the Trump administration's weaponization of the criminal justice system against its political opponents.

In the video, posted on social media, Newsom declared:

In recent days federal agents have knocked on the doors of family, friends and former employees. Not because they found a crime, because they are simply trying to find one. They are demanding records. They are abusing the grand jury process, digging through years and years of random documents.

The term-limited governor and likely 2028 Democratic presidential candidate claimed that Trump "isn't coming after me because of my mean tweets. He's coming after me because I am considering running for president. Because he hates that I have consistently called him out, over and over again, for his lies and deceit."

Since returning to the White House, Trump, in his ongoing effort to establish a presidential dictatorship, has ignored court orders and deployed federal agents and military elements in cities across the US to attack democratic rights. Those targeted have included anti-genocide protesters, immigrants, students and political opponents. College students, such as Rümeyşa Öztürk, a Tufts University student, have been kidnapped for writing op-eds opposing the genocide in Gaza.

As of this writing, the Department of Justice and acting Attorney General Todd Blanche have refused to comment on any investigations into the Newsoms or release any charging documents. Newsom's attorneys have filed a Freedom of Information Act request for communications involving top Justice Department officials, including Blanche, former Attorney General Pam Bondi and former acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove.

In his video address, Newsom noted that Trump personally called for him to be investigated last year. Newsom's office claims federal agents began making inquiries to associates of the governor after Trump announced that he planned to nominate Blanche as attorney general. Blanche previously served as Trump's personal lawyer.

Since Trump's return to the White House, Blanche has been carrying out Trump's personal and political vendettas at the Department of Justice. He has overseen the ongoing cover-up of the Epstein files, refusing to release millions of documents still held by the department. He spearheaded the attempted creation of a \$1.8 billion slush fund for the fascists who stormed the Capitol on January 6 and the agreement with the Internal Revenue Service that granted Trump and his children immunity from audits of past tax returns.

The *New York Times* reported, citing aides to Newsom, that the federal investigation "appears to focus on his wife, Jennifer Siebel Newsom." The paper noted that those questioned by federal agents in recent days include former employees of the governor and people affiliated with his wife's nonprofit groups. Newsom's aides told the *Times* they believe banking records have been subpoenaed, although they said they had no written evidence of that.

The newspaper quoted a person familiar with the

matter who confirmed that multiple federal investigations are active against Newsom, with at least one focused on his wife. This unnamed source rejected Newsom's claim that the investigations were politically motivated and ordered by Trump, asserting instead that the probes originated with federal officials in California, not in Washington D.C.

Siebel Newsom is the mother of the Newsoms' four children. She is a filmmaker and owns a production company, Girls Club Entertainment, which is listed as a contractor for the Representation Project, a nonprofit founded by her. Tax records reviewed by the *Times* indicate that the Representation Project paid Girls Club Entertainment \$161,250 for film production services.

Siebel Newsom is also the co-founder of the California Partners Project, another nonprofit, which claims it exists to champion "gender equity across the state" and ensure "media and technology industries are a force for good in the lives of all children." The *Times* wrote that Governor Newsom has reported soliciting \$4.3 million in donations from the California Partners Project since 2020.

As Newsom noted in his video address, Trump "is running the largest cash heist in American political history trading foreign tariff relief for approval of his golf courses. ... His personal fortune has skyrocketed by \$4 billion since making his return to office. This is the behavior of a regime, not a republic."

Newsom's denunciations of Trump underscore the hypocritical and bankrupt character of the Democratic Party. He correctly accuses Trump of using "the levers of government" to reward "cronies" and "try and jail his opponents." But Newsom himself has for years used the powers of the state to defend the interests of the corporations, the wealthy and the Democratic Party machine.

Most recently, Newsom and powerful Democratic-aligned groups have moved to quash a proposed wealth tax on California billionaires. Newsom's team and allied organizations have worked to isolate SEIU-UHW President Dave Regan, whose union has championed the ballot measure. Construction unions, police unions, teachers' unions and major healthcare organizations have broken with SEIU-UHW to oppose the initiative, while wealthy figures such as Google co-founder Sergey Brin have reportedly moved assets or changed

residency arrangements in response to the proposal.

Faced with a modest proposal to impose a one-time tax on the state's billionaires, Newsom has mobilized the Democratic-aligned labor bureaucracy, nonprofit groups and corporate interests to protect the fortunes of the financial oligarchy.

Trump's use of the Justice Department against Newsom marks a dangerous escalation in the breakdown of American democracy. But the Democrats have no progressive answer to it because they represent the same financial oligarchy that controls the Republicans.

The significance of this conflict lies not in the personal fate of Newsom but in what it portends. The methods now being used in factional warfare within the ruling class will be turned with far greater violence against workers and youth who oppose the policies of the oligarchy: war, austerity, deportations, police repression and the destruction of democratic rights.



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