

THE EPOCH TIMES

OUR NATION

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A large, close-up portrait of U.S. Attorney John Durham. He is a middle-aged man with a full, grey beard and mustache, wearing round-rimmed glasses. He is dressed in a dark suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a dark red tie with thin blue and white diagonal stripes. The background is a blurred American flag. The lighting is soft, highlighting his facial features.

U.S. Attorney
John Durham.

Trump Asks Who Changed Whistleblower Rules Before Submittal of ‘Fake Whistleblower Report’

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

President Donald Trump on Sept. 30 demanded to know which officials changed the rules on a whistleblower form for complaints submitted to the Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community.

Sometime between May 17, 2018, and Sept. 24, 2019, the office removed language from the Urgent Concern Disclosure Form that notified complainants that their reports wouldn't be transmitted pursuant to the Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act (ICWPA) unless they had first-hand knowledge of alleged wrongdoing.

The removal of the language is significant because on Aug. 12, less than three weeks before the form was modified, the Intelligence Community inspector general (ICIG) received a whistleblower complaint based entirely on second-hand knowledge about a call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and related events. Democrats relied on the complaint, before it was made public, to launch an impeachment inquiry.

"Who changed the long standing whistleblower rules just before submittal of the fake whistleblower report? Drain the swamp!" Trump wrote on Twitter on Sept. 30.

In the Twitter post, Trump

didn't refer to the whistleblower form and instead referenced "whistleblower rules." It's unclear if the president is aware of a change to ICIG rules prior to the filing of the complaint on Aug. 12. The White House didn't respond to a request for clarification.

The form currently posted on the ICIG website states that it was revised in August, although the internal file properties say the form was created on Sept. 24.

A version of the Urgent Concern Disclosure Form, which was created on May 17, 2018, states that "in order to find an urgent concern 'credible,' the ICIG must be in possession of reliable, first-hand information."

"The ICIG cannot transmit information via the ICWPA based on an employee's second-hand knowledge of wrongdoing," the form, which The Epoch Times obtained from a CIA whistleblower, states.

The form currently posted on the ICIG website no longer features the language requiring first-hand knowledge.

"There has never been any requirement that whistleblowers were required to possess first-hand knowledge to file complaint. No law anywhere states that," Mark Zaid, the attorney for the anonymous whistleblower, wrote on Twitter.

Who changed the long standing whistleblower rules just before submittal of the fake whistleblower report?

President Donald Trump

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the ICIG didn't respond when asked when the new form became official, who approved it, why the change was made, and if the process for handling complaints featuring second-hand information has changed.

House lawmakers on Sept. 30 issued a preservation order for all the records connected to changes made to the complaint form.

"[The] timing of the removal of the first-hand information requirement raises questions about potential connections to this whistleblower complaint," Republican Reps. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), and Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) wrote in a letter to ICIG Michael Atkinson.

"This timing, along with numerous apparent leaks of classified information about the contents of this complaint, also raise questions about potential criminality in the handling of these matters."

The whistleblower's complaint, released by the House Intelligence Committee on Sept. 26, relies entirely on second-hand information the complainant allegedly received from purported government sources, media reports, and other publicly available information.

The Department of Justice, upon request of Director of

National Intelligence Joseph Maguire, reviewed the complaint and determined that it didn't meet the statutory definition of an "urgent concern," because "the alleged conduct does not relate to 'the funding, administration, or operation of an intelligence activity' under the authority of the Director of National Intelligence."

The Intelligence Community Whistleblower Protection Act is similarly limited to complaints that concern activities under the "authority of the Director of National Intelligence." In his letter to the ODNI, Atkinson didn't explain how a complaint alleging wrongdoing by the president falls within the authority of the Director of National Intelligence.

The attorneys for the anonymous whistleblower didn't respond when asked why the complaint about the president was filed with the ICIG.

As part of their impeachment inquiry, congressional Democrats are working with the whistleblower's attorney to set up a time and place for testimony, according to Zaid.

"Discussions continue to occur to coordinate & finalize logistics but no date [and] time has yet been set," Zaid wrote on Twitter on Sept. 29.

Trump and Republicans have decried the impeachment probe, calling it another attack on the president by the Democrats.

The whistleblower's complaint centers around a call between Trump and Zelensky in which the president asks the Ukrainian leader to look into potential misconduct by former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden. The whistleblower alleges that Trump's request amounted to a potential violation of campaign finance laws because Trump purportedly used his office to ask for an investigation into an election opponent. The Department of Justice reviewed the allegation and determined that no further action was necessary.

In videotaped remarks, Joe Biden spoke about forcing Ukraine to fire its top prosecutor by withholding \$1 billion in loans. The prosecutor was at the time investigating Burisma, a gas company for which Hunter Biden served on the board of directors. Hunter Biden received \$50,000 per month in compensation.

Before the transcript of the call or the whistleblower's complaint were made public, Biden accused Trump of asking Ukraine for help.

"Desperate Donald Trump knows that I can beat him, so now he's enlisting the help of a foreign government—once again. It's an abuse of power and violates every basic norm of the presidency," Biden wrote on Sept. 21. "We cannot give him four more years in the White House."

The former vice president appears to have been relying on a media report based on anonymous sources who claimed, without evidence, that Trump made a mysterious promise to Zelensky and mentioned Biden on the call eight times. These and other media claims have been debunked by the release of the transcript and the complaint.

President Donald Trump speaks during the Armed Forces Welcome Ceremony in honor of the 20th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Arlington, Va., on Sept. 30, 2019.



A police officer stands guard in Aventura, Fla., on Oct. 26, 2018.

US Murders Drop Most Since 1990s as Crime Abates in 2018

PETR SVAB

Not since 1999 has the United States seen the number of murders drop so precipitously as in 2018, when 1,080 fewer people died of homicide or non-negligent manslaughter than the year before, according to national crime statistics released by the FBI on Sept. 30.

The murder rate dropped to 5 per 100,000 residents, a decline of 6.8 percent from 2017.

Overall, the violent crime rate dropped by 3.9 percent, most notably the robbery rate, which slid by 12.6 percent in 2018. The property crime rate, meanwhile, decreased by 6.9 percent. The burglary rate, in particular, declined by 12.5 percent.

Of the seven crimes captured in the data—homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, and car theft—only rape was up in 2018, by 2.1 percent.

The decline in crimes accelerated from 2017, when the violent crime rate dropped by about 1 percent and the rate of property crime fell by 3.6 percent.

The past two years saw a decrease from the major crime spike in the two years prior. Between 2014 and 2016, the murder rate had increased by more than 20 percent. The country hadn't seen a two-year increase so steep for decades.

Winners and Losers

As usual, more than 80 percent of violent crimes were concentrated in cities in 2018, but there were notable improvements. Violent crime decreased by about 25 percent since 2016 in Las Vegas, Atlanta, Miami, Virginia Beach, and Minneapolis.

On the other hand, some cities that have historically maintained lower crime rates have seen substantial increases. Violent crime was up since 2016 in San Jose, California, by 14 percent, Seattle by 18 percent, Denver by 14 percent, Oklahoma City

It is wonderful news for America's inner cities that the crime increase of 2015 and 2016 has leveled off.

Heather Mac Donald, policing expert, Manhattan Institute

by 13 percent, and 40 percent in Aurora, Colorado. Also, murders were up by nearly 70 percent in Seattle and almost 80 percent in Portland, Oregon, though murder rates still remain well below U.S. average for both cities.

Philadelphia was the only city with a population above a million where murders went up since 2016—by almost 30 percent.

Good for Trump

The overall decrease in crime benefits President Donald Trump, who ran on a tough-on-crime platform. Increased safety was also one of his major promises to inner-city black Americans, who've been historically most affected by high crime rates.

"It is wonderful news for America's inner cities that the crime increase of 2015 and 2016 has leveled off, since the vast majority of victims of that crime increase—3,000 additional homicide deaths—were urban blacks. Likewise, the beneficiaries of a violent crime decline will be urban blacks," said Heather Mac Donald, policing expert at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank.

She thinks the positive trend is due in part to the media switching focus from the "Black Lives Matter" narrative centered on police brutality, which she considers false, to the "Resistance" narrative centered on opposition against Trump.

"The absence of a Black Lives Matter-supporting president and attorney general may have persuaded more cops to go back to proactive policing," Mac Donald said in an email. "Still, recently-elected left-wing prosecutors are carrying on the crusade against law enforcement, refusing to prosecute low-level crimes in the name of racial justice. As their policies play out, in places like Philadelphia, which is still seeing a crime increase, and elsewhere, the gains in public safety from the previous two decades of assertive law enforcement expert at risk."

Police officers stand on patrol as people participate in a Silent Peace March Against Violence in New York on July 25, 2018.



SPENCER PLATT/Getty Images

BRENON SMALOWSKI/GETTY IMAGES

DEA Allowed Increase in Opioid Production Despite Rising Deaths: IG Report

BOWEN XIAO

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was slow to address the opioid epidemic and authorized an increase in opioid production quotas despite the fact that overdose deaths were rising, according to a new report by the Justice Department’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

From 1999 through 2013, opioid overdose deaths in the United States grew by 8 percent per year on average, and 71 percent per year from 2013 through 2017. But from 2003 through 2013, the agency still authorized manufacturers to “produce substantially larger amounts of opioids,” the report found.

The report, in one example, described how the DEA authorized a 400 percent increase in the production of oxycodone, a common prescription opioid between 2002 and 2013. The agency only started to significantly reduce the oxycodone production quota in 2017—with a 25 percent cut.

While the OIG acknowledged the DEA had taken some action to address the crisis in recent years, they said the agency didn’t do enough to address the significant rise in opioid use and diversion of opioids since the early 2000s. The report, in addition, detailed shortfalls in the DEA’s policies and regulations they said: “did not adequately hold registrants accountable or prevent the diversion of pharmaceutical opioids.”

“We found the DEA was slow to respond to this growing public health crisis and that its regulatory and enforcement efforts could have been more effective,” Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz said in an Oct. 1 video statement.

Continuing in his statement, Horowitz also said the agency “does not capture sufficient data to detect emerging drug trends or suspicious orders in a timely manner, which may have contributed to its overall slow response to the opioid crisis.”

The opioid epidemic claimed the lives of nearly 400,000 people between 1999 and 2017, according to the latest U.S. data. On average, the epidemic takes the lives of 130 people every day across the United States and was declared a public health emergency by the White House in October 2017.

“The DEA is the gatekeeper of opioid production and distribution in the United States and they were quite literally asleep on the job,” Jeffery Greco, a criminal defense lawyer and former prosecutor, told The Epoch Times.

“How else do you explain how something like this could be allowed to continue, despite the known dangers, year after year?”

The OIG, in its review, examined the regulatory activities and enforcement efforts of the DEA from the fiscal year

The DEA is the gatekeeper of opioid production and distribution in the United States and they were quite literally asleep on the job.

Jeffery Greco, criminal defense lawyer



Oxycodone pain pills prescribed for a patient with chronic pain are on display in Norwich, Conn., on March 23, 2016.



Local police and paramedics help a man who is overdosing in the Drexel neighborhood of Dayton, Ohio, on Aug. 3, 2017.

2010 to 2017 in regard to what it did to combat the opioid epidemic. The report’s introduction described the crisis as not only affecting public health but also the social and economic welfare of the country.

By one count, the opioid crisis costs the United States \$78.5 billion per year when accounting for the cost of health care, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To help the DEA better combat the crisis, the OIG made nine recommendations that will help the agency’s ability to detect the diversion of opioids. The Justice Department and the DEA have all agreed with these recommendations.

The DEA, per their mission statement, enforces laws and regulations in the United States and aims to bring to the criminal and civil justice system organizations involved in the “growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the United States.”

‘Unacceptable on Every Level’

The OIG report also identifies weaknesses in the DEA’s registration process. The agency is responsible for vetting and registering anyone who wishes to handle controlled substances, including manufacturers, distributors, and health care practitioners.

Registrants, after having their registration revoked or surrendered, could reapply for registration again the day after, the OIG found. Greco described this as “appalling.”

“To call this appalling is an insult to the word appalling,” he said. “It doesn’t come close to explaining just how egregious this lackluster enforcement on the people who have made millions, if not billions, was in this deadly game.”

“People are dying every day from it and all we get is a paper identifying the many ways in which the DEA has failed to do the one and only job that mattered most? This is unacceptable on

every single level imaginable.”

Meanwhile, pharmaceutical maker Purdue Pharma, which made billions selling its prescription painkiller OxyContin, recently filed for bankruptcy as part of an agreement to pay back billions of dollars to communities ravaged by the opioid epidemic. More than 2,600 lawsuits assert the company aggressively sold OxyContin as a drug with a low risk of addiction, despite knowing it wasn’t.

Another OIG finding said the DEA didn’t “adequately collect, maintain, or analyze data in order to identify trends in use of controlled substances.” The DEA’s system of collecting suspicious orders was also incomplete.

Robert C. Whitley, an attorney based in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, who has been working with the local community to combat the opioid epidemic, said that his initial reaction to the OIG report is positive, as it’s an indication the Trump administration is stepping up efforts to address the problems.

“The OIG report does make it clear that prior to the Trump administration, the DEA was definitely lax on staying up with addressing the problems and regulatory issues relating to opioids, particularly the diversion of opioids,” he told The Epoch Times.

The OIG report did say both the justice department and the DEA recently increased efforts to address the opioid epidemic, “including increasing enforcement staffing and enforcement actions, and working more closely with federal and state partners.” But the office states that more work is needed.

In an Oct. 1 statement to The Epoch Times, a DEA spokesperson said they appreciated the OIG’s assessments.

“While only a minute fraction of the more than 1.8 million manufacturers, distributors, pharmacies, and prescribers registered with DEA are involved in unlawful activity, DEA continuously works to identify and root out the bad actors,” the spokesperson said via email.

“In the past eight years, DEA removed approximately 900 registrations annually, preventing further diversion of controlled substances.”

BENJAMIN CHASTEEN/THE EPOCH TIMES

JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

BENJAMIN CHASTEEN/THE EPOCH TIMES



Local police help a man who is overdosing in the Drexel neighborhood of Dayton, Ohio, on Aug. 3, 2017.

Trump: Democrats ‘Are Trying to Stop Me, Because I Am Fighting for You’

SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



President Donald Trump disembarks after arriving on Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on Sept. 26, 2019.

JANITA KAN

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resident Donald Trump has expressed his resolve to fight for the American people in a video message, following a whistleblower complaint about a phone call between Trump and Ukraine’s president that prompted the House to launch an impeachment inquiry.

“What’s going on now is the single greatest scam in the history of American politics,” Trump said in his video on Sept. 28.

“The Democrats want to take away your guns, they want to take away your health care, they want to take away your vote, they want to take away your freedom, they want to take away your judges, they want to take away everything. We can never let this happen.”

“We are fighting to drain the swamp. And that’s exactly what I’m doing and you see why we have to do it because our country is at stake like never before. It’s all very simple. They’re trying to stop me because I’m fighting for you. And I’ll never let that happen.”

House Democrats are moving forward with an impeachment inquiry announced by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on Sept. 24. On Sept. 27, three House committees announced that one of the panels has issued a subpoena to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo over documents relating to Ukraine dealings, as well as scheduled depositions of five State Department officials as part of the inquiry.

Pelosi initiated the impeachment inquiry over media reports about a whistleblower complaint that centers on a phone call between Trump and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky. The transcript of the call and complaint were released this week.

House Republican leaders have criticized Pelosi for making the decision to start the inquiry prior to reviewing the documents. The transcript revealed that although Trump had asked Zelensky to look into Biden, he didn’t exert any pressure and neither was there any quid pro quo.

Earlier on Sept. 28, Trump took to Twitter to criticize Democrats, while singling out six House members: Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee; Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee; and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-

Can you imagine if these Do Nothing Democrat Savages, people like Nadler, Schiff, AOC Plus 3, and many more, had a Republican Party who would have done to Obama what the Do Nothings are doing to me.

President Donald Trump

N.Y.); as well as her three close allies—Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.), and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.).

“Can you imagine if these Do Nothing Democrat Savages, people like Nadler, Schiff, AOC Plus 3, and many more, had a Republican Party who would have done to Obama what the Do Nothings are doing to me,” he wrote.

“Oh well, maybe next time!” In separate posts, he wrote, “Presidential Harassment!,” “Make America Great Again!,” and “Keep America Great!”

Trump and other critics have suggested that the impeachment inquiry would distract the House from its legislative agenda in Congress.

On Sept. 25, at the United Nations, Trump told reporters that he tried talking to Pelosi about gun laws but said she didn’t appear interested.

“She’s lost her way. She’s been taken over by the radical left. She may be a radical left herself, but she really has lost her way. I spoke to her about guns yesterday. She didn’t even know what I was talking about. She’s not interested in guns,” Trump said.

“I’ll tell you what: Nancy Pelosi is not interested in guns and gun protection and gun safety. All she is thinking about is this. She’s been taken over by the radical left, the whole Democrat Party. And you take a look at what’s happening in the media today. The whole party is taken over by the left.”

Similarly, Rep. Jeff Van Drew (D-N.J.) said that compared to the last session, he feels that fewer bills are being passed now, and Congress “seldom” comes together to get things done.

“I think probably only a third of the number of bills compared to [the] last session,” he told Fox News in an appearance on Sept. 28.

Meanwhile, Pelosi told a press conference on Sept. 27 that the inquiry wouldn’t affect the House’s legislative processes.

“We continue to move forward on meeting the needs of the American people and making progress for them,” Pelosi said. “At the same time, we take an oath to protect and defend the constitution. We can do both.”

Epoch Times reporter Zachary Stieber contributed to this report.

SERGIO FLORES/GETTY IMAGES



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi speaks at the Texas Tribune Festival in Austin on Sept. 28, 2019.



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MICHIGAN

Federal Judge Rules Catholic Adoption Agency Can Refuse LGBT Parents

MATTHEW VADUM

In a victory for religious freedom, a federal judge in Michigan ruled a Catholic adoption agency that contracts with the state will be allowed to refuse to handle adoption requests that would place children with LGBTQ couples.

The judge pointedly noted that in opposing the agency, the state's attorney general engaged in a "targeted attack" on the agency's "sincerely held religious belief."

The ruling came Sept. 26 in a case cited as *Buck v. Gordon*, which involved Lansing-based St. Vincent Catholic Charities, along with Chad and Melissa Buck, parents of five children with special needs, and Shamber Flore, a former foster child.

St. Vincent has stated that "as a Catholic organization, [it] cannot provide a written recommendation to the State evaluating and endorsing a family situation that would conflict with [its] religious beliefs." This means it can't endorse adoption for "unmarried or LGBTQ couples consistent with its Catholic mission."

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel was elected Nov. 6, 2018, becoming the first openly gay person to win statewide office in the Mitten State, as well as the first Democrat to hold the post of attorney general in two decades.

Nessel refused to defend a 2015 state law protecting the agency's religious freedoms because, in her own words, she "could not justify using the state's money" to defend "a law whose only purpose is discriminatory animus," Judge Robert J. Jonker of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan wrote in his

What this case is about is whether St. Vincent may continue to do this work and still profess and promote the traditional Catholic belief that marriage, as ordained by God, is for one man and one woman.

Robert J. Jonker, U.S. district court judge



Attorney General Dana Nessel.

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MICHIGAN

ruling.

Nessel called supporters of the law "hate-mongers" who disliked gay people more than they cared about children, the judge wrote.

"This case is not about whether same-sex couples can be great parents," Jonker wrote. "They can. No one in the case contests that. To the contrary, St. Vincent has placed children for adoption with same-sex couples certified by the State.

"What this case is about is whether St. Vincent may continue to do this work and still profess and promote the traditional Catholic belief that marriage, as ordained by God, is for one man and one woman. In 2015, Michigan's state legislature passed a law designed to ensure it could do just that."

When Michigan was first sued on the issue, the state "defended the right of St. Vincent to maintain its religious belief while it placed children on a non-discriminatory basis in any home approved by the State," but after taking office, Nessel changed the interpretation of Michigan law and the agency's contracts, forcing it to "choose between its traditional religious belief, and the privilege of continuing to place children with foster and adoptive parents of all types."

The reinterpretation of Michigan law came when Nessel settled a 2017 lawsuit filed by two lesbian couples, stipulating that the 2015 law didn't apply to adoption agencies if they were under contract with the state.

The judge wrote that the state's "real goal is not to promote non-discriminatory child placements, but to stamp out St. Vincent's religious belief and replace it with the State's own."

Jonker issued a preliminary injunction

against the state, "preserving the status quo while the case is fully litigated."

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a nonprofit and public interest law firm that represents the adoption agency in the litigation, praised the judge's decision.

The firm said in 2017, "St. Vincent recruited more new adoptive families than nearly 90 percent of the other agencies in its service area, but despite their success, they were targeted by the Attorney General of Michigan simply because of their beliefs about same-sex marriage."

"Our nation is facing a foster-care crisis, and we are so glad that Michigan's foster children will continue having all hands on deck to help them find loving forever homes," Lori Windham, senior counsel at Becket, said in a statement.

"The Bucks and St. Vincent Catholic Charities won a victory in Michigan, but there is still work to be done to ensure that faith-based agencies can contribute to ending our nation's foster-care crisis."

The American Civil Liberties Union disagreed.

"Today's ruling requires the state to put the individual religious beliefs of foster-care agencies ahead of the welfare of children," Jay Kaplan, staff attorney for the ACLU of Michigan's LGBT Project, said, according to NBC News. "This will not facilitate foster and adoptive placements for children in need. Instead, it will allow agencies to turn away same-sex foster parents who are able to provide supportive and loving homes for these children."

Nessel's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from The Epoch Times.

Warren Backs Ocasio-Cortez's Plan for Economic Inequality and Climate Change

MATTHEW VADUM

Democratic presidential contender Elizabeth Warren threw her weight behind a plan proposed by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez that includes taxpayer-funded welfare benefits for illegal aliens and increased government intervention in the economy, including nationwide rent control.

Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) is an outspoken member of the United States' largest Marxist group, the Democratic Socialists of America. She is one of four members of a congressional grouping known as "The Squad," which advocates radical left-wing policies and is fiercely critical of President Donald Trump.

The other Squad members are Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), and Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.). Although Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) is speaker of the House of Representatives, many commentators say that Ocasio-Cortez, who is popular on social media, is so influential that she sets policy for House Democrats.

The new plan, "A Just Society," comes after Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal, an environmental policy that critics say would cost more than \$90 trillion to implement and have little discernible impact on the environment. Major Democrats in the presidential race back the Green New Deal, including Warren (D-Mass.), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), former Vice President Joe Biden, and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg.

A Just Society "aims to com-

Warren became the first of the large field contending for the Democrats' presidential nod to express support for the plan.

The plan calls for imposing rent control throughout the nation and giving tenants the right to apply to federal courts for relief if landlords violate the law.

bat the greatest threats to our country, our democracy, and our planet: economic inequality and climate change," according to Ocasio-Cortez's congressional website.

The plan will put America "on a path towards shared prosperity for all," the site states, by providing "a living wage, safe working conditions, and healthcare," while acknowledging "the value of immigrants to our communities." It also "guarantees safe, comfortable, and affordable housing."

Warren became the first of the large field contending for the Democrats' presidential nod to express support for the plan.

"It's going to take big, structural change to tackle poverty and inequality in the U.S., and @AOC's 'A Just Society' is just the type of bold, comprehensive thinking we'll need to get it done," she said in a Sept. 29 tweet.

Politico wrote in a headline in May that Ocasio-Cortez's was "One of the most important endorsements in America right now." The headline was quoting political operative Rebecca Katz, who advised left-wing actress Cynthia Nixon's campaign for governor of New York. "AOC has captured the imagination of so many young people, so many women and so many nonpoliticos who really see her as a ray of light," Katz said.

A Just Society is broken down into six policy packages labeled as the "Recognizing Poverty Act," "Place to Prosper Act," "Embrace Act," "Mercy in Re-entry Act," "Uplift Workers Act," and "Guarantees the Economic, Social

and Cultural Rights for All."

The plan calls for imposing rent control throughout the nation and giving tenants the right to apply to federal courts for relief if landlords violate the law. It also would make illegal aliens eligible for federal benefits and provides that "an individual may not be denied any Federal public benefit solely on the basis that the individual was convicted of a criminal offense (whether under Federal, State, tribal, or foreign law)."

The plan would require that employers be scored for "worker-friendliness" before being giving a federal contract. This score would consider "factors such as paid-family leave, scheduling predictability, a \$15 minimum wage or otherwise prevailing wage, and union membership, to ensure that all federal agencies prioritize contractors that are 'worker-friendly' when deciding what entities deserve public funds."

The plan would also empower the United Nations and weaken U.S. control over its own internal affairs by instructing "the executive branch to re-initiate ratification processes for the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights," a document that "states that all persons have the right to work, fair and just conditions of work, social security, an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing, housing, and healthcare."

The Epoch Times requested comments from both the Warren and Ocasio-Cortez campaigns. As of press time, neither campaign had replied.

SCOTT EISEN/GETTY IMAGES



Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) speaks at a Town Hall in Keene, N.H., on Sept. 25, 2019.

Barr, Durham Take ‘Spygate’ Investigation Overseas

Inquiry into origins of investigations of Trump campaign expand to Italy, Australia, the United Kingdom

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

The Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation into spying on the campaign of President Donald Trump is going global, with Attorney General William Barr and U.S. Attorney John Durham communicating and meeting with officials from Italy, Australia, the UK, and other nations.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison told Trump during a phone call that his government is ready to assist with the investigation, a spokesperson from Morrison’s office confirmed to The Epoch Times. Australia had offered to help Barr with the investigation as early as May 28, just two weeks after the attorney general appointed Durham to lead the probe, according to a letter addressed to Barr from Joe Hockey, Australia’s ambassador to the United States.

“The Australian government has always been ready to assist and cooperate with efforts that help shed further light on the matters under investigation,” the Morrison spokesperson said.

“The Prime Minister confirmed this readiness once again in conversation with the president,” the spokesperson said, referring to a phone call that was the subject of a report by The New York Times.

Trump made the introductions to Australia and Italy at Barr’s request, a DOJ official told ABC on Oct. 1. Barr and Durham met with senior Italian intelligence officials during a trip to Italy on the week of Aug. 26, the same official confirmed.

“As the Department of Justice has previously announced, a team led by U.S. Attorney John Durham is investigating the origins of the U.S. counterintelligence probe of the Trump 2016 presidential campaign. Mr. Durham is gathering information from numerous sources, including a number of foreign countries,” DOJ spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said in a statement, according to ABC.

“At Attorney General Barr’s request, the President has contacted other countries to ask them to introduce the Attorney General and Mr. Durham to appropriate officials.”

The DOJ didn’t respond to a request from The Epoch Times to confirm the statements provided to ABC.

Durham also is reviewing information his team received from private individuals in Ukraine, a DOJ spokesperson confirmed to The Epoch Times.

Durham’s investigation is going global at the same time as Barr and Trump are under growing attacks by congressional Democrats and their media allies about a phone call the president had with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky. During the phone call, Trump inquired about a server tied to the cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, which analyzed the Democratic National Committee server

Democrats are running scared of what Barr’s fact-finding will uncover. That’s why they’re trying to undermine him. But he’ll get to the truth.

Rep. Jim Jordan, in a tweet

after it was allegedly hacked by Russian intelligence operatives.

“Barr is following the facts where they lead about how the false collusion narrative started,” Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) wrote on Twitter. “This effort requires talking to intelligence agencies around the world. That’s why he’s gathering information from our allies, like Australia, Britain, and Italy.

“Democrats are running scared of what Barr’s fact-finding will uncover. That’s why they’re trying to undermine him. But he’ll get to the truth.”

The FBI counterintelligence of the Trump campaign officially started on July 31, 2016, based on a tip about a conversation between senior Trump campaign associate George Papadopoulos and Australian diplomat Alexander Downer. Papadopoulos told Downer during a meeting in London that Russians had “dirt” on then-candidate Hillary Clinton.

The FBI investigators eventually secured a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrant on Trump campaign associate Carter Page. While the extent of the spying granted still isn’t public, it’s possible the communications of the entire campaign were captured via the Page FISA warrant.

The warrant application relied heavily on an opposition research dossier on then-candidate Trump compiled by former UK spy Christopher Steele, with whom the bureau cut ties after learning that he was leaking to the media. Steele paid second- and thirdhand sources with ties to the Kremlin for information in the dossier; the Clinton campaign and the Democratic National Committee paid for the Steele dossier via the Perkins Coie law firm.

The Steele dossier was widely distributed to the media and Obama administration officials before and after the 2016 election. An FBI official in Italy was one of the first to receive a copy.

The FBI investigation of the Trump campaign evolved into the special counsel probe led by Robert Mueller, after Trump fired FBI Director James Comey in May 2017. Mueller finished his investigation in March, concluding that there wasn’t enough evidence to establish that Trump colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

Some of the same media outlets that perpetuated the now-debunked Trump–Russia conspiracy theory are now criticizing Barr’s inquiry. The Washington Post suggested that Barr’s overtures to Italy and Australia have “a conspiratorial focus,” while a New York Times reporter, without evidence, wrote that Trump “is using federal law enforcement powers to aid his political prospects” and “settle scores with his perceived ‘deep state’ enemies.”

“Bill Barr is doing exactly what he should: investigate and get to the bottom of how a collusion conspiracy,

with no real basis, spread through senior levels of our Justice Department and gripped America for 3 years,” Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) wrote on Twitter.

“One has to wonder why the people who were the loudest in spreading the Russian collusion hoax are now the same people most vehemently opposed to investigating its true origins. Troubling.”

The Durham investigation for some time ran alongside a separate, extensive review centered on the Page FISA application, conducted by DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz. In a Sept. 13 letter to lawmakers, Horowitz said that he had submitted a draft copy of the report to the DOJ. His team had reviewed more than 1 million records and conducted more than 100 interviews.

Horowitz is obliged to forward evidence of any criminality to Durham, who has the power to bring charges against any alleged perpetrators. Horowitz told lawmakers recently that he has been in contact with Durham.

Top Democrats and their media allies are painting the Barr–Durham inquiry as a political weapon wielded by Trump as part of his 2020 campaign. In doing so, both the media and those lawmakers have at times resorted to omissions and falsehoods.

For example, some media reporting on Trump’s call with Zelensky skipped over several hundred words from the transcript in an apparent effort to tie Trump’s request for a “favor” to his request to look into potential impropriety by former Vice President Joe Biden, who’s a 2020 presidential candidate. The portion which the media skipped over referred to Trump’s comments about the CrowdStrike server.

In addition, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) made up portions of the Trump–Zelensky transcript during his statement at a hearing of the House Intelligence Committee, which he chairs. Schiff’s fabricated version of the transcript created the appearance that Trump pressured Zelensky to investigate Biden. After being called out for it, Schiff said he did so in jest. In response, Trump called on Schiff to resign for making false statements to Congress.

On Oct. 2 the president suggested for the first time that the ongoing investigations may result in a “major lawsuit.”

“I’ve been looking at that long and hard for a long period of time. How it started, why it started, it should never happen to another president, ever. But I’ve been talking about it from the standpoint of bringing a major lawsuit, and I’ve been talking about it for a long time. We’ve been investigating the corruption having to do with what they did to my people. They destroyed many people,” Trump said.

ED ZURGA/GETTY IMAGES



Attorney General William Barr in Topeka, Kan., on Oct. 2, 2019.