

(Washington D.C.) - Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D- VA-03) made the following statement after today’s House Committee on the Judiciary markup regarding Contempt of Congress allegations against former White House Counsel Harriet Miers and White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten.

“It is important to put the House Judiciary Committee markup today in context. The issue at hand is not whether the President has the right to fire U.S. Attorneys. Of course he has that right. Instead, the issue is whether the criminal justice system has been corrupted by the Administration’s firing of U.S. Attorneys for either investigating Republicans or failing to indict Democrats in time to have a partisan effect on elections. We also have evidence that some U.S. Attorneys may have saved their jobs by indicting Democrats on frivolous charges in an apparent attempt to have a partisan affect on the outcome of elections.

“In response to these allegations, the House Judiciary Committee has received conflicting answers. High ranking officials at the Department of Justice have said that the Attorney General is not telling the truth. Another official has resigned. Another has invoked the 5th Amendment, and then admitted, under the cover of immunity, that partisan considerations were improperly or illegally taken into account in the hiring of Department of Justice officials. Now other officials are refusing to comply with subpoenas issued by the Committee.

“The Committee has also received conflicting claims of executive privilege by the Administration. At this point, the President has not formally made any claim of executive privilege, nor clearly asserted a basis for such a claim. Many involved in this matter have said there were no discussions with the President on this matter. Therefore, if the President were to make a formal declaration of privilege, he would be incorrectly asserting that this privilege extends to information regarding communications between Presidential advisors, not discussions with the President himself. Furthermore, the White House continues to withhold documents for which no privilege is even claimed.

“I believe it is imperative to get a straight answer to the question of whether or not the Administration improperly or illegally corrupted the U.S. criminal justice system to advance a partisan, political agenda.”

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