

Yesterday, the House of Representatives voted to hold Attorney General Eric Holder in criminal contempt of Congress. I was one of [255](#) members who supported this bipartisan action. The Attorney General has repeatedly refused to cooperate with the congressional investigation into Operation Fast and Furious by not releasing all related documents. I believe the American people should be able to learn the truth about an initiative responsible for the death of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry and the distribution of over 2,000 weapons to members of drug trafficking organizations.

As I [discussed](#) last week, after the collapse of Operation Fast and Furious, the Justice Department consistently failed to cooperate with an investigation led by Representative Darrell Issa, Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. Senior Justice Department officials initially denied any knowledge of the operation before eventually admitting their involvement. Attorney General Holder has refused to turn over documents that, by law, Congress is entitled and obligated to view. President Obama continued these stonewalling actions by invoking executive privilege over all related Justice Department documents sent to the Oversight Committee after February 2011, arguing that providing Congress with all the subpoenaed material would undermine the Executive Branch's deliberative process. Because the White House had declared, however, that it was not involved in the creation or operation of the Fast and Furious program, many constitutional experts believe this claim is dubious. Throughout the investigation, it became clear that the Justice Department was not interested in assisting the Oversight Committee's attempt to hold accountable those responsible for the failure of Operation Fast and Furious. Instead, it sought only to avoid the embarrassment of acknowledging its enormous mistake.

The House of Representatives yesterday also passed a [civil contempt resolution](#), which will allow the House to bring a civil lawsuit in an effort to force the Attorney General to comply with the subpoena and turn over the necessary documents. This additional measure was necessary as it is unlikely that the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, charged with enforcing the criminal contempt resolution, will take action in court against his own Administration and the Attorney General. I am committed to supporting the use of all tools at Congress' disposal to ensure that we learn the truth and hold responsible those who created and authorized Operation Fast and Furious.