

Sen. Burr takes GOP fire over Trump Jr. subpoena

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Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans lashed out Thursday at fellow GOP Sen. Richard Burr for his committee’s subpoena of President Donald Trump’s son, a move that suggested the Russia investigation is not “case closed,” as some in the party insist. Trump said he was “very surprised” at the move.

The revolt by some against the Senate intelligence committee chairman comes after The Associated Press and other news outlets reported it had called in Donald Trump Jr. to answer questions about his 2017 testimony as part of its probe into Russian election interference. The issue of re-calling Trump’s son laid bare the conflict inside the president’s party over whether probes involving Russian election meddling are still merited.

It’s the first known subpoena of a member of Trump’s immediate family and a new sign that the Senate panel is continuing with its own two-year-long investigation, even after the release of special counsel Robert Mueller’s report and Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s call from the Senate floor on Tuesday to move on.

“This case is closed. The Mueller Report cleared @DonaldJTrumpJr and he’s already spent 27 hours testifying before Congress,” tweeted Burr’s fellow North Carolina Republican senator, Thom Tillis, one of several GOP senators who criticized Burr. “It’s time to move on & start focusing on issues that matter to Americans.”



Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., center, and Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, right, arrive for a farewell ceremony for Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, right, in the Great Hall at the Department of Justice in Washington on Thursday.

A source familiar with the committee’s deliberations said the subpoena went out “weeks ago” and all committee members were aware of it. The person, who requested anonymity to discuss the internal negotiations, said members had been regularly briefed on communications with Trump Jr.

Burr wouldn’t comment on the subpoena or the backlash Thursday. But at a Republican policy lunch, he walked through the timeline of events that led to the committee’s decision, according to a person familiar with his comments who requested anonymity to discuss the private meeting. McConnell then stood up and defended him, saying he trusts Burr, according to the person.

The subpoena appeared to catch the president and many of his allies by surprise. Trump said as much, adding that “my son is a very good person.” Trump Jr., the president said, had already testified for a “massive” amount of time.

Chief of staff Mick Mul-

vaney said Thursday he was not given a heads-up. But Trump’s advisers had not yet decided if he would publicly attack Burr, according to two Republicans close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions.

The subpoena highlights a delicate bind facing Burr, a third-term senator who is not expected to run for re-election when his term is up in 2022. He has been adamant that the panel’s Russia probe be bipartisan and fair and has worked closely with the panel’s top Democrat, Virginia Sen. Mark Warner.

The blowback against him inside the Senate was especially fierce from Republicans up for re-election in 2020, including Tillis and Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who said he understands the younger Trump’s “frustration.”

“I think we have an important job to do to try to keep the intelligence committee out of politics,” he added. Cornyn, who is on the

intelligence panel, later said he has confidence in Burr.

Other Republicans joined in. Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul tweeted that Burr “didn’t get the memo” that the Mueller case was closed. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz tweeted: “There’s no need for another subpoena for @DonaldJTrumpJr. It’s time to move on & focus on issues Americans care about.”

Criticism also came from the top Republican in the House.

“Endless investigations — by either party — won’t change the fact that there was NO collusion. It’s time to move on. It’s time to focus on ISSUES, not investigations,” tweeted House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

But Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, a Republican member of the panel, said he thinks the criticism of Burr is “a fundamental misunderstanding of what the Senate intelligence committee is about,” which is congressional oversight and not prosecution.

Storms damage Arkansas apartments, leave damage in South

PINE BLUFF, Ark. (AP) — Several people were injured when a tornado damaged two apartment complexes in Arkansas, part of a powerful line of thunderstorms that was dumping more rain Thursday on waterlogged areas throughout the nation’s midsection.

The severe weather moved eastward after forcing people from their homes in Kansas, soaking Houston once again, and straining levees along the surging Mississippi River on Wednesday.

Flooding has caused billions of dollars of damage to farmland, homes and businesses across the Midwest, with some rivers above flood stage for more than six weeks now.

The National Weather Service issued flood warnings as more than 5 inches of rain fell in parts of Mississippi. The downpours swelled streams and made driving difficult.

Fear of flooding in the Houston area grew throughout Thursday evening as steady downpours overwhelmed some roadside storm drains.

According to the Harris County Flood Warning System website, almost 5 inches of rain had fallen in the first 90 minutes of the storm Thursday evening at the Barker and Addicks flood-control dams on Houston’s western outskirts.

Some high water disrupted traffic in some intersections in the western Houston area, and fire-rescue crews were making a handful of high-water rescues. But with the exception of a couple of small creeks, most streams were still within their banks. No

injuries or flooded buildings were immediately reported.

Trees were down in north Alabama after the storm system moved through, prompting multiple tornado warnings. No injuries were reported but officials said several farm buildings were damaged.

In Arkansas, authorities said about 150 people were displaced Wednesday after the storm hit apartment buildings and ripped off a roof in Pine Bluff, about 40 miles southeast of Little Rock.

Pine Bluff Police Chief Kelvin Sergeant said four people were hurt, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*. “One of those is probably going to be pretty severe,” he said.

The weather service confirmed Thursday that the damage was caused by a small tornado that touched down for less than a minute Wednesday night. Meteorologist Thomas Jones said two apartment complexes were damaged.

Jones said the twister was about 100 yards wide and traveled for only about a quarter of a mile, but still managed to damage the brick facing and roof of the apartments. He said at least two walls caved in.

Resident Carla Jackson told the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* that she heard a loud boom and that the storm moved in quickly.

“First there were real high winds and then a loud boom, and next thing you know the lights started blinking. We heard the transformer blow, then another transformer blow, and then it just went black,” she said.

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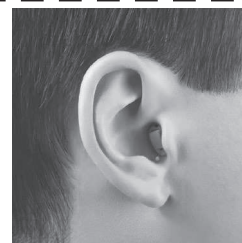
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