

DISSENTING VIEWS

The 2012 attack in Benghazi was a tragedy that took the lives of brave American public servants representing and serving our country. We join their families in continuing to mourn their loss. Congress has an obligation -- both to the families of the victims and to the country -- to take every possible step to prevent anything like this from ever happening again.

The United States Senate has produced two bi-partisan reports on the issue and the State Department's Accountability Review Board has also produced a constructive, unbiased report. Unfortunately, the House Majority has chosen a different path, with an entirely partisan approach.

Over nearly two years and across four separate standing committees of the House, the majority has repeatedly demonstrated that rather than engaging in serious, objective examination of the circumstances of the Benghazi attacks, rather than producing constructive recommendations to keep our citizens and facilities abroad safe, they intend to use this tragedy as an excuse for generating partisan talking points.

Between the eight separate reports on Benghazi to date, millions of dollars of taxpayer money have been spent, dozens of interviews have been conducted and 13 hearings have been held. More than 25,000 pages of documents have been produced. There is a vast body of evidence already collected, none of it demonstrating that the Obama Administration engaged in any sort of cover-up as the majority continues to allege.

The reports issued by House committees have been highly partisan, as were the investigations on which they were based. Democratic Members were excluded from fact-finding delegations. The minority was denied access to hearing witnesses. Documents obtained by a committee were withheld from minority Members. These are only some of the abuses committed in the course of these investigations. Press reports even indicate that the National Republican Congressional Committee -- the House Republicans' campaign arm -- is explicitly raising campaign money off of the tragedy in Benghazi.

Now, after nearly two years of the majority engaging in thoroughly partisan exercises on this subject, they are proposing to create an extraordinary select committee, with the same partisan makeup and rules -- to conduct yet another investigation.

Given the majority's history of unprecedented partisanship with regard to this matter, there is no reason to believe that the new select committee will produce a different result.

The *only* way this select committee could be effective is if it were completely bipartisan by the terms of the resolution creating it. We offered an amendment to make a number of changes to the structure and rules of the committee. Most importantly, our amendment would have made membership on the committee equally divided between Republicans and Democrats, like the Ethics Committee and like some past select committees. Our amendment would have guaranteed minority concurrence for authorization of subpoenas and equal distribution of money, staffing, and other committee resources.

Unfortunately, our amendment was rejected on a party-line vote. Accordingly, we must oppose this resolution and the creation of this select committee. There is potential for a House select committee to investigate the tragedy in Benghazi in such a way as to finally produce a thoughtful, useful report on the subject, in stark contrast to the investigations and reports issued by four House committees thus far. But this select committee is doomed by the terms of this resolution to instead be more of the same.

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