



## **GOP Vows to Release Jan. 5 Footage to Counter Democrats' Narrative**

Republicans of the U.S. House of Representatives are [warning they will release](#) Capitol Police footage filmed on January 5, 2021 in order to vindicate a member of the caucus whom Democrats have accused of leading tours prior to the January 6 protest. First, however, GOP lawmakers must obtain the footage — which comes with a high price tag.

Last week, the Democrat-led January 6 House committee asked Representative Barry Loudermilk (R-Ga.) to speak voluntarily with the panel's investigators on the grounds that they reviewed footage of Loudermilk showing visitors around the Capitol Building.



AP Images  
Rodney Davis

The accusation countered Republicans on the House Administration Committee (on which Loudermilk sits), who have long pressed for the release of tapes which they say would dispel allegations that they led reconnaissance tours of the Capitol prior to the events of January 6.

Yet fulfilling their vow will require a major investment from Republicans. The external hard drive they would need to store the hundreds of hours of footage would cost approximately \$20,000.

“Committee Minority staff have reviewed all footage in question and have confirmed no ‘reconnaissance tours’ occurred,” ranking member Rodney Davis (R-Ill.) wrote in a Friday letter to the Capitol Police Board.

“If the Board has any hope of preserving a reputation as an unbiased security agency and re-establishing itself as a non-partisan entity, there is no alternative but to release the tapes. If the Board does not release the relevant footage in a timely manner, I will have no choice but to exercise my authority under 2 U.S.C. § 1979 to release the footage myself,” he added.

Since February, the House Administration Committee has sought to have the footage released. In [one letter](#), the committee asserted that the video “does not support these repeated Democrat accusations about so-called ‘reconnaissance’ tours.”

The “reconnaissance” narrative has come from Representative Mikie Sherrill (D-N.J.) and other Democrats who claim they saw an unusual amount of visitor activity in the Capitol on January 5 in spite of Covid-19 restrictions on tours then in place.

In February, the Administration Committee decided to review the footage from Capitol Police offices rather than spend the thousands necessary to store it directly. As pressure from the January 6 committee mounts, however, they now may be willing to make that investment.

“Clearly things have changed when one of our committee members is being insinuated that he led



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on May 24, 2022

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reconnaissance tours in the Capitol on Jan. 5 when we know for a fact the video footage shows otherwise,” said a senior aide to the administration committee.

The January 6 committee last week challenged its colleagues’ description of the footage showing “no tours, no large groups, no one with MAGA hats on.”

“The Select Committee’s review of evidence directly contradicts that denial,” wrote Representatives Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) and Liz Cheney (R-Wy.), the chairman and vice chairwoman of the January 6 committee, respectively, to Loudermilk.

In response to that letter, the House Administration Committee and Loudermilk published a [statement](#) claiming the congressman was simply giving a tour to a constituent family, during which they never entered the Capitol.

According to the administration committee aide, Loudermilk’s group went through House office buildings but never into the building housing the chambers.

While the events of January 6 were playing out, Loudermilk said in an interview that he had “about a dozen people up here” upon being asked if he had the opportunity to speak with any of those involved in the rally.

“They definitely were peaceful people, people that we met at church, they were supporters of the president, they just wanted to be up here as if it was another rally. We’ve actually checked on them to make sure they are safe,” Loudermilk told the Georgia-based WBHF.

“They saw what it was turning into and they immediately turned back down the mall to get away from the crowds here,” he said, adding that some participants of the rally came with the intention of creating “chaos.”

Capitol Police have said they will not release the footage in question.

“The USCP has cooperated extensively with the January 6th Select Committee and the Department of Justice by providing witnesses, documents, and 14,000 hours of security sensitive camera footage. We cannot make additional public statements or provide any of the materials while their work is still pending,” the department wrote in a statement.

*The Hill* notes:

The law Davis points to in his letter allows Capitol Police to release footage “in consultation with other appropriate law enforcement officials, experts in security preparedness, and appropriate committees of Congress, that the release of the security information will not compromise the security and safety of the Capitol buildings and grounds.”

Some of the footage related to Jan. 6 has been released and used in court cases, by the Jan. 6 committee in hearings and even in former President Trump’s second impeachment trial.

“That statute means they can’t not give it to us,” the administration committee’s senior aide told *The Hill*.

“There are not parameters around what the committee can do with it because it’s not classified,” they added.



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