

PREPARED TESTIMONY
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30th WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
18 JUNE 2025

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and members of the Committee:

My name is Sean Spicer and I served as the 30th White House Press Secretary from the first inauguration of President Donald Trump until September 1, 2017, and am now the host of the Sean Spicer Show podcast.

I was asked by the Committee to share my experience as a senior White House staffer with respect to the interactions that I and other senior staff had with President Trump during his first term. During my tenure as press secretary, I interacted with the President multiple times every day. Most days, I would talk to him by phone or in person in the morning and then multiple times throughout the day, including weekends. For the most senior positions in the White House—those designated by the rank of Assistant to the President, which includes White House Chief of Staff, White House Counsel, and Press Secretary—it is critical to have regular interaction with the President.

The position of press secretary especially demands this type of consistent and intentional communication. I, or any other press secretary regardless of Administration, could not do the job effectively without regular communication with the President. It was my responsibility to have the most up-to-date understanding of President Trump's positions on policy, personnel and everything in between. Admittedly, I made a couple rather high profile mistakes during my tenure. But those mistakes almost entirely occurred when I wasn't connected with the President's thinking or position on an issue or policy. Coordinating and collaborating among even the most senior staff cannot replace direct communication with the President himself.

In my position, I was very well acquainted with President Trump's work, his day-to-day responsibilities, and his fitness for office. I watched him serve with the strength and endurance of a man half his age. As you can see on an almost daily basis through events, statements, and social media posts, he is up early and ends his days very late. Yet in several instances during his first term, the media questioned his fitness for office. Guests and so called "experts" like [Sanjay Gupta at CNN](#) were called upon to speculate on the results of Trump's physical and mental well being.¹ *The Washington Post* ran hit pieces with headlines like, "[The White House struggles to silence talk of Trump's mental fitness](#)".² Vox wrote, "[is Trump mentally unfit to be President?](#)"³ NBC ran a story by the Associated Press "[raised mental health concerns](#)"

¹ CNN, January 17, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXpvFjxDmSI>

² January 8, 2018:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/the-white-house-struggles-to-silence-talk-of-trumps-mental-fitness/2018/01/08/2a7d4092-f493-11e7-a9e3-ab18ce41436a_story.html

³ January 19, 2018:

<https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/1/19/16866040/donald-trump-diagnosis-mental-health-behavior>

regarding the President.⁴ [CNN's Brian Stelter](#) questioned if members of the news media were tiptoeing around “obvious” questions about President Trump's instability.⁵ These headlines weren't isolated instances; most major news outlets ran with these ridiculous types of propaganda pieces. To use one of the media's favorite terms, these inquiries were all “without evidence.”

That brings us to the juxtaposition of how the very same media covered the Biden Administration. To be blunt, the legacy media failed the American people. They failed to do their job. Many, rightly so, believe the media in this country is culpable in covering up the obvious decline of the 46th President and leader of the free world.

The scrutiny that was baselessly directed at President Trump during his first term was wholly absent from the media coverage of the Biden White House. The media lacked any sense of curiosity that would naturally stem from what the public could see with their own eyes. Even in the face of deeply concerning—and public—signs of President Biden's mental and physical decline, legacy media outlets were silent. Biden and his senior aides flatly dismissed the need for a cognitive test during his tenure as had been requested of President Trump, yet no protest was heard from the voices that were so critical of Trump. With the exception of a couple White House reporters like Fox News Channel's Peter Doocy, reporters generally refused to breach the subject at White House press briefings.

News outlets weren't the only ones complicit covering up Biden's declining state. As I described, presidential staff would have—or should have—been interacting with Biden on a daily basis. At best, his administration was grossly negligent. At worst, Biden's staff actively concealed his fitness for office.

When White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre [said President Biden could run circles around her](#), there were only two possible conclusions: that she herself was in very poor physical condition herself and in need of medical assistance or she was lying.⁶

There is no question there was a vast difference between how Trump interacted with his staff and how President Biden did. Whether one supports President Trump or not, he is the most accessible and transparent president in modern history, and there is no question who is running the country. The same can't be said of Biden.

It is the president who is elected by the American people – the role of staff is to execute his agenda and policies.

⁴ January 9, 2018: <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/trump-faces-presidential-fitness-test-friday-amid-raised-mental-health-n836271>

⁵ August 24, 2019: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/25/media/donald-trump-job-fitness-press>

⁶ June 2022, “I can't keep up with him [Biden]” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7Oc8X-eRng>

I thank the committee for holding this hearing so that going forward the American people can have confidence in who is running the country and making critical decisions.

The American people deserve no less.