



Why Government Weaponization Matters to All of Us

These Talking Points were published by the Fulcrum on January 16, 2026, as an article entitled: [White House ‘Score-Settling’ Raises Fears of a Weaponized Government](#)

The recent casual acknowledgement by the White House Chief of Staff that the President is engaged in prosecutorial “score settling” marks a dangerous departure from the rule-of-law norms that restrain executive power in a constitutional democracy. This admission that the State is using its legal authority to punish perceived enemies is antithetical to core Constitutional principles and the rule of law.

The American experiment was built on the rejection of personal rule and political revenge, replacing it with laws that bind even those who hold the highest offices. In 1776, Thomas Paine wrote, *“For as in absolute governments the King is law, so in free countries the law ought to be King; and there ought to be no other.”* The essence of these words can be found in our Constitution that deliberately placed power in the hands of three co-equal branches of government—Legislative, Executive, and Judicial.

In the past year, however, the executive branch has asserted its power in ways that undermine the core founding principles of this country by weaponizing agencies and authorities throughout government to take actions based on personal vendettas, rather than the interests of the American people. The nation’s once exalted law enforcement agency, the Department of Justice, has diminished itself through its complicity, targeting individuals and institutions at the direction of the White House.

Examples of Retributive Actions taken by the Administration

- On January 11, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell revealed that he is under criminal investigation in connection with renovation of the Federal Reserve buildings. [Powell](#) called the threatened criminal indictment charges “pretexts” and “a consequence of the Federal Reserve setting interest rates based on our best assessment of what will serve the public, rather than following the preferences of the President.” This provoked a rare [rebuttal](#) from Senator Thom Tillis, who sits on the Senate Committee overseeing nominations for the Fed: “If there were any remaining doubt whether advisers within the Trump Administration are actively pushing to end the independence of the Federal Reserve, there should now be none. It is now the independence and credibility of the Department of Justice that are in question.”



- The Department of Justice has investigated and sought to prosecute former FBI Director James Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James at the apparent direction of the President based on his desire to seek retribution against them.
- After Senator Mark Kelly and five other members of Congress posted a video reminding U.S. military member that they are obligated to not follow illegal orders, the President called their statements “[seditious behavior punishable by death](#)”. The Pentagon escalated a military review of the Senator, and on January 5, 2026, [sent him a letter of censure](#), initiating the process of demoting him. The President has called for all those in the video to be “arrested and put on trial”.
- The administration has removed security clearances from numerous individuals against whom the President had grievances, including former US Presidents, CIA chiefs, and other officials. As of November 2025, 470 individuals and organizations had been subjected to some form of retribution.

How do we know that this is retribution?

We know these actions reflect retribution because the White House has been explicit about personal motives. The President sent a direct message over social media to Attorney General Pam Bondi, instructing her to initiate actions against James Comey, Letitia James, and Senator Adam Schiff ([Truth Social, Sept 20, 2025](#)), stating: “...What about Comey, Adam ‘Shifty’ Schiff, Letitia??? They’re all guilty as hell... JUSTICE MUST BE SERVED, NOW!!!” White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles confirmed this behavior in a [Vanity Fair interview](#) where she stated, “We have a loose agreement that the score settling will end before the first 90 days are over.”

Why does this matter?

Trust in our government requires a belief that it exercises its authority based on facts and the law, not on politics or revenge. Indeed, the framework of our entire form of government was designed to ensure that no one can direct government actions based on personal agendas. When the Department of Justice and other government agencies behave arbitrarily and launch vindictive investigations and prosecutions, we are all at risk of being wrongly punished.

Retaliatory prosecutions, such as those cited above, violate key elements of our Constitution, for example:

- The First Amendment by punishing speech and/or association.



- The Due Process clause, which was designed to ensure that the law is applied to everyone equally.
- Separation of Powers, if the investigation lacks a legitimate law enforcement purpose or is done in retribution or to coerce or undermine the role of a member of Congress.

It is a long-held principle in this country that our justice system cannot be used to advance a personal agenda. Unfair retaliatory actions place everyone's rights and freedoms at risk – even people who have no connection to the target.

What can we do?

We must all speak up and explain the dangers of a weaponized government.

1. Remind people that the federal government works *for* them. The people have a right to know what the government is doing—and to make sure it is following the facts and not a government leader's personal or political agenda. The government is not there to do one individual's bidding, even if that individual was elected by the people.
2. Speak out when learning of government retaliation. Doing so reminds those in office that public power is not a personal weapon for revenge.

Why we all must act *now*

The greatest danger of retaliatory use of government power is not any single investigation or individual target, but the precedent it sets. When retaliation becomes normalized—when investigations, prosecutions, or administrative punishments are understood as tools for settling political or personal scores—it reshapes incentives throughout government in a way that is dangerous to all of us.

In particular, career officials learn that independence carries risk, dissent invites punishment, and loyalty to individuals matters more than fidelity to law. Over time, this corrodes public trust in the justice system itself, chills lawful speech and opposition, and weakens the institutional safeguards that protect everyone's rights.

All of us all have a responsibility to speak out and demand that our leaders follow the Constitution and the law.