

# F.B.I. Agents Ask Court to Bar Trump Team From Disclosing Their Names

Employees who participated in the Jan. 6 investigations contended in two lawsuits that they believed the administration intended to reveal their identities, endangering them and their families.



By Charlie Savage

Feb. 4, 2025

Two anonymous sets of F.B.I. agents and employees filed lawsuits on Tuesday seeking to prevent the Trump administration from releasing the identities of agents and staff members who participated in the investigations into the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021.

The lawsuits came in response to a demand by Emil Bove, the acting deputy attorney general, that the F.B.I. compile and turn over a list of everyone who worked on those cases. That group, the lawsuits estimated, could number as many as 6,000 agents.

The lawsuits said that the agents believed the administration intended to reveal their identities, exposing the agents and their families to profound danger. They seek court orders prohibiting the executive branch from releasing the names.

The Trump administration has not said it intends to release the identities of the law enforcement officials, but its demand for names of people who worked on the cases has stoked the belief that it may move to fire them en masse. The information the F.B.I. provided on Tuesday identified employees by their workplace IDs, their title at the time of the relevant investigation or prosecution, and the date of the last action related to the investigation, among other details, but not their names.

At the Justice Department, prosecutors who have worked on cases involving President Trump or the Jan. 6 rioters have been dismissed. The lawsuits on Tuesday appear to be putting down a marker that could expand into a challenge to any mass firings if they happen.

“It is clear that the threatened disclosure is a prelude to an unlawful purge of the F.B.I. driven solely by the Trump administration’s vengeful and political motivations,” Chris Mattei, a lawyer for the Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents Association, said in a statement. “Releasing the names of these agents would ignite a firestorm of harassment towards them and their families, and it must be stopped immediately.”

One of the cases, filed on behalf of nine unnamed F.B.I. agents and employees, is styled as a class-action lawsuit on behalf of bureau personnel who worked on either the Jan. 6 cases or the investigation into Mr. Trump's handling of classified documents he had kept at his Florida club and residence, Mar-a-Lago, after leaving office.

"Plaintiffs are employees of the F.B.I. who worked on Jan. 6 and/or Mar-a-Lago cases, and who have been informed that they are likely to be terminated in the very near future (the week of Feb. 3-9, 2025) for such activity," that complaint said.

It added that the eventual class would represent "at least 6,000 current and former F.B.I. agents and employees who participated in some manner in the investigation and prosecution of crimes and abuses of power by Donald Trump, or by those acting at his behest."

That case is being handled by the Center for Employment Justice, which represents people who claim they have been wronged in their workplaces.

The other case was filed on behalf of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Agents Association and seven unnamed F.B.I. agents and employees, and is not cast as a class action. It was filed along with a request for a temporary restraining order.

It is being handled by lawyers for the association, along with Mark Zaid and the State Democracy Defenders Fund, which describes itself as a nonpartisan group that fights against "election sabotage and autocracy."

The agents, it said, expect that the Justice Department "will soon take action against numerous F.B.I. agents, including the individual plaintiffs named here," and that those "actions will result in the disclosure of the identities of individual F.B.I. agents, which will cause immediate and irreparable harm to the plaintiffs, who will be harassed and subjected to threats of violence in violation of their First Amendment and due process rights."

Mr. Zaid and two leaders of the fund, Norm Eisen and the retired federal judge Nancy Gertner, in a letter to the Justice Department on Sunday, had warned the administration against releasing the identities of agents and threatened litigation.

Adam Goldman contributed reporting.

**Charlie Savage** writes about national security and legal policy. More about Charlie Savage