

WILLIAM BARR

President Trump announced that he intends to nominate William Barr to be attorney general. Barr served as attorney general under President George H.W. Bush from 1991-1993. Since then, he has been a [telecommunications](#) executive and [board](#) member, as well as in private legal practice.

BARR WILL NOT BE INDEPENDENT OF PRESIDENT TRUMP OR RESTRAIN TRUMP'S ATTACKS ON THE RULE OF LAW

THREAT TO THE MUELLER INVESTIGATION

Barr authored a controversial memo attacking part of the Mueller investigation. In June 2018, Barr sent the Department of Justice a lengthy [memo](#) arguing that Mueller shouldn't be able to investigate Trump for obstruction of justice. The memo, which Barr [reportedly](#) shared with the White House as well, raises serious concerns that Barr thinks Trump should be above the law.

Barr has already been asked to defend President Trump in the Mueller investigation. President Trump repeatedly [criticized](#) Attorney General Jeff Sessions for failing to rein in Special Counsel Robert Mueller, and clearly a priority for the president is appointing an individual to lead the Justice Department who will protect him from investigations. President Trump has reportedly asked Barr in the past whether he would serve as Trump's personal [defense attorney](#) and has inquired whether Barr, like Sessions, would [recuse](#) himself from the Mueller investigation.

Barr is already on record minimizing the seriousness of allegations surrounding Trump and Russia. In reference to a supposed Clinton uranium scandal that gained traction in right-wing [conspiracy](#) circles, it was reported that "Mr. Barr [said](#) he sees more basis for investigating the uranium deal than any supposed collusion between Mr. Trump and Russia."

Barr is highly skeptical of independent investigations. When he was Attorney General, Barr reportedly considered firing Lawrence Walsh, then the [independent counsel](#) investigating the Iran-Contra scandal. Bob Woodward reported Barr as [saying](#) in 1992 "I've had an itchy finger" in the context of his stating that he had been thinking about firing Walsh for the previous 18 months. Barr [has also said](#), "Frankly, I don't think prosecutors should be independent." Barr [criticized](#) the independent counsel statute in effect at the time, [including](#) the Supreme Court decision that upheld the statute.

Barr played a key role in controversial Iran-Contra pardons. After an independent prosecutor was appointed to investigate the Iran-Contra scandal, President George H.W. Bush pardoned several members of his administration in a move that the independent prosecutor [assailed](#) as a cover-up. Reporting at the time indicated that Barr played a [key role](#) in the controversial [pardons](#).

Barr would likely be skeptical of Congress's power to protect Mueller. In a 1989 Office of Legal Counsel [memo](#), Barr called on the president to resist "congressional incursions" into the president's appointment power and advocated "vigorous opposition" to limitations on the president's power to remove officials, which would be precisely the issue should Trump try to fire Mueller.

LOYALTY WILL LIE WITH TRUMP

Barr supported Trump's decision to fire James Comey. Trump has insisted on personal loyalty from law enforcement officials. When Comey would not pledge his personal loyalty to the President, Trump fired him. Barr authored a May 12, 2017 [op-ed](#) titled "Trump made the right call on Comey."

Barr heavily criticized Sally Yates's decision to follow the Constitution rather than succumb to President Trump's agenda. When Yates directed Department of Justice lawyers not to defend the original discriminatory Muslim Ban (which was struck down by multiple courts), Barr heavily criticized Yates's decision. Barr authored a February 1, 2017 [op-ed](#) where he argued that "[h]er action was unprecedented and must go down as a serious abuse of office."

Barr sees nothing wrong with the president calling for an investigation of his political opponents and believes that Hillary Clinton should be investigated. When Trump pressured the Department of Justice to open an investigation into Hillary Clinton, Barr [said](#), "There is nothing inherently wrong about a president calling for an investigation." In another interview, Barr [said](#), "I don't think all this stuff about throwing [Clinton] in jail or jumping to the conclusion that she should be prosecuted is appropriate . . . but I do think that there are things that should be investigated that haven't been investigated."



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EXPANSIVE VIEWS OF EXECUTIVE POWER

Barr pushed back on congressional efforts to ban torture. During President George W. Bush's administration, Barr testified, "This administration says they're not going to engage in torture, but they will engage in coercive interrogation, and I'm not sure if it would be helpful for Congress to try to figure out what exactly constitutes torture and what's coercion under the circumstances."

Barr believed President Trump could legally issue his first Muslim Ban. In fact, the ban was struck down by multiple courts, and the Trump Administration itself ultimately revised the ban.

Barr reportedly played a role in approving a bulk data collection program. He also supported immunity for tech companies that helped violate Americans' civil liberties.

BARR WILL ROLL BACK CIVIL RIGHTS

TROUBLING VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION

As AG, Barr focused on aggressive immigration enforcement. He later argued that "[o]ne of the biggest problems we have with immigration . . . is the abuse of the asylum laws." During Barr's tenure, the George H.W. Bush administration also attempted to prevent Haitian asylum-seekers from reaching U.S. shores. After the Rodney King riots in LA, Barr stated in a 1992 interview that "The problem of immigration enforcement--making sure we have a fair set of rules and then enforce them--I think that's certainly relevant to the problems we're seeing in Los Angeles."

OPPOSES REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Barr has called for overturning the landmark decision protecting a woman's right to abortion care. Barr stated, "I believe Roe v. Wade should be overruled."

PROBLEMATIC VIEWS ON LGBTQ RIGHTS

Barr has spoken disparagingly of LGBTQ Americans and has fought LGBTQ equality. He has expressed his view that "[v]enereal disease is the price that we pay for sexual licentiousness." While at DOJ, Barr reportedly led the effort to maintain a policy preventing HIV-positive non-citizens from entering the country. Barr was also reportedly a proponent of keeping HIV-positive Haitians housed at Guantanamo Bay, even though they were approved for asylum in the U.S. In 2018, Barr praised Jeff Sessions's decision to rescind guidance protecting transgender Americans.

LEGACY OF OVERINCARCERATION

Barr served as attorney general during the so-called War on Drugs, which disproportionately impacted communities of color. Notably, he wrote a report titled "The Case for More Incarceration." In a 1992 speech, Barr said, "The choice is clear. More prison space or more crime." He also opposed the bipartisan Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015 and applauded Jeff Sessions's decision to revert to harsh charging policies.

BARR SUPPORTS THE WEALTHY AND POWERFUL OVER ALL AMERICANS

ATTACKED CRITICAL CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

Barr has opposed a free and open internet. As general counsel for Verizon, Barr, who received over \$10 million from Verizon in 2009, opposed net neutrality.

Barr advocated for TimeWarner's merger with AT&T. The Justice Department he is nominated to head said the merger would harm consumers.

Barr opposed critical protections for investors. He attacked legislation Congress put in place after the Enron and WorldCom scandals.

SIGNED A BRIEF OPPOSING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

In his capacity as a former attorney general, Barr signed a brief challenging the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act. Had he been successful, health care for millions would have been jeopardized.

