

I voted Yes on H.Res. 711 which recommends that the House of Representatives find Eric Holder, Jr., Attorney General, in contempt of Congress for refusal to comply with a subpoena issued by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

This resolution stems from the Committee's investigation into the "Operation Fast and Furious" gun-running operation that was orchestrated by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). Fast and Furious was a botched operation that began in 2009 and has been directly linked to guns sold to Mexican cartels that resulted in the death of U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry on December 14, 2010. These weapons were also linked to the deaths of at least 200 Mexican citizens.

As part of the investigation, a subpoena was issued to Attorney General Holder for specific documents related to Fast and Furious in an effort to get the facts. The Department of Justice and Attorney General Holder have consistently failed to comply with this subpoena by refusing to produce all of the subpoenaed documents and impeding the investigation. On June 20, 2012, the Committee voted in favor of a resolution that cites Attorney General Holder in contempt of Congress for his failure to comply with the subpoena.

Congress has a standing authority and responsibility to ensure an appropriate balance of power and maintain oversight of Executive functions and federal agencies whenever an instance of abuse arises. It is important to ensure that federal agencies act in a manner that is responsible, appropriate and most importantly, in accordance with our Constitution. No agency, organization or person is above the law and each should be held to the highest degree of accountability.

While my top priority in Congress remains creating jobs in Upstate and strengthening our economy, a well-functioning government must be able to multi-task. I believe that the family of Agent Brian Terry and the American people deserve answers through a transparent and complete investigation, and Attorney General Holder's failure to comply in this instance constitutes contempt of Congress.

H.Res. 711 was approved by a vote of 255 – 67 – 1.