

CONCLUSION

Panel Democrats proposed an investigative plan and rules to govern the Panel’s work in February 2016 in an effort to ensure that – unlike the three House investigations that preceded it, which were decidedly one-sided and marred by procedural irregularities – this investigation would be balanced and fact-based.

As we noted at the time, “Republican and Democratic Members may not agree regarding the topics that this Panel should address. But taxpayer-funded congressional investigations should strike an appropriate balance” on behalf of all of the Americans that we are sworn to serve.

Our rules sought a process to ensure that:

The Panel will reach conclusions based on an objective review of the facts and we will treat witnesses or others called upon to participate in our investigation fairly and in a manner that safeguards their privacy and safety.

Panel Republicans refused to discuss our proposals and proceeded with a “viciously partisan” investigation that has been roundly criticized by top national editorial boards and Chair Blackburn’s own home-state newspaper.

In June 2016, the editorial board of *The Tennessean*, concluded that “the panel is creating the perception that it is embroiled in a wild goose chase.”¹

The *Washington Post* expressed concern over the Republicans’ “heavy-handed tactics in service of this grotesque theater,”² and other opinion writers stressed the “dangerous anti-science and anti-research agenda” of the Panel³ and described the investigation as nothing more than an “abortion witch hunt.”

We are elected officials. It is our opportunity and responsibility to make things better for the people that we serve. That privilege – and the power that accompanies it – should not be abused.

We agreed to participate in this Panel because we believe that words matter, facts matter, and the truth matters. As Panel Republicans increasingly abused congressional authority and put doctors and researchers at risk, we called on the Panel to disband but continued in our efforts to make this investigation as fair, balanced, and fact-based as possible.

To that end, we are releasing this report to set the record straight for the American people.

ENDNOTES

¹ Editorial, *Marsha Blackburn's Infant Lives panel loses focus*, THE TENNESSEAN (June 12, 2016), <http://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/06/12/editorial-marsha-blackburns-infant-lives-panel-loses-focus/85634356/>.

² Editorial, *It's time to shut down the special panel on fetal tissue research*, WASH. POST (May 27), https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/case-closed-its-time-to-shut-down-the-special-panel-on-fetal-tissue-research/2016/05/27/67df20a6-21e8-11e6-aa84-42391ba52c91_story.html?utm_term=.aa53fede90ff.

³ Charles Tiefer, *Congressional Republicans Try to Criminalize Key Medical Research*, FORBES (July 20, 2016), <http://www.forbes.com/sites/charlestiefer/2016/07/20/congressional-republicans-try-to-criminalize-key-medical-research/>.