

## Trump Faces Backlash Over “Epstein Files” Strategy

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President Donald Trump is facing mounting criticism from within his base after his administration decided not to release documents related to the late financier Jeffrey Epstein, despite previous suggestions that a full disclosure would be forthcoming. The Department of Justice (DOJ), under Attorney General Pam Bondi, released a memo asserting that Epstein died by suicide and that no “client list” or incriminating materials exist,

conclusions that have sparked outrage among many of Trump's most loyal supporters.

Conservative figures such as Laura Loomer and Dan Bongino were quick to accuse the administration of concealing vital information. Bongino, a staunch Trump ally, was reportedly so frustrated by the decision that he considered resigning from his advisory role. Loomer and others accused Bondi of betraying the public trust and criticized the administration for backtracking on its commitments to transparency.

In response to the backlash, Trump took to Truth Social to defend Bondi's integrity, stating that any release of files would be at her discretion and should be based on credibility, not conspiracy. He also described the Epstein case as "boring," a remark that only intensified the discontent among followers who had placed hope in Trump's pledge to "drain the swamp" and expose elite misconduct.

Adding to the internal Republican divide, House Speaker Mike Johnson publicly urged for greater transparency and called for the release of the full Epstein file. While he stopped short of forcing a congressional vote on the matter, his position marked a rare public departure from the president's line and signaled unease among establishment Republicans.

Despite the storm of criticism, political analysts suggest that Trump's core support is unlikely to erode significantly. Many believe the controversy, while loud, will fade as long as Trump maintains his broader policy agenda. However, it does highlight the risk of overreliance on conspiracy-driven narratives, which can easily turn inward when expectations go unmet.

This incident underscores a growing tension in Trump's second term: navigating between the loyalty of a base hungry for accountability and the practical constraints of governing. As Trump's administration grapples with heightened demands for transparency, the Epstein file saga serves as a cautionary tale about the volatility of populist promises colliding with institutional boundaries.