

Are Accusers Railroading Jim Jordan with Factless Allegations?

Like many Americans, when I saw last week's headlines about my friend, U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, I couldn't believe them. The accusations did not describe the man of character and courage I've known for more than a decade. When I read the actual stories under those headlines, my reaction turned from dread to outrage. Jordan isn't being accused; he's being railroaded.

Jordan, as you may know, was a two-time NCAA Division I national champion wrestler. After graduating from college, he became an assistant wrestling coach at Ohio State University, from 1986 to 1994. This was during the decades-long career of the now deceased OSU doctor Richard Strauss, who has now been accused of sexual abuse by former OSU athletes. The university just launched an investigation in April of the claims that date back three decades.

Some of the former wrestlers, including two with criminal pasts, are now accusing Jordan of knowingly turning a blind eye to Strauss's alleged abusive behavior. One is a serial litigant who has made wild accusations not only against Jordan, but Jordan's brother and nephews as well, also wrestlers.

Jordan categorically denies the allegations, stating on Fox News last week: "I never saw, never heard of, never was told about any kind of abuse. If I did I would have dealt with it. A good coach puts the interests of his student-athletes first."

Former Wrestlers Stand Up for Jim Jordan's Integrity

Amidst the sudden allegations, numerous former OSU wrestlers are coming forward to back Jordan and questioning the motivations for the charges.

“There’s a lot more of us who are standing by (Jordan) than those who are accusing him of not acting,” former OSU wrestler Dan George told *The Asbury Park Press*. “I’m devastated by what I’ve heard. My heart goes out to anyone who was abused in any way. But Jim Jordan is a tremendous human being who has always lived his life beyond reproach. If he had any knowledge of any misconduct, he would deal with it. There’s no question in my mind.”

Former wrestler Andrew Skove said he stands “100 percent” in support of Jordan and that “I’m not aware of any incidents that could have potentially been covered-up.”

Other former OSU wrestlers spoke with *The Washington Post*, including Michael Alf, who said Jordan was, “the most honest person I’ve ever met. The thing is, if he saw something like that, he wouldn’t have tolerated it.” *The Post* reported that another former wrestler, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said wrestlers didn’t usually speak that frankly with Jordan: “It’s way more likely that [he] didn’t know than did know. We were so guarded around these guys.”

The former wrestler added, “I think the only reason he’s being dragged into it is because of his political stature, and I think that’s terrible.” Indeed, why is Jordan being singled out, decades later, months after the investigation began?

The Circumstantial Evidence Points Against the Allegations

There is a notably strange absence of the other OSU sports staff’s supposed role in this massive conspiracy. The core of the allegation against Jordan is that, as an assistant coach, he *must have known* what Strauss was doing to athletes. Yet the accusers make no mention of what OSU Head Coach Russ Hellickson “must have known.”

Hellickson himself has vehemently defended Jordan, saying: "At no time while Jim Jordan was a coach with me at Ohio State did either of us ignore abuse of our wrestlers." Five other former OSU coaches are also vouching for Jordan's integrity: "It is hard for me to think of another person who embodies the character qualities of honesty, fairness, good judgement and wisdom like Jim Jordan. Jim also never took shortcuts or ducked challenges, that's not how he became a champion, so the idea that Jim would know of abuse of his wrestlers and do nothing is utterly absurd," said Lee Kemp, a former University of Wisconsin assistant coach, and former three-time national and world champion.

The accusers had to know making these provocative claims against a nationally popular conservative lawmaker would maximize news coverage and gain the sympathy of a liberal media quick to believe the worst about conservatives.

Then, there is the conspicuous presence of law firm Perkins Coie, which has been retained to do this investigation. Perkins Coie's clients have included the Democratic National Committee. It produced the infamous "dossier" of conspiracy theories about President Trump and represented the DNC when its computer servers were "hacked."

Also, the timing of these accusations is suspect, squarely targeting one of the most prominent conservative elected officials in the country, decades after the alleged incidents but just as speculation has grown that Jordan might be running for speaker of the House after Paul Ryan retires next year.

No Facts Support These Allegations

Make no mistake: the allegations against Jordan *are* serious. But that is a reason to dig even deeper than normal into the facts surrounding those charges. If you or I were on either side of such accusations, we would want nothing less. Investigations are supposed to pursue the truth, not pre-

scripted political or media narratives.

As President Trump said last week, “Jim Jordan is one of the most outstanding people I’ve met since I’ve been in Washington. I believe him 100 percent. No question in my mind. I believe Jim Jordan 100 percent. He’s an outstanding man.” I agree 100 percent with the president.

People like Jim spend a lifetime developing a reputation of honesty and integrity, yet irresponsible media try to destroy that reputation with one misleading story. This is what makes it difficult to attract men and women of character and conviction to political office.

In the case of Jordan, the facts are already telling a different story than the headlines. {eo}

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