

CONTINUED FROM 1A

> Holder sanctioned

ged debate. Many Democrats walked out of the chamber in protest without voting, accusing Republicans of railroad-ing the motion so they could inflict political damage on the Obama administration during an election year.

The dispute centers on whether the Justice Department must turn over emails and memorandums showing its internal deliberations last year as officials grappled with a congressional investigation about the botched Arizona-based gunrunning investigation known as Operation Fast and Furious. President Barack Obama has invoked executive privilege to block the subpoena.

In early jostling Thursday, Republicans repeatedly invoked the death of Brian Terry, a Border Patrol agent killed in a shootout in December 2010. Two guns that had been purchased by a suspect in the gunrunning case the previous January were found near the scene.

"These contempt charges aren't about politics," said Rep. Rich Nugent, R-Fla. "They aren't about Attorney General Holder or President Obama or anything else but this: A man died serving his country, and we have a right to know what the federal government's hand was in that. It's clear this country somehow played a role in his death.



ASSOCIATED PRESS; BILL HABER

The U.S. House of Representative found Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress on Thursday for failing to disclose internal Justice Department documents in response to a subpoena. The Obama administration and House Republicans refused to find a middle ground in a dispute regarding Justice Department documents related to a botched Arizona-based gun-tracking operation dubbed "Fast and Furious."

We need to root it out, find the cause and make sure this never, ever happens again."

Democrats dismissed the effort as an election-year witch hunt. They said previously disclosed documents and testimony had established that Fast and Furious was the work of Arizona-based law enforcement officials who were frustrated by the difficulty of bringing low-level gun cases, and they contended that Republicans were seeking to embarrass Holder for political reasons.

With Republicans in the majority in the House, there

Kentucky and Kathy Hochul of New York. Rep. Joe Donnelly of Indiana, who is running for the Senate, also voted yes. The gun group Gun Owners of America released a letter this week specifically demanding a yes from Donnelly.

The walkout echoed one by many Republicans in 2008, when the House, led by Democrats then, cited two Bush administration officials for contempt in a dispute over information related to a mass firing of U.S. attorneys.

"We're going to make it clear we're disappointed with the process and the superficiality with which this matter has been dealt with," Steny Hoyer, D-Md., the House minority whip, said Thursday.

A citation for contempt of Congress carries symbolic weight, but its practical impact is limited because the executive branch controls prosecution decisions.

Fast and Furious was an investigation by Phoenix-based agents of the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives into a gun-smuggling network that recruited low-level "straw buyers" — people without criminal records who could lawfully purchase weapons — to buy guns, which were then funneled to a Mexican drug cartel.

The investigation, which ran from late 2009 to early 2011, is controversial because investigators, frustrated at the difficulty of bringing cases against suspected straw buyers, are said to have used the risky tactic of "gunwalking," meaning they sometimes failed to swiftly interdict weapons and arrest low-level suspects because they were trying to build a bigger case.

The suspects under scrutiny ended up purchasing about 2,000 guns, most of which are presumed to have reached drug gangs. In December 2010, two weapons that had been purchased by one of the suspected straw buyers for the network were found at the site of a shootout in which Terry was killed.

CONTINUED FROM 1A

> Extradition blocked



Shawn Eugene Sullivan is being sued by his three Minnesota accusers.

trate anybody in this country, because he can't get back in."

The court said Minnesota's restrictive treatment program for sex offenders was far too draconian.

Judges Alan Moses and David Eady endorsed Sullivan's appeal against extradition after U.S. officials refused to guarantee that Sullivan wouldn't be placed in Minnesota's civil commitment program, which provides for indefinite detention of people found to be "sexually dangerous."

"We have told them, we don't have any present plans to commit him," Freeman said. "But we plan to prosecute him on the crimes for which he's already been charged."

Peter Wold, a Minneapolis attorney representing Sullivan in the criminal case, said his client is "very relieved" by the British court's decision not to extradite him. The British court has "great respect for people's civil rights," Wold said.

The Minnesota program, which began in its current form in 1988, allows civil courts to commit a person for sex offender treatment if a judge decides the person is sexually psychopathic or sexually dangerous. As of April 1, 641 people were in the program.

The program has been criticized for holding people indefinitely. A 64-year-old man became the first person to be granted a provisional discharge in more than a decade this year when he was allowed to move into a Golden Valley halfway house. Only one other person was ever released from the program, and he was soon taken back into custody on a violation.

To be committed in the program, the defendant must have at least two prior sex-related convictions, said Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom. According to court records, Sullivan does not have a criminal history in Minnesota.

Warrants for Sullivan in Hennepin and Dakota remain outstanding, officials say. If he returns to Minnesota, criminal prosecutions against him will continue.

THREE SUBURBAN CASES

Sullivan is accused of sexually assaulting two 11-year-old girls in 1993 at an Eagan home. A year later, Sullivan allegedly raped a 14-year-old girl in Bloomington.

In the Dakota County case, Sullivan sexually touched the girls, showed them pictures of naked women and had them watch pornographic movies with him, according to a 1994 criminal complaint. He also had one of the girls model underwear for him.

Police began investigating Sullivan after one of the girls wrote a letter to her mother about the incidents. A teacher suggested that the girl write the note after noticing her grades dropping. The girls later gave similar accounts of the incidents in police interviews.

In the 1994 Hennepin County case, Sullivan met a 14-year-old girl at Rapid Oil Change in Bloomington in January, according to a separate criminal complaint. He and the girl left in his vehicle, where he gave her vodka and

peach schnapps. The girl passed out drunk in the back seat, the complaint said. When she awoke, Sullivan was raping her, she told police. Immediately after Sullivan took her home about 2:30 a.m., the girl reported the incident and was taken to the hospital.

Sullivan fled to Ireland as prosecutors prepared to file charges. While there, he was convicted of sexually assaulting two 12-year-old girls. Sullivan is originally from Georgia, Hennepin County officials said. He also lived in Colorado Springs, Colo., before moving to Minnesota in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

Authorities finally caught up with him two years ago in London, where he'd moved using an Irish passport that spelled his last name in Gaelic as "O'Suilleabhain."

Sullivan fled to Ireland as prosecutors prepared to file charges. While there, he was convicted of sexually assaulting two 12-year-old girls. Sullivan is originally from Georgia, Hennepin County officials said. He also lived in Colorado Springs, Colo., before moving to Minnesota in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

The High Court judges made clear in an earlier decision that they would have supported Sullivan's extradition had it not been for the sex treatment program, which they described as among the toughest in the U.S. The justices noted that offenders don't have to be mentally ill to be committed; their offenses don't have to be recent; and in some cases, those placed in the program don't even have to have been convicted of a crime.

"There is a real risk that if returned, Mr. Sullivan will be the subject of an order of civil commitment," the judges said in the June 20 decision, adding that placing him in the program would be a flagrant denial of his rights.

They gave U.S. officials a week to guarantee that Sullivan wouldn't be enrolled in the program; when no assurances were made, the extradition proceedings were dropped.

"We do not believe it's in the interest of public safety in our communities to forgo forever a lawful right that we have under a constitutional law to pursue the civil commitment of Mr. Sullivan if we deem that to be appropriate and necessary in the future," said Backstrom.

Sullivan is scheduled to be released from a home-monitoring system Friday in England, Freeman said.

The three Minnesota women in the 1990s cases are suing Sullivan in hopes of holding him accountable for what he did, said Michael Hall III, an attorney representing them. Defense attorneys wanted the women's lawsuit put on hold pending an extradition decision, but Hall said he expects it to go forward. Sullivan has been participating in the civil case, but it remains unclear whether the judge in the case will require him to return to Minnesota.

But "he's not going to show his face in Minnesota, because if he did, he'd be arrested, Hall said.

The Pioneer Press generally does not identify victims of alleged sex crimes.

Sullivan's civil defense attorney did not return a message Thursday

This report includes information from the Associated Press. Maricella Miranda can be reached at 651-228-5421. Follow her at twitter.com/mariwritesnews.

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