

Calls For Steven Chu To Be Fired Over Solyndra Scandal

WASHINGTON — Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich on Monday called for Energy Secretary Steven Chu to be fired for his decision to allow Solyndra to keep receiving taxpayer money even after the struggling solar company had technically already defaulted on the \$535 million federal loan guaranteed by the Energy Department.

The long-shot presidential candidate attacked Chu [on his website Monday](#), earning Gingrich the dubious honor of being the first politician to publicly attack the Nobel Prize-winning physicist who arrived in Washington via academia.

“The president says he has full confidence in Secretary Chu despite this scandal,” Gingrich wrote on his website. “What kind of confidence can we have in a president who refuses to hold his cabinet officers accountable?”

“As President, I would have fired Secretary Chu for so grossly mismanaging taxpayer dollars,” Gingrich continued. “Furthermore, to protect taxpayers, I would have blocked any additional loan guarantees until a full investigation had taken place into the mismanagement and potential corruption in the loan for Solyndra.”

The comments come as House Republicans are turning up the pressure on Chu after a spokesman admitted the secretary was ultimately responsible for the restructuring of Solyndra's federal loan guarantee, which the politically-connected company secured in 2009.

Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla.), the chairman of the subcommittee at the center of an [investigation into government loan programs that benefit private companies](#), told The Huffington Post on Friday that Chu's decision was a direct violation of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which requires that taxpayers be placed ahead of private investors when it comes to repaying a federal loan guarantee.

Stearns has not, however, explicitly called for Chu to be fired.

"Secretary Chu and other officials should be held accountable for their role in exerting pressure to close the Solyndra loan and for illegally subordinating the taxpayers to two private hedge fund investors this year," Rep. Cliff Stearns said in a statement to The Huffington Post on Tuesday night. "I intend to have him come before the committee and testify so that he can explain his actions and then hold him responsible."

Chu is slated to appear sometime soon before the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee.

Internal White House email threads [released in their entirety](#) on Tuesday showed that government officials had significant concerns about the Solyndra loan guarantee. As Democrats have noted, the emails do not

reveal any signs of corruption, merely disagreement about whether the firm was financially viable.

The documents “do not contain evidence that government decisions relating to Solyndra were influenced by considerations relating to campaign donations,” wrote Democrats in a memo on Monday. “Rather, the documents show that there was internal disagreement within the administration about Solyndra’s viability and the effectiveness of the loan guarantee program throughout the process.”
