

How did fear shape the federal government's actions during the Cold War?

The Lavender Scare



Supporting Questions

1. What was the Red Scare?
2. What was the Lavender Scare?

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How did fear shape the federal government's actions during the Cold War?

Content Standards

MI USHG 8.2.2 – Policy Concerning Domestic Issues – analyze major domestic issues in the post-World War II era and the policies designed to meet the challenges by:

- describing issues challenging Americans, such as domestic anticommunism (McCarthyism), labor, poverty, health care, infrastructure, immigration, and the environment.
- evaluating policy decisions and legislative actions to meet these challenges.

MI USHG 8.3.4 – Civil Rights Expanded – evaluate the major accomplishments and setbacks in securing civil rights and liberties for all Americans over the 20th century.

Staging the Question

Students respond to prompt: “What do people do when they get scared?”

Supporting Question 1

What was the Red Scare?

Supporting Question 2

What was the Lavender Scare?

Formative Performance Task

Students engage in a T.A.C.O.S. centered on a collection of Herb Block cartoons.

Students read the Snapshot: McCarthy's Oversight Abuses and answer the discussion questions.

Formative Performance Task

Students use two congressional investigations, along with a speech delivered by Joseph McCarthy, to evaluate the influence of fear on policy decisions and legislative action targeting LGBTQ+ citizens.

Featured Sources

Political Cartoons by Herbert Block

Source 1A: “It’s okay, we’re hunting Communists!” (1947)

Source 1B: “Fire!” (1949)

Source 1C: “You mean I’m supposed to stand on THAT?” (1950)

Source 1D: “You read books, eh?” (1949)

Source 1E: Snapshot: Joe McCarthy’s Oversight Abuses

Featured Sources

Source 2A: The Wherry Committee Report Adapted Excerpts (1950)

Source 2B: The Hoey Committee Report Adapted Excerpts (1950)

Source 2C: Executive Order 10450 Excerpts (1953)

Source 2D: [Joseph McCarthy Speech to Women’s Club, Wheeling W.V.](#) (1952)

(Optional) **Source 2E:** [The Lavender Scare \(Time\) Video](#)

Assessment

Students answer the compelling question.

Extension/Taking Informed Action

Students add to the Snapshot: Joe McCarthy’s Oversight Abuses, expanding the document to include more information on the Lavender Scare.

Additional Sources

- [Handling Sensitive Topics-Stanford Teaching and Learning Hub](#)
- [T.A.C.O.S. Political Cartoon Analysis Strategy](#)
- [“These People Are Frightened to Death” Congressional Investigations and the Lavender Scare](#)



Required Supplies/Materials:

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White board or chart paper• Class set of political cartoons (Sources 1A-1D, one set of four for each pair of students)• Supporting question 1 worksheet• Snapshot: Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses• Snapshot: Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses comprehension questions
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audio clip of Joseph McCarthy speaking to the women's club in Wheeling W. Virginia• Class set of the following primary sources (one set per group of two):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2A: The Wherry Committee Report excerpts (1950)○ 2B: The Hoey Committee Report excerpts (1950)○ 2C: Joseph McCarthy Speech to Women's Club, Wheeling W.V. (1952)○ 2D: Executive Order 10450 excerpts (1953)• Supporting question 2 worksheet• [OPTIONAL: The Lavender Scare (Time) Video with Edpuzzle questions embedded]

Suggested Pacing: Two 60-minute class periods

Lesson Sequence

Period 1

1. Begin by writing the question "What do people do when they get scared?" on the whiteboard or chart paper. Give students a moment to think individually about the question. Facilitate a brief whole-class discussion, inviting students to share their responses. Record key themes and ideas on the board (e.g., fight, flight, hide, lash out, make bad decisions, seek safety, trust others, distrust others). Move into the larger inquiry by linking their responses to the idea that fear can influence people's actions, setting the stage for exploring how fear influenced the government during the Cold War. **(5 min)**
2. Pair students off and review the T.A.C.O.S. political cartoon analysis strategy (from the [K20 Center](#)), explaining each letter of the acronym:
 - *Time* (When was it drawn? What else is happening then?)
 - *Action* (What's happening in the cartoon?)
 - *Caption* (What is the title/caption?)
 - *Objects* (What objects or symbols are used?)
 - *Summary* (In one sentence, what is the meaning of this cartoon?)
3. Once students understand the T.A.C.O.S. format, distribute one set of the political cartoons (Sources 1A-1D) to each pair of students and the supporting question 1 worksheet to each student. Each student will complete one worksheet, but they may work together to analyze the cartoons. When pairs have finished, invite a few pairs to share their "one word" they chose to describe the theme of the cartoons. **(30 min)**
4. Following the cartoon analysis, tell students they are going to read a snapshot from the Levin Center to help them better contextualize the angst they just saw depicted in the cartoons. Distribute the "Snapshot: Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses" (Source 1E) and its corresponding comprehension questions to each student. Students should individually read the document and answer the questions. **(20 min)**

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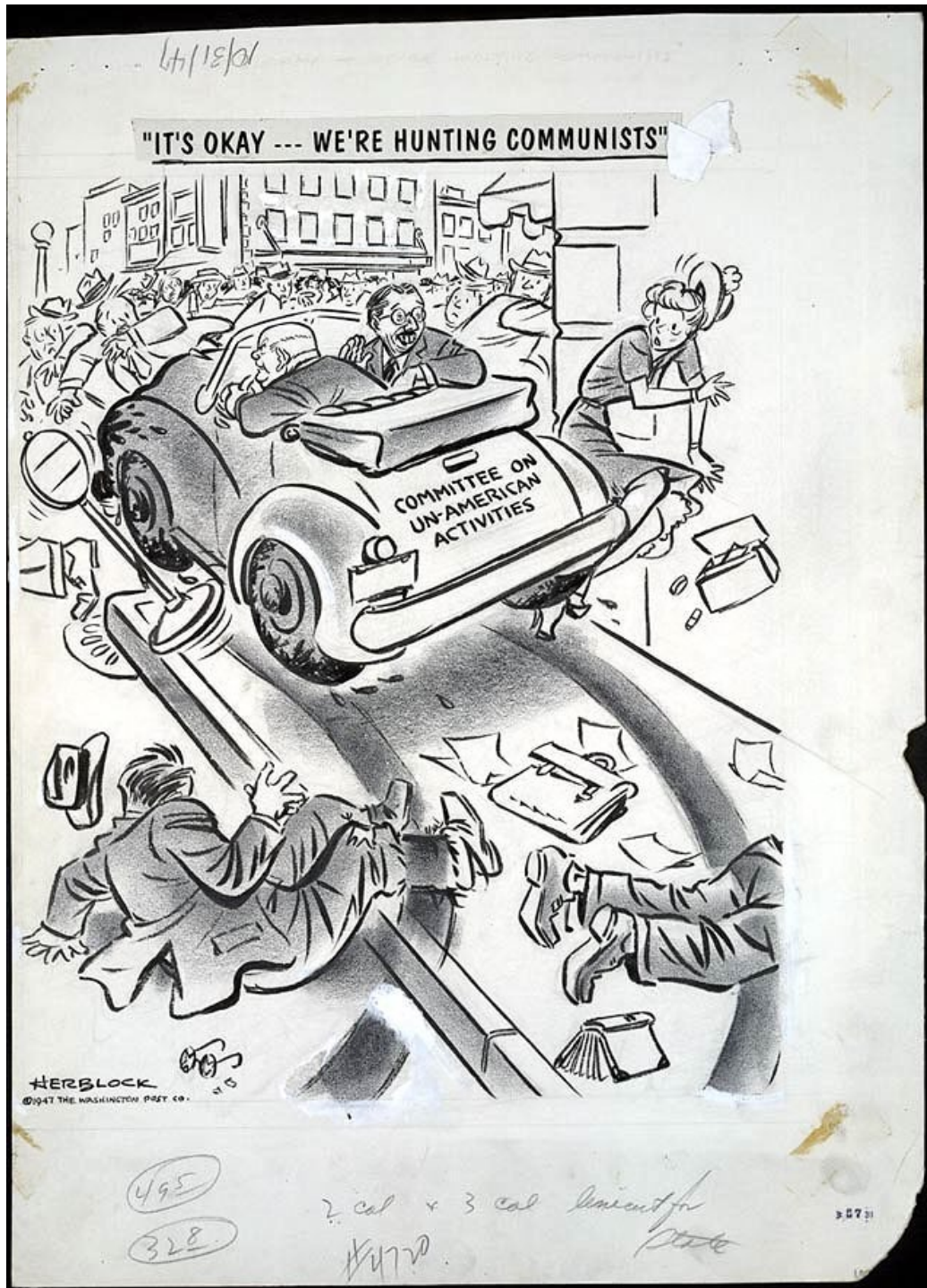
Period 2

1. Tell students that the Red Scare they learned about in the previous period was not the only “scare” to grip the country. This period they will learn about another one known as the “Lavender Scare.”
2. Get students into pairs and pass out the supporting question 2 worksheet. Tell students that two congressional experts, Senator Carl Levin and Elise J. Bean, developed a checklist to evaluate the quality of a legislative investigation. Students will be using a modified version of this checklist to evaluate the quality of two congressional reports into LGBTQ+ people in government.
3. Pass out to each pair of students the Wherry Report adapted excerpts (Source 2A) and the Hoey Committee Report adapted excerpts (Source 2B). Students should begin by identifying the claim that each source makes about LGBTQ+ employees and recording their answer. Following this, they should use the sources to fill out the high-quality investigation checklist. They should cite a minimum of one piece of evidence for each entry, as well as a reason (even if they determine the investigations did NOT accomplish one of the items on the checklist, they need to justify why they answered that way). Students should finish this portion of the lesson by reflecting on whether the investigations provided enough evidence to support their claims. **(30 min)**
4. Once students finish their high-quality investigation checklist, pass out the Executive Order 10450 Excerpts (Source 2C). Have students use this source in pairs to answer the two questions on their worksheet. **(5 min)**
5. After students have read the investigations, pass out Source 2D: Joseph McCarthy Speech to Women’s Club, Wheeling W.V. (1952) and tell students that this address took place two years after the investigations they just explored. Play the audio for students and give them time to answer the questions on their worksheet. Take one or two share outs as appropriate. **(10 min)**
6. After taking share outs on Joseph McCarthy’s speech, have students answer the compelling question. **(10 min)**

Optional Extension/Differentiation

1. Call the class back together, and play the [Lavender Scare Edpuzzle](http://bit.ly/4ojyDR0) (<http://bit.ly/4ojyDR0>), allowing time for students to respond to the questions (this can be done using Live Mode). **(10 min)**

Supporting question 1	What was the Red Scare?
Source 1A	"It's okay, we're hunting Communists!"
Block, H. "It's okay – We're hunting Communists," October 31, 1947. Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper. Published in the Washington Post (18) LC-USZ62-127327	



Supporting question 1	What was the Red Scare?
Source 1B	"Fire!"
Block, H. "Fire!" June 17, 1949. Reproduction from original drawing. Published in the Washington Post (25)	



Supporting question 1	What was the Red Scare?
Source 1C	"You mean I'm supposed to stand on THAT?"
Block, H. "You mean I'm supposed to stand on that?" March 29, 1950. Reproduction from original drawing. Published in the Washington Post (27).	



Supporting question 1	What was the Red Scare?
Source 1D	"You read books, eh?"
Block, H. "You read books, eh?" April 24, 1949. Ink, graphite, and opaque white over graphite underdrawing on layered paper. Published in the Washington Post (24)	





Name: _____

Supporting question 1: What was the Red Scare?

Directions: In pairs, look at the following cartoons drawn by cartoonist Herb Block, and for each one, build your T.A.C.O.S.

Cartoon	<u>T</u> ime (When was it drawn? What's happening then?)	<u>A</u> ction (What's happening in the cartoon?)	<u>C</u> aption (What is the title/caption?)	<u>O</u> bjects (What objects or symbols are used?)	<u>S</u> ummary (In one sentence, what is the meaning of this cartoon?)
					
					



Cartoon	<u>T</u>ime (When was it drawn? What's happening then?)	<u>A</u>ction (What's happening in the cartoon?)	<u>C</u>aption (What is the title/caption?)	<u>O</u>bjects (What objects or symbols are used?)	<u>S</u>ummary (In one sentence, what is the meaning of this cartoon?)
					
					

If you had to pick one word (that was NOT Communism) to describe the theme of all these cartoons, what would it be?

Name: _____

Supporting question 1: What was the Red Scare? **ANSWER KEY**



Directions: In pairs, look at the following cartoons drawn by cartoonist Herb Block, and for each one, build your T.A.C.O.S.

Cartoon	<u>T</u>ime (When was it drawn? What's happening then?)	<u>A</u>ction (What's happening in the cartoon?)	<u>C</u>aption (What is the title/caption?)	<u>O</u>bjects (What objects or symbols are used?)	<u>S</u>ummary (In one sentence, what is the meaning of this cartoon?)
	<i>1947. WWII was just ending; the Red Scare was starting</i>	<i>People are getting run over by a car labelled "House Un-American Activities Committee"</i>	<i>"It's okay, we're hunting Communists!"</i>	<i>A car, people, a briefcase, papers flying out of the briefcase</i>	<i>HUAC is running roughshod over people and hurting them, saying it is okay that they are doing so because they are HUAC.</i>
	<i>March 29, 1950. The Red Scare was going on; Joseph McCarthy had begun his reign of terror</i>	<i>An elephant representing the Republican Party is being pushed toward a messy, towering thing labelled "McCarthyism"</i>	<i>"You mean I'm supposed to stand on that?"</i>	<i>Elephant for the G.O.P.; Wherry, McCarthy, Taft and Bridges are all labelled (they're senators)</i>	<i>The Republicans are being led toward a bad situation, being forced to support McCarthy. His position is not well supported.</i>

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Cartoon	<u>T</u>ime (When was it drawn? What's happening then?)	<u>A</u>ction (What's happening in the cartoon?)	<u>C</u>aption (What is the title/caption?)	<u>O</u>bjects (What objects or symbols are used?)	<u>S</u>ummary (In one sentence, what is the meaning of this cartoon?)
	<i>June 17, 1949. The Red Scare was going on</i>	<i>A man is trying to douse the fire on the Statue of Liberty</i>	<i>"Fire!"</i>	<i>Statue of Liberty Fire bucket labeled "panic" Man labeled "hysteria"</i>	<i>In our hysteria to put out the fire of Communism, we might accidentally snuff out liberty itself.</i>
	<i>April 24, 1949. The Red Scare was happening</i>	<i>G-Men are investigating a teacher and scrutinizing her room with suspicion</i>	<i>"So you read books, eh?"</i>	<i>Classroom, books, maps, picture of Jefferson</i>	<i>Anti-communism paranoia is so bad that even innocuous things like Thomas Jefferson are seen as subversive. Even the idea of thinking is subversive.</i>

If you had to pick one word (that was NOT Communism) to describe the theme of all these cartoons, what would it be?

Fear

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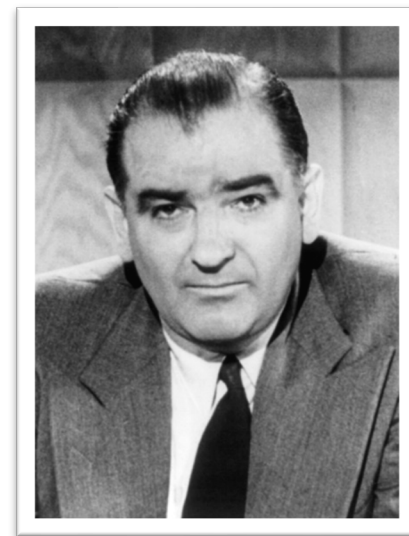
Supporting question 1	What was the Red Scare?
Source 3A	Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses
Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses • levin center. Levin Center. (2024a, September 20). https://levin-center.org/joe-mccarthys-oversight-abuses/	

Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses

Joseph McCarthy was sworn into the U.S. Senate as a Republican from Wisconsin in 1947 and remained a senator until his death in 1957. During his tenure, he sat on the Senate Government Operations Committee, serving as full committee chair from 1953 to 1955. From 1953 to 1954, he also served as **chair** of its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI), a panel charged with investigating and exposing waste, fraud, and abuse in a wide range of government programs. Focusing on Cold War fears of communism and **subversion**, Senator McCarthy became infamous for abusing his congressional oversight powers, spreading disinformation, and acting without regard for individuals' dignity and constitutional rights.

McCarthy's Rise to Prominence

Senator McCarthy first rose to prominence in early 1950 when he claimed to have a list of 205 communists who worked in the U.S. State Department. The Senate **Subcommittee** on the Investigation of Loyalty of State Department Employees was formed to investigate his accusations. The committee determined that the nine State Department employees actually named by McCarthy during hearings were not communists and declared the list as "a fraud and a hoax." However, simply by making the allegations, the relatively unknown senator gained national attention.



Senator Joseph McCarthy, 1954
Source: Library of Congress

Chair: Member who conducts and guides committee meetings.

Subversion: Undermining the power and authority of an institution.

Subcommittee: A subdivision of a larger congressional committee that considers specific issues and reports back to the committee.

He was not the first or only one to assert that spies were operating within the U.S. government. In 1947, President Harry Truman created the Federal Employee Loyalty Program, which directed the FBI to investigate government employees suspected of communist affiliation. Other investigations, such as the hearings examining the so-called "Hollywood Ten" film writers were occurring around this time. In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted of **espionage** and executed in 1953, sparking public attention and concern

regarding the government's response to the apparent threat of communism.

McCarthyism and Its Tactics

Senator McCarthy's speech about unnamed communists who had supposedly infiltrated the State Department stoked public fears about communism – often referred to as the **Red Scare** – that had already been awakened by the communist take-over of Eastern Europe following World War II, the 1949 communist revolution in China, and emerging communist movements in countries around the world. Senator McCarthy also targeted employees and

Espionage: The act of spying and gathering secret information, often in the government to obtain political and military information.

Red Scare: The spreading of fear of the possible rise of communism or anarchism.

service-members he claimed to be members of the LGBTQ+ community in the lesser-known “Lavender Scare,” causing numerous government employees to lose their jobs because of their assumed sexual orientation rather than political leanings. In response to Senator McCarthy’s actions, Herbert Block published an unflattering political cartoon coining the term “McCarthyism.”

While some in the Senate opposed Senator McCarthy’s tactics, calls to reject McCarthyism did not deter Senator McCarthy from sowing disinformation and suspicion. In January 1953, when the Republicans assumed majority control of the U.S. Senate, Senator McCarthy became chair of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PSI). He hired the abrasive, 26-year-old Roy Cohn as his chief counsel and instructed him to search for communists in the U.S. government.

He began holding both non-public and public hearings with a wide variety public hearings with a wide variety of public officials, academics, and private citizens, subjecting many to unfair questions and accusations.

Senator McCarthy’s relationship with his PSI colleagues was rocky. He denied other members of the subcommittee full access to the information being gathered, provided inadequate notice of hearings and meetings, and refused to allow subcommittee Democrats to hire their own staff.

Senator McCarthy plowed ahead with several investigations and hearings into the State Department's foreign-language radio station, Voice of America, the U.S. Information Services Libraries around the world, and university professors. In these hearings, he rejected the value of allowing a range of political opinions in a democracy and ignored principles of academic and intellectual freedom.

Eisenhower’s Executive Order

Senator McCarthy also attacked the military, leading to a chain of events that put him at

Executive Order: A rule or order issued directly by the president that acts as a law.

odds with the Army and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and that eventually led to his downfall. In August 1953, Senator McCarthy held PSI’s first closed-door session investigating the Army. Earlier that year, in April 1953, President

Eisenhower had issued **Executive Order** 10450 requiring the reinvestigation of government personnel previously suspected of disloyalty.

In response to the Executive Order, the Army intelligence unit reopened investigations into civilian engineers at Fort Monmouth’s laboratories who had previously been cleared of charges. Alleging that a communist spy ring was operating at Fort Monmouth, Senator McCarthy questioned several low-level civilian employees in a closed session and exaggerated to the press the evidence obtained. Forty-two Signal Corps employees were suspended, despite an FBI reinvestigation that found no evidence of a spy ring.

On November 6, 1953, Senator McCarthy met with Army Secretary Robert T. Stevens and demanded information about the Army’s loyalty boards and investigations in defiance of President Truman’s Executive Order requiring such information to be kept secret and President Eisenhower’s extension of that order.



Herbert Block’s cartoon in Washington Post on March 29, 1950

Source: Library of Congress

Growing Public Attention and McCarthy's Downfall

On March 9, 1954, news broadcaster Edward R. Murrow dedicated his entire evening program, *See It Now*, to condemning McCarthyism and actions taken by the senator. As one of the most trusted journalists in the country, the broadcast drew increased public attention to Senator McCarthy's tactics. In the days following the broadcast, due to growing factual disputes and claims of bias, the other PSI members voted unanimously to remove Senator McCarthy as

PSI chair for the duration of the Army inquiry. Senator McCarthy agreed to temporarily leave the subcommittee. The Army-McCarthy hearings, which would continue for 35 days, began on April 22, 1954, and the broadcasts garnered an enormous audience of around 20 million. Despite losing his position on PSI, Senator McCarthy used a variety of

tactics, some abusing Senate institutional norms, to dominate the hearings. He testified as a witness for parts of six days and attended all the hearings, using his status as a senator to interrupt multiple witnesses by claiming a “**point of order**” — which became a catchphrase throughout the nation. For many Americans, the hearings were their first direct exposure to Senator McCarthy's conduct, and many were shocked to see him attempt to introduce doctored photographs and documents into the record, bully witnesses, and make baseless accusations. By allowing the public to see the hearings in their entirety, as they occurred, PSI members limited the senator's ability to manipulate the facts.

The hearings ended on June 17, 1954, and the report cleared the Army of wrongdoing while noting that the Army should have brought complaints to the full subcommittee when officials felt Senator McCarthy and staff requests had become unreasonable.



*Attorney Joe Welch and Senator Joe McCarthy at the Army-McCarthy hearings on June 9, 1954
(Source: U.S. Senate)*

Point of Order: Inquiring during a debate as to whether the proper rules and procedures are being followed.

Censure: A formal expression of strong disapproval enacted by a majority vote.

Select Committee: Small committee formed for a specific purpose and disbanded afterwards.

Lame Duck Session: A meeting of Congress that occurs after election day, but before the next Congress meets the following January. This term can also apply to Presidents and other elected officials.

Jurisdiction: The limits or territory within which authority may be exercised.

Censure of Senator McCarthy

On July 30, 1954, Republican Senator Ralph Flanders of Vermont introduced a resolution to **censure** Senator McCarthy's increasingly offensive conduct. In response, the Senate formed a bipartisan **Select Committee** to Study Censure Charges against Senator McCarthy. Senator McCarthy attacked the committee, calling it an “unwitting handmaiden of the Communist party.” On December 2, 1954, in a **lame duck session** called to consider the select committee's findings, the Senate voted 67 to 22 to condemn Senator McCarthy for conduct “contrary to senatorial tradition,” with all Democrats voting for the measure and Republicans evenly split. In November 1954, elections cause Republicans to lose control of both chambers of Congress, and Senator McCarthy never regained his position as chair of PSI.

The Aftermath

Senator McCarthy's abuse of his congressional investigative powers forced wholesale changes within the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. These changes included requiring authorization of investigations by both the chair and ranking member, allowing minority members to initiate their own preliminary investigations and hire staff, and giving all members full access to all information obtained by the subcommittee.

The Supreme Court warned that in abusing its power to conduct investigations, Congress had encroached on the most cherished of American freedoms including the right to privacy and the freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly. The Supreme Court also issued several rulings in the 1950s that strengthened the rights of witnesses called before a congressional inquiry. The high court upheld the investigative powers of Congress while holding that: 1) a congressional committee had to state the specific **jurisdiction** and purpose of the committee when attempting to force a witness to share information; and 2) a witness at a congressional proceeding may invoke their right against self-incrimination by merely mentioning the Fifth Amendment.

Jurisdiction: The limits or territory within which authority may be exercised.

Conclusion

In the 15 months that Senator McCarthy chaired PSI, he called over 500 persons to appear before the subcommittee, producing over 9,000 pages of transcripts. By statute, all records pertaining to congressional investigations are sealed for 50 years, so it was not until 2004, that the unpublished McCarthy-era records were unsealed. At that time, PSI Chair Carl Levin and Ranking Member Susan Collins prefaced the release of the records with a joint statement that included the following:

Senator McCarthy's zeal to uncover subversion and espionage led to disturbing excesses. His browbeating tactics destroyed careers of people who were not involved in the infiltration of our government. His freewheeling style caused both the Senate and the Subcommittee to revise the rules governing future investigations and prompted the courts to act to protect the constitutional rights of witnesses at congressional hearings. These hearings are a part of our national past that we can neither afford to forget nor permit to reoccur.

Learn more about Senator McCarthy's oversight abuses:

- [*Congress Investigates: A Critical and Documentary History*, Volume Two, Chapter Six by the Robert C. Byrd Center](#)
- [Investigating Power: Timeline of McCarthyism](#)
- [McCarthy: Power Feeds on Fear \(PBS documentary\)](#)
- [McCarthyism and the Red Scare](#)
- [Sixty-five years ago, a divided Senate was called upon to judge a rogue politician](#)
- [U.S. Senate: McCarthy and the Army-McCarthy Hearings \(includes links to Executive Session Transcripts unsealed in 2004\)](#)
- [Levin Center Portraits in Oversight: Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses](#)

Name: _____

Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses

Comprehension Questions

- 1) What is the role of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations? What acronym is used to identify this committee?

- 2) What groups of people did McCarthy target during his campaign and investigations?

- 3) What tactics did McCarthy use during his time as chair of PSI?

- 4) What factors contributed to McCarthy's loss of power?

- 5) What changes were made to Congressional Investigations because of McCarthy's actions? What protections for Congressional witnesses were put into place?

Supporting question 1: What is the Red Scare?

Name: _____

Joe McCarthy's Oversight Abuses **ANSWER KEY**

Comprehension Questions

- 1) What is the role of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations? What acronym is used to identify this committee?

This subcommittee was tasked with studying and investigating cooperation with the rules, regulations, and laws across many areas including Congress, individuals, and companies. This committee was commonly referred to as the PSI.

- 2) What groups of people did McCarthy target during his campaign and investigations?

McCarthy targeted suspected Communists, academics, people in the LGBTQ+ community, people in the entertainment business, and eventually his peers in the US government and US military.

- 3) What tactics did McCarthy use during his time as chair of PSI?

McCarthy denied other members of the PSI access to information, provided inadequate notice of hearings and meetings, and refused Democrats on the PSI to hire their own staff. He also publicly targeted academics, libraries, and radio stations. Following Eisenhower's Executive Order 10450 that reopened a closed investigation into a suspected spy ring, McCarthy held closed door meetings, questioned Army employees, and then released exaggerated information to the press and public about his findings.

- 4) What factors contributed to McCarthy's loss of power?

By allowing the public to see the hearings in their entirety, PSI members limited McCarthy's ability to manipulate the facts. The public was able to see McCarthy bully witnesses, use doctored evidence, and make baseless accusations about government and military employees. In 1954, Edward Murrow dedicated an entire evening program of the news to condemning McCarthyism.

- 5) What changes were made to Congressional Investigations because of McCarthy's actions? What protections for Congressional witnesses were put into place?

- *PSI Chair and Ranking Member must agree to an investigation*
- *Minority members are allowed to hire their own staff*
- *All PSI members are allowed access to all information obtained*
- *All committee members are required to respect the Constitutional rights of all hearing witnesses*

Supporting question 1: What is the Red Scare?

Answers may include something like: The Red Scare was a period during the late 1940s and early 1950s where Americans became terrified of Communists and their potential infiltration into society. Paranoia around possible Communist subversion led to the excesses of people like Joseph McCarthy who ruined lives and reputations with little to no evidence to back up his often-outlandish attacks.

Supporting question 2	What was the Lavender Scare?
Source 2A	The Wherry Report Adapted Excerpts (May 1950)
Wherry, K. & 81st Congress. (1950). Report of the Investigations of the Junior Senator of Nebraska. . . On the Infiltration of Subversives and Moral Perverts into the Executive Branch of the United States Government [Senate Committee Print 4178]. United States Senate.	

Your subcommittee consisting of Senators Hill and Wherry jointly questioned officials of the Department of State, Department of Defense, Civil Service Commission, and others regarding the testimony of Lieutenant Blick [...]
Differences have arisen over what matters should be included in this report and regarding recommendations. Hence this separate report by [Senator Wherry].

The testimony of Lieutenant Blick, head of the vice squad of the Metropolitan Police Department, dealt chiefly with employment of homosexuals by the Government, while Sergeant Hunter's testimony dealt chiefly with the extent and activities of subversive forces in the District of Columbia. **The activity of Senator Wherry to have eliminated from the Department of State pro-Communists, subversives, and other alien- minded radicals with low standards of morality, began when he took the oath of a United States Senator January 6, 1943.**

[...]

Lieutenant Blick [...] **testified that he has in his possession the names of between 300 and 400 Department of State employees suspected or allegedly homosexuals.**

In his testimony before the full subcommittee, Lieutenant Blick testified to the following:

Senator WHERRY. Out of your 18 years' experience, how many homosexuals do you think there are in the District of Columbia?

Mr. BLICK. *As a very conservative estimate, I would say 5,000.*

Senator WHERRY. What percentage of those would you say are in Government?

Mr. BLICK. *Of course, this is my own judgment.*

Senator WHERRY. This is just your judgment.

Mr. BLICK. *And it is not official. Seventy-five percent.*

Senator Hill questioned Lieutenant Blick on the growth of the crime of homosexuality.

Senator HILL. How much has this thing grown?

Mr. BLICK. *It has blossomed out; yes, sir.*

At another point in the hearing, Lieutenant Blick testified as follows:

Senator WHERRY. The one thing that I am particularly interested in is the national security, and, of course that gets into the Department of State; it also gets into the Department of Commerce and into the military. The other day I asked you this question: "Do you have names, through prosecutions or confessions or from whatever source you get them, that would indicate how many homosexuals you might find in a Department?"

Mr. BLICK. *I gave you an estimate of approximately how many. I have not figured them or broken them down.*

[...]

Mr. BLICK. *Among those names are people who have been arrested who maybe did not belong to the State Department, but in questioning them or talking to them they might say, "Why don't you go and get so-and-so and so-and-so? They all belong to the same clique." By doing that, their names were put on the list, and they are cataloged as such, as a suspect of being such.*

Senator FERGUSON. You mean the names were given by this particular person saying "Here, now, why don't you get these fellows?"

Mr. BLICK. *Yes, sir.*

Senator FERGUSON. And he would name five.

Mr. BLICK. *Yes, sir, or one or two.*

[...]

Lieutenant Blick testified as follows:

Senator WHERRY. Is a homosexual, because he is a moral deviant, one that is an easy prey for blackmail and conditions that might be imposed upon him?

Mr. BLICK. *I would say that anything I would want from an individual who was [queer]¹, I could get.*

Senator FERGUSON. And you knew he was [queer]?

Mr. BLICK. *And knew he was [queer]. I could get it quicker by the approach of exposing him than I could by money, by offering him money.*

[...]

Hitler **is said** to have amassed the names of homosexuals around the world, chiefly in capitals of countries on his now-destroyed timetable for subjugation. The Hitler list is **rumored** to have been acquired by Russia when the Hitler regime crashed to defeat and unconditional surrender. **Only the most naive** could believe that the Communists' fifth column in the United States would neglect to propagate and use homosexuals to gain their treacherous ends in view of the resort to every conceivable form of sabotage revealed in every country infiltrated and finally taken over by the ruthless Communists. In testimony received by your subcommittee, there was a **fleeting** reference to a trail of homosexuals leading to a foreign embassy in Washington, D. C.

[...]

Senator Wherry rejects the argument that the Senate and [...] the executive branch will have done enough if they see that [queer people] [...] are kept out of sensitive positions only in government. Wherever they may be employed in a department handling defense secrets, [queer people] are a security risk, because of their proximity to persons having security secrets and documents containing such information.

[...]

When Sergeant Hunter appeared before the full Appropriations Subcommittee on Appropriations for the District of Columbia, Senator Ferguson asked:

Is there any tie-in between this and the previous testimony [by Lieutenant Blick] that was given here about the degenerates?

¹ Language changed due to its offensive nature.

Mr. HUNTER. *I would say that a [queer person] is very susceptible. You find quite a few [queer people] attending these meetings.*

He was referring to meetings of Communists and their fellow travelers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. A thorough investigation by the appropriate committee of the Senate into the problem of eliminating [queer people] from employment by the Government, [...] with especial attention to the following:

F. Asserted connection between increase in [queer people] and Communists undermining activities.

These recommendations are made with a view to obtaining action by the Senate in the present session of Congress. Conditions described in this report are too grave to be left dangling uncertainly by mere reference of this report to several committees of the Senate for such action or inaction as may ensue.

Supporting question 2	What was the Lavender Scare?
Source 2B	The Hoey Committee Report Adapted Excerpts
Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments Subcommittee on Investigations. (1950). Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government (p. 31) [Interim Report]. United States Senate. https://stacks.stanford.edu/file/druid:fd720pb8753/employment-homosexuals-serialset.pdf	

<p><u>COMMITTEE ON EXPENDITURES IN THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS</u></p> <p>JOHN L. MCCLELLAN, Arkansas, Chairman JAMES O. FASTLAND, Mississippi JOSEPH R. MCCARTHY, Wisconsin CLYDE R. HOEY, North Carolina IRVING M. IVES, New York HERBERT R. O'CONOR, Maryland KARL E. MUNDT, South Dakota HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, Minnesota MARGARET CHASE SMITH, Maine EDWARD L. LEAHY, Rhode Island ANDREW F. SCHOEPPPEL, Kansas WILLIAM BENTON, Connecticut ARTHUR H. VANDENBERG, Michigan WALTER L. REYNOLDS, Clerk</p>	<p><u>INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE¹</u></p> <p>CLYDE R. HOEY, North Carolina, Chairman HERBERT R. O'CONOR, Maryland JAMES O. EASTLAND, Mississippi JOHN L. MCCLELLAN, Arkansas KARL E. MUNDT, South Dakota MARGARET CHASE SMITH, Maine ANDREW F. SCHOEPPPEL, Kansas FRANCIS D. FLANAGAN, Chief Counsel</p>
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The Senate Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments was directed, under authority of Senate Resolution 280 (81st Cong., 2d sess., **adopted June 7, 1950**), (see Appendix I), to make an investigation into the employment by the Government of [queer people]². **This resolution was the result of preliminary inquiries made earlier this year by a subcommittee [...] composed of Senator Hill of Alabama and Senator Wherry of Nebraska. The reports and testimony of that subcommittee were of considerable value to the Investigations Subcommittee in the conduct of this inquiry.**

The primary objective of the subcommittee in this inquiry was to determine the extent of the employment of [queer people] in Government; to **consider reasons why their employment by the Government is undesirable**; and to examine into the efficacy of the methods used in dealing with the problem.

[...]

In the opinion of this subcommittee [queer people] are not proper persons to be employed in Government for two reasons; first, they are generally unsuitable, and second, they constitute security risks.

[...]Most of the authorities agree and our investigation has shown that the presence of a [queer person] in a Government agency tends to have a corrosive influence upon his fellow employees. [...] One homosexual can pollute a

¹ These are the Senators who were assigned to this investigation.

² Language changed due to its offensive nature.

Government office.

[...]

The lack of emotional stability which is found in most [queer people] and the weakness of their moral fiber, makes them susceptible to the blandishments of the foreign espionage agent. [...] Furthermore, most [queer people] tend to congregate at the same restaurants, night clubs, and bars, [...] making it possible for a recruiting agent to develop clandestine relationships which can be used for espionage purposes.

As has been previously discussed in this report, [queer people are] easy prey to the blackmailer. **It follows** that if blackmailers can extort money from a homosexual under the threat of disclosure, espionage agents can use the same type of pressure to extort confidential information or other material they might be seeking.

[...] Cases have been brought to the attention of the subcommittee where Nazi and Communist agents [...] **attempted** to obtain information from employees of our Government by threatening to expose their abnormal sex activities.

[...]

It is an accepted fact among intelligence agencies that espionage organizations the world over consider [queer people] [...] to be prime targets where pressure can be exerted [...] **despite protestations by [queer people]** that they would never succumb to blackmail[...]. The present danger of this security problem is well illustrated by the following excerpt from the testimony of D. Milton Ladd, Assistant to the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who appeared before this subcommittee in executive session:

The Communists, without principles or scruples, have a program of seeking out weaknesses of leaders in Government and industry. In fact, the FBI has in its possession information of unquestionable reliability that orders have been Issued by high Russian intelligence officials to their agents to secure details of the private lives of Government officials, their weaknesses, their associates, and in fact every bit of information regarding them, hoping to find a chink in their armor and a weakness upon which they might capitalize at the appropriate time.

[...]

In considering the extent of homosexuality in the Government, the subcommittee has confined itself, as far as it has been reasonably possible, to those cases where specific information has led to the conclusion that a person is [queer], or at least a likely suspect.

[...]

It is significant to note that it was about April 1 of this year that the employment of [queer people] in Government was given widespread publicity as the result of preliminary studies by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee.³

[...]

CONCLUSION

It is the opinion of this subcommittee that those who engage in acts of homosexuality and other perverted sex activities are unsuitable for employment in the Federal Government. This conclusion is based upon the fact that persons

³ This is the Wherry-Hill committee and ensuing reports.

who indulge in such degraded activity are committing not only illegal and immoral acts, but they also constitute security risks in positions of public trust.

It is quite apparent that as a direct result of this investigation officials throughout the Government have become much more alert to the problem of the employment of [queer people] in Government and in recent months they have removed a substantial number of these undesirables from public positions.

While this subcommittee is convinced that it is in the public interest to get [queer people] out of Government and keep them out, this program should be carried out in a manner consistent with the traditional American concepts of justice and fair play. [...] No such appeal machinery exists at the present time.

**Note: this report did not include a "Recommendations" section*

Supporting question 2	What was the Lavender Scare?
Source 2C	Excerpts of Executive Order 10450
Executive Order 10450--Security Requirements for Government Employment (1953). https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/Regulations/EO_10450.pdf	

WHEREAS the interests of the national security require that all persons privileged to be employed in the departments and agencies of the Government, shall be reliable, trustworthy, of good conduct and character, and of complete and **unswerving** loyalty to the United States

[...]

Sec. 8. (a) The investigations conducted **pursuant** to this order shall be designed to develop information as to whether the employment [...] of the person being investigated is clearly consistent with the interests of the national security. Such information shall relate, but shall not be limited, to the following:

(1) Depending on the relation of the Government employment to the national security:

(i) Any behavior [...] which tend to show that the individual is not reliable or trustworthy.

[...]

(iii) Any criminal, infamous, dishonest, immoral, or notoriously disgraceful conduct, habitual use of intoxicants to excess, drug addiction, sexual perversion¹.

[...]

(v) Any facts which furnish reason to believe that the individual may be subjected to coercion, influence, or pressure which may cause him to act contrary to the best interests of the national security.

Unswerving: steady or constant

Pursuant: following, in accordance with

Transient: lasting only a short time,
temporary

¹ This term is here because it had force of law. This is an outdated and offensive term.

Supporting question 2	What was the Lavender Scare?
Source 2D	Joseph McCarthy Speech to Women’s Club, Wheeling W.V. (1952)
McCarthy, J. R. (1952, February 9). <i>Homosexuals in State Department, 1952</i> [Speech audio recording]. Republican Women’s Club, Wheeling, WV, United States. https://server16280.contentdm.oclc.org/dmwebservices/index.php?q=dmGetStreamingFile/p128701coll0/32.mp3/byte/json	

Senator McCarthy speaking:

There’s another group about which I hesitate to talk, but I think the picture isn’t complete unless we do. Dean Acheson appeared before the American Society of Newspaper Editors shortly after I had given the evidence to the MacCarran – uh, or I beg your pardon – the Tydings Committee¹. He said the State Department is now staffed with good, loyal, clean-living Americans. Well I don’t quite know what his conception of clean-living Americans happens to be, but, since he made that statement, fifty-four individuals who had this unusual State Department **affliction** – homosexuals – were allowed to resign. Fifty-four of those good, clean-living Americans.

As one of my friends said the other day, he said, “McCarthy why worry about those individuals. You don’t claim they’re all communists do you?” The answer is obviously no. Some of them are very energetic, very loyal Americans. Some of them have that unusual affliction because of no fault of their own – most, of course, because they are morally weak. The question is, why worry about getting those individuals out of the State Department?

I think the answer was given by a committee headed by Senator Wherry, one of our very able senators who died a few weeks ago, and Senator Hill -- a Democrat and a Republican -- and they explained very well why those individuals must not be handling top secret material. Let me read it to you. They say, “A classic case,” – no, starting on page 5 of their report – “As has been previously discussed in this report, the pervert² is easy prey to the blackmailer. It follows that if blackmailers can extort money from these individuals under the threat of disclosure, **espionage** agents can use the same type of pressure to **extort** confidential information or other material they might be seeking.”³ Listen to this: they

Affliction: disease or illness

Espionage: the act of spying

Extort: to force someone to give something to you by using threats, fear, or intimidation

say, “A classic case,” – this is the Wherry Committee, the Wherry-Hill Committee – “a classic case of this type involved one Captain Raydell who became chief of the Austrian Counter-Intelligence Service. He succeeded in building up an excellent intelligence net in Russia and had done considerable damage to Russia’s intelligence net. However, Russian agents soon discovered that Raydell was a homo. And shortly thereafter,” -- then I won’t read this, they discuss how they trapped him – “under the threat of exposure Raydell

agreed to furnish and he did furnish the Russians with Austrian military secrets. He also doctored or destroyed the intelligence reports which his own agents were sending in from Russia with the result that the Austrians, at the outbreak of the war⁴, were completely misinformed as to Russia’s mobilization intentions. On the other hand, the Russians had obtained from Raydell the war plans of the Austrians and part of the German plans. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, Captain Raydell’s acts were discovered by his own government and he committed suicide.” So just remember that

¹ The Tydings Committee was set up to investigate charges Senator McCarthy made in January of 1950 that the State Department was full of Communists and other undesirable persons. The committee concluded that McCarthy’s charges were baseless.

² The Learning by Hearings team at the Levin Center acknowledges that this is an outdated and offensive term. It is only included here because as part of an audio recording, it cannot be removed.

³ This quote does not come from the Wherry Report. It comes from the Hoey Committee Report.

⁴ The war referenced here is World War I.

when you hear the complaint by the liberal elements of press that we should not be disturbed about people because of their morals. We're not disturbed about them because of their morals, but because they are dangerous to this country.

Name: _____

Supporting question 2: What was the Lavender Scare?

Directions: Read both the adapted excerpts from the Wherry and Hoey investigation reports (Sources 2A and 2B). What is the primary **claim** these sources make about LGBTQ+ employees?

Source 2A: Wherry (1950)	Source 2B: Hoey (1950)

Having now identified the main claim of the two sources, evaluate their quality. Fill out the chart below, citing a minimum of one piece of evidence for each entry, as well as the reason the evidence cited works as proof.

High-Quality Investigation Checklist			
Adapted from: Levin, Carl & Elise J. Bean. Defining Congressional Oversight and Measuring Its Effectiveness. Wayne Law Review Vol. 62 No. 1 (2018).			
Using Source 2A and/or 2B...		Evidence (direct quote from sources)	Reasoning (in your own words)
Did the investigation address issues that were important to the public?	Yes No		
Were the people investigating all able to agree on the main things they found out?	Yes No		
Did the investigation contact, or at least try to contact, the key subjects of the investigation?	Yes No		
Were the facts and recommendations in the written report well supported by the evidence?	Yes No		

High-Quality Investigation Checklist			
Adapted from: Levin, Carl & Elise J. Bean. Defining Congressional Oversight and Measuring Its Effectiveness. Wayne Law Review Vol. 62 No. 1 (2018).			
Using Source 2A and/or 2B...		Evidence (direct quote from sources)	Reasoning (in your own words)
Did the investigation find important and helpful information?	Yes No		

Do either of these reports provide enough evidence to answer their claims? Explain your answer in a complete sentence.

Directions: Read Executive Order 10450 (Source 2C) and answer the following questions.

1. Based on your observations of the two investigations, what motivated the creation of this order?
2. Can you draw any connection between this order and your answers to the staging the question?

Directions: Answer the following questions using Source 2D.

1. McCarthy mentioned the Wherry Committee report, which you have just read. Does that report provide the evidence that McCarthy said it did? Explain your answer.
2. What was McCarthy’s goal in giving this speech?
3. What was the Lavender Scare?

Directions: Answer the compelling question using at least two examples from this lesson to support your answer.

How did fear shape the federal government's actions during the Cold War?

Name: _____

Supporting question 2: What was the Lavender Scare? **ANSWER KEY**

Directions: Read both the adapted excerpts from the Wherry and Hoey investigation reports (Sources 2A and 2B). What is the primary **claim** these sources make about LGBTQ+ employees?

Source 2A: Wherry (1950)	Source 2B: Hoey (1950)
<i>Homosexuals are a security risk because their lifestyle opens them up to the possibility of blackmail, and because Communists and homosexuals often cavort with each other.</i>	<i>Homosexuals open themselves up to blackmail because of their lifestyle.</i>

Having now identified the main claim of the two sources, evaluate their quality. Fill out the chart below, citing a minimum of one piece of evidence for each entry, as well as the reason the evidence cited works as proof.

High-Quality Investigation Checklist			
Adapted from: Levin, Carl & Elise J. Bean. <i>Defining Congressional Oversight and Measuring Its Effectiveness</i> . Wayne Law Review Vol. 62 No. 1 (2018).			
Using Source 2A and/or 2B...		Evidence (direct quote from sources)	Reasoning (in your own words)
Did the investigation address issues that were important to the public?	Yes	<i>Answers will vary</i>	<i>Answers will vary</i>
	No		
Were the people investigating all able to agree on the main things they found out?	Yes	<i>Answers will vary</i>	<i>Answers will vary</i>
	No		
Did the investigation contact, or at least try to contact, the key subjects of the investigation?	Yes	<i>Answers will vary</i>	<i>Answers will vary</i>
	No		
Were the facts and recommendations in the written report well supported by the evidence?	Yes	<i>Answers will vary</i>	<i>Answers will vary</i>
	No		

High-Quality Investigation Checklist			
Adapted from: Levin, Carl & Elise J. Bean. <i>Defining Congressional Oversight and Measuring Its Effectiveness</i> . Wayne Law Review Vol. 62 No. 1 (2018).			
Using Source 2A and/or 2B...		Evidence (direct quote from sources)	Reasoning (in your own words)
Did the investigation find important and helpful information?	Yes	<i>Answers will vary</i>	<i>Answers will vary</i>
	No		

Do either of these reports provide enough evidence to answer their claims? Explain your answer in a complete sentence.

Answers will vary, but the short answer is that “No- neither report provides enough evidence to support their claim.”

Directions: Read Executive Order 10450 (Source 2C) and answer the following questions.

1. Based on your observations of the two investigations, what motivated the creation of this order?

The order was motivated by a fear that Communists and homosexuals would collude with one another.

2. Can you draw any connection between this order and your answers to the staging the question?

Answers may include: When I thought about what people do when they are scared, some things that came to mind where “people tend to look to authority figures for guidance,” “people become overly cautious,” and “people don’t think through all the implications of their actions.” Based on the E.O. that I just read, it looks like all of that applies here.

Directions: Answer the following questions using Source 2D.

1. McCarthy mentioned the Wherry Committee report, which you have just read. Does that report provide the evidence that McCarthy said it did? Explain your answer.

While McCarthy quoted from the source, it did not provide any concrete evidence that homosexuals were a security risk. So no- the report did not provide enough evidence.

2. What was McCarthy’s goal in giving this speech?

McCarthy was trying to use fear of communists and homosexuals to justify his actions and accusations.

3. What was the Lavender Scare?

The Lavender Scare was the targeted discrimination against homosexuals in government and society more broadly, where they were accused of being national security risks and immoral.

Directions: Answer the compelling question using at least two examples from this lesson to support your answer.

How did fear shape the federal government's actions during the Cold War?

Sample claim: Fear led the federal government to make unfounded accusations about different groups of people, (Communists and LGBTQ+ individuals), ruining their lives, with no concrete evidence to back it up.

Lavender Scare Edpuzzle Video **ANSWER KEY**

1. What was the Lavender Scare?

A fear beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s that gay and lesbian people had infiltrated the federal government.

2. Why was it assumed that queer people were unsuitable for government jobs?

They were portrayed as “disloyal” and subject to blackmail.

3. What could prompt someone to be investigated for homosexuality?

If there was anything suspicious in your record, you were a female employee and wore unusual clothing or got a lot of calls from women.

4. What could happen to an employee outed as homosexual?

They might be interrogated by the Civil Service Commission, be forced to resign, lose their life through suicide.

5. What role did the police play in carrying out the Lavender Scare?

Police would arrest people all over the country and funnel their names to the Civil Service Commission.