



The Republican tactic is clear: To try and tarnish a vice presidential nominee who is widely regarded as squeaky clean. | Getty

## GOP demands answers on Kaine's 2009 bid to deport convicted murderer

As Virginia governor, Kaine moved to transfer an incarcerated double-murderer back to his native Germany.

By **BURGESS EVERETT** | 08/11/2016 10:29 AM EDT | Updated 08/11/2016 11:22 AM EDT



Virginia Republicans are dredging up a 7-year-old decision by Tim Kaine to try and send a convicted murderer back to Germany.

Two Virginia state delegates told reporters on Thursday that Kaine has never fully answered questions about his efforts as governor to transfer convicted murderer Jens Soering to Europe. Soering was convicted of killing the parents of girlfriend Elizabeth Haysom in a grisly 1985 case in Central Virginia.

State Dels. Rob Bell and Todd Gilbert say they remain unsatisfied by Kaine's past explanations of why he sought to remove Soering from lifetime imprisonment in Virginia. Kaine has said in the past that he sought to kick a convicted murderer out of the country and [save](#) money for the state.

"Gov. Kaine knew that this effectively meant this double murderer was going to get released," Gilbert said, referring to the possibility that the Germans would have released Soering. "Sen. Kaine has never given a good answer. Certainly saving the taxpayers money is not a good answer when you're talking about a brutal double murderer. So the question is: what was his reasoning?"

Soering would have been eligible for parole after two years in Germany, according to the Washington Post. Kaine's deal would have blocked him from returning to the U.S.

The Republican tactic is clear: To try and tarnish a vice presidential nominee who is widely regarded as squeaky clean.

Scrutiny of Kaine's candidacy has largely focused on two policy breaks with Clinton: His previous praise of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and his support for banning taxpayer dollars from going toward abortion. Since accepting the running mate job, Kaine has vowed to oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership and support Clinton's efforts to overturn the abortion funding ban, called the Hyde Amendment.

The Clinton campaign said Kaine had never shied away from the matter.

"After receiving assurances from the German government that Jens Soering had been convicted to a life sentence in Germany, and would never be allowed to enter the U.S. again, then-Governor Kaine recommended the Department of Justice consider transferring him into the German penal system where his own country

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could pay for his life imprisonment rather than Virginia taxpayers. He has had no involvement in the case since January 2010," said Amy Dudley, a spokeswoman for Kaine.

Gilbert said the Soering case seems to fit with the narrative that Kaine does what is "politically expedient at the time."

"We think it's important to show [whether] he's a good vice president and one step away from the White House," said Bell, who is running for Virginia attorney general in 2017.

Kaine's efforts to send Soering overseas during the final days of his term in 2009 were reversed when former GOP Gov. Bob McDonnell took office. Soering has been **denied** subsequent requests to go back to Germany by current Democratic Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

Republicans trying to defeat Kaine in his 2012 Senate election researched the matter extensively but were unable to find a clear political edge to the Soering case, according to one GOP official familiar with the 2012 campaign. Still, then-Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli **tried** to portray Kaine as supportive of blocking Soering's extradition from England to the United States in 1988, a charge Kaine's campaign denied.

Asked why the Soering case should be a political scandal in 2016 after it fell flat in 2012, Bell responded: "I don't know why the press chooses to cover what it covers. This is a critical issue."

The two Republicans aren't alone in demanding more answers about the case.

"Members of the national press corps ought to be asking Kaine about the Soering matter every day – at least until the veep hopeful from Virginia comes up with a sensible explanation for why he tried to set this man free," **wrote** Virginian-Pilot columnist Kerry Dougherty late last month.

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