

read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2758) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2758

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DISPLAY OF NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES POW/MIA FLAG AT THE WORLD WAR I MEMORIALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d)(3) of section 902 of title 36, United States Code, is amended by striking “The World War II Memorial,” and inserting “The World War I Memorials, the World War II Memorial.”

(b) DAYS FOR DISPLAY.—Subsection (c)(2)(A) of such section is amended by inserting “the World War I Memorials,” before “the World War II Memorial.”

NATIONAL DAY OF AWARENESS FOR MISSING AND MURDERED NATIVE WOMEN AND GIRLS

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 401 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 401) designating May 5, 2018 as the “National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls.”

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 401) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of February 12, 2018, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 483, S. Res. 484, and S. Res. 485.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to recon-

sider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 26; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. Finally, I ask that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Pompeo nomination, with the time until 12 noon tomorrow equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator BLUMENTHAL.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

DARK MONEY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to talk about money in politics and, even more insidiously and potentially perniciously, money in government.

The money in politics begins with the President's nominee to be Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. I suggest to my colleagues that they read an article that appeared in opensecrets.org from the Center for Responsive Politics. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[OpenSecrets.org, Center for Responsive Politics, March 24, 2018]

TRUMP PICKS TOP KOCH RECIPIENT FOR SECRETARY OF STATE

(By Megan Janetsky and Matthew Kelly)

President Trump nixed Rex Tillerson as secretary of state Tuesday in favor of CIA Director Mike Pompeo, a former Kansas congressman whose political career was paved by Koch Industries.

Headquartered in Pompeo's former Wichita district, the privately held company run by conservative megadonors Charles and David Koch has funneled more money to the Trump pick than any other federal politician.

The oil-and-gas conglomerate built a reputation for using a network of “dark money” to exert political influence and was Pompeo's top donor over the course of his former congressional career.

That “in” may work to the advantage of the Koch brothers, who hold a significant interest in global affairs, especially with Trump's recently imposed tariffs.

TOP DONORS TO MIKE POMPEO

[Career Totals]

| Donor | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Koch Industries | \$400,500 |
| Textron | \$79,810 |
| Mull Drilling | \$70,350 |
| Club for Growth | \$64,817 |
| Ritchie Exploration | \$55,954 |
| INTRUST Bank | \$55,300 |
| McCoy Petroleum | \$52,550 |
| AT&T | \$51,250 |
| Cox Enterprises | \$47,300 |
| Emprise Bank | \$44,555 |

Since his first bid for Congress in 2010, Pompeo has received \$400,500 from Koch Industries—\$335,500 from individual employee contributions and \$65,000 from its corporate PAC, Center for Responsive Politics data shows.

Each election cycle leading up to his confirmation as CIA director in 2017, Pompeo led all federal politicians in Koch-related donations. He's also received more money from the oil interest than any candidate since 1989.

Trump's announcement came in a surprise tweet Tuesday morning, adding Tillerson to a growing list of White House officials to unceremoniously leave the administration.

Tillerson thanked members of the State Department in a news conference that afternoon, saying “the world needs selfless leaders such as these.”

“I will address a few administrative matters related to my departure and work towards a smooth and orderly transition for secretary of state-designate, Mike Pompeo,” Tillerson told reporters.

Pompeo's relationship with the Kochs has held strong over the years. In 2014, when he faced a tough primary challenge, the Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity group spent over \$409,000 supporting Pompeo.

Other congressional leaders who trailed Pompeo in career donations from Koch Industries include House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) with \$274,172 and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) with \$148,350.

But Pompeo's ties to the Koch brothers predate his political career.

He used investments from the Koch empire to help kick-start a Wichita-based company, Thayer Aerospace. After leaving the company, Pompeo acted as head of Sentry International, an oil drilling manufacturer with Koch ties.

Those investments seem to have paid off.

When Pompeo entered Congress, he brought with him a former Koch Industries lawyer as his chief of staff. Within his first week on the job, Pompeo proposed measures considered top legislative priorities for Koch Industries.

The proposals included cutting funding for an Environmental Protection Agency registry of greenhouse-gas polluters and a database of consumer complaints about unsafe products. The Washington Post reported.

Along with Koch support, Pompeo has been bankrolled by other oil-and-gas interests, including Textron, Mull Drilling and McCoy Petroleum. The industry has given him a total of \$1.2 million, the most by any industry, CRP data shows.

Now Pompeo enters the role of the White House's chief diplomat, a position that can affect the financial interests of multinational companies.

TOP POLITICIANS SUPPORTED BY KOCH INDUSTRIES
(Career Totals)

| Politician | Last Office Sought | Total |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Mike Pompeo (R-KS) | House | \$400,500 |
| Todd Tiahrt (R-KS) | House | \$388,766 |
| Paul Ryan (R-WI) | House | \$274,172 |
| Pat Roberts (R-KS) | Senate | \$258,850 |
| James M. Inhofe (R-OK) | Senate | \$187,150 |
| Jerry Moran (R-KS) | Senate | \$175,900 |
| Roy Blunt (R-MO) | Senate | \$168,600 |
| Sam Brownback (R) | President | \$168,050 |
| Pete Sessions (R-TX) | House | \$162,000 |
| Mitch McConnell (R-KY) | Senate | \$148,350 |

The Koch brothers already have a broad international presence. According to the company's website, Koch companies alone "employ more than 120,000 people across about 60 countries."

While Pompeo has yet to take a stance on Trump's recently rolled out tariffs, Charles Koch harshly rejected them, saying in a press release last week that "History is filled with examples of administrations that implemented trade restrictions with devastating results."

"One might assume that, as head of Koch Industries—a large company involved in many industries, including steel—I would applaud such import tariffs because they would be to our immediate and financial benefit," he wrote. "Corporate leaders must reject this type of short-term thinking, and we have."

Late last year, the Charles Koch Foundation embarked on a multimillion-dollar project to promote the realist school of foreign policy in programs at elite universities such as Harvard, Notre Dame and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Koch is an outspoken libertarian when it comes to foreign policy, and the realist school of foreign policy champions restraint on the world stage and taking a backseat on humanitarian intervention and nation-building.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. The article has the headline "Trump picks top Koch recipient for secretary of state." The article says that "former Kansas congressman whose political career was paved by Koch Industries" received more money than others in similar situations.

The reasons to vote against Mike Pompeo are many, but one of the principal ones is that he was one of the chief recipients of money from the Koch brothers or their organizations. In fact, since his first bid for Congress in 2010, Pompeo has received \$400,000 from Koch Industries, \$335,000 from employee contributions, and \$65,000 from its corporate PAC, according to the Center for Responsive Politics.

The Pompeo nomination is a poster boy for the impact of money in politics, the influence of the Koch brothers on this administration, and the enduring effect of campaign contributions, of influence-buying and pettiness in government.

The Koch brothers are blatantly using their influence in the Trump administration to advance an agenda based on their own self-interests at the expense of our democracy, and they have reached into the uppermost levels and echelons of this administration through individuals they have supported over years and years, such as Mike Pompeo.

In July of 2015, 2 weeks before he kicked off his campaign for President,

the President said through a tweet: "I really like the Koch Brothers (members of my [Palm Beach] Club), but I don't want their money or anything else from them. Cannot influence Trump!" Well, they are good friends. They are members of the club. And nobody can deny their influence on Donald Trump, their impact on this administration, or their enduring reaches and effects on public policy.

If you have ever wondered where Republican ideological positions originated on lowering corporate taxes, undercutting healthcare, or loosening environmental regulations, look no further than a Koch front group called Americans for Prosperity. Americans for Prosperity is the recipient of the largest grants made by another organization called Freedom Partners. POLITICO describes Freedom Partners as "the Koch brothers' secret bank." The group peddles dark money to front groups to drum up public support for policies that benefit the richest of the rich.

The Americans for Prosperity organization has been called by the Washington Post "the third largest political party in the United States." It was founded in 2004 by David Koch, who serves as the chairman of the board, and he has crammed the group with Republican operatives. Many of them work for the Vice President. They operate in 36 States. They are heavily involved in electoral activities, spending millions of dollars on TV ads that spread disinformation, falsely claiming that the middle class will benefit from policies designed to enrich the millionaire backers and billionaire backers of Americans for Prosperity.

The organizations backed by these two groups and others have consistently claimed that tax cuts for the wealthy will benefit all Americans. They have consistently argued for measures that cause environmental degradation. In fact, the Koch brothers have an enormous stake in repealing regulations that protect the environment and put limits on polluting fossil fuel companies, repealing those regulations designed to accomplish that goal.

Americans for Prosperity drives the Koch energy agenda. The group spent millions lobbying for its industry-backed champion, Scott Pruitt, to head the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as others nominated for EPA and Energy Department positions. Once they were in place, these cronies wasted no time in seeking to dismantle the environmental regulations prohibiting oil and gas drilling on Federal lands, withdraw from the Clean Power Plan, which is aimed at cutting U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and revoke a moratorium on new coal leases.

There are other examples of influence by an American in modern political history but none so egregious as the Koch brothers in this administration.

Most recently, we saw their influence on the judiciary in suppressing votes.

The Koch brothers are throwing a lot of money behind the nomination of judges who are poised to rule in their favor, undermining judicial precedence and the rule of law. Its network is helping Donald Trump stack the courts with far-right ideologues.

Donald Trump entered office with more than 100 vacancies on the Federal bench—an opportunity created in part by Senate Republicans who blocked many of Barack Obama's nominees before he left office. Judges enjoy lifetime appointments. If the Koch brothers succeed in rigging the judiciary against the needs of everyday Americans, the effects will be felt for generations to come.

Americans for Prosperity is also behind shameless efforts to suppress votes. It has launched disinformation campaigns, sending out bogus registration mailings with incorrect deadlines in swing States like North Carolina and Wisconsin. When challenged, Americans for Prosperity claims that these blatant lies were the result of clerical error.

Our Nation needs prosperity but not an influence-peddling organization that claims to be for prosperity but, in fact, leads to policy that undermines the prosperity of everyday Americans.

My reasons for opposing Mike Pompeo's nomination go well beyond the campaign contributions he has received. His views are contrary to American values. He has repeatedly devalued and dismissed religious tolerance. He has allied himself with anti-Islam and anti-LGBT groups. At a time when the environment our children will inherit hangs in the balance, he is a career-long climate change denier, drowning in dark money from the Koch brothers' oil industry. His regressive views on reproductive rights jeopardize the healthcare of millions of women around the world. If confirmed, he will be responsible for executing Donald Trump's misguided policies, and he will reinforce Donald Trump's misguided instinct, expanding, for example, the global gag rule that prevents foreign aid from being provided to global health programs that discuss or provide abortion services. He will cut programs covering everything from HIV prevention, to maternal and child health, to epidemic disease response, putting our lives at risk.

Money in politics has reached its apex in this administration, not only in politics but in government. Just within the last day or so, the President's Director of the Office of Management and Budget gave a speech to a group of bankers in which he said:

We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress. If you were a lobbyist who never gave us money, I didn't talk to you. If you were a lobbyist who gave us money, I might talk to you.

That quote from Mick Mulvaney, the head of the Office of Management and Budget, was made to a group of about 1,300 bankers in plain view and hearing of the American public.

First, the idea that a lobbyist would have to pay in order to have access to a Member of Congress or his administration raises the potential of bribery, extortion, and perhaps pay-to-play. It is pay-to-play and the image of it that has so sullied this town and government in general that President Trump swayed so many people by describing it as a swamp. Well, the swamp has been deepened, and it has been further polluted by exactly this kind of talk.

I will say to Mick Mulvaney: You are destroying the credibility and trust of the American people and our honest colleagues, who come to work every day and try to help and serve the American people. Some of them still work in the Federal Government at high levels, in fear of losing their jobs because they adhere to a standard of integrity that no longer prevails.

In fact, the mindset and mentality of pay-to-play has become the new normal in this administration. It is filled with people at the highest levels who regard unbridled and unapologetic graft as the new normal. That is what that quote says to the average American.

It is typical of the practices of the Administrator of the EPA, who accepts virtually free lodging from a lobbyist who has access to him, as well as takes luxury flights and stays in exorbitantly expensive hotels at taxpayers' expense. Conflicts of interest, ethical violations, and other kinds of betrayal of the public trust have become commonplace at the top levels of the EPA.

It is the mindset of a President of the United States who literally every day accepts benefits from foreign governments and payment in violation of the U.S. Constitution, specifically in violation of the emoluments clause that prohibits such benefits and payments without the consent of Congress. Donald Trump has never come to the U.S. Congress seeking approval for the payments and benefits that go to the Trump Organization, which he still owns. That failure is a violation of the emoluments clause of the U.S. Constitution, and it is the reason that 200 of us Members of Congress have brought legal action to vindicate our trust and the trust of the American people that the Constitution will be followed and that we will do our job. We have standing to bring that action

because the President of the United States is preventing us from reviewing those payments and benefits that go to him, which we have an obligation to review under the U.S. Constitution. That case will be heard in court in June.

I hope the courts will vindicate the rule of law. I hope we will see an end to this corrosive and corrupting impact of money in politics and money in government through a web of deceit and contempt for the rule of law that betrays the trust of the American people.

The Washington, DC, that is conveyed by these quotes and actions by officials at the very top of our government are not my Washington. They are not the Washington, DC, of many of our colleagues—honest and hard-working in this Chamber, in the House of Representatives, and in the executive and judicial branches—who continue to do their job. Among them are two of our colleagues: JOHNNY ISAKSON and JON TESTER.

Senator ISAKSON of Georgia and Senator TESTER of Montana have helped to lead the Veterans' Affairs Committee over the past few days as it raises concerns and questions about the serious allegations made by men and women in uniform or retired Active-Duty military. These concerns go directly to the ethics and integrity and character and ability of the President's nominee to be VA Secretary, Ronny Jackson, a rear admiral in the U.S. Navy. There is no realistic path at this point to confirmation of Admiral Jackson. He should have a hearing if he wishes. He should be considered if he chooses. But the administration owes the American people, as well as the Senate, answers to questions raised by the chairman and ranking member of the VA Committee. I have talked to both of them, as well as the staff, about this investigation, and I have participated in their thinking and support their efforts to uncover the truth. Facts are stubborn things. That is what Ronald Reagan said. It remains true even more so today in this inquiry.

The administration has failed to vet this nomination. It failed abjectly to uncover the truth before it submitted this nomination. It owes the truth and the facts now to the Senate before there is any hearing. Documents and evidence should be provided, and the administration should reverse course,

if necessary, and make sure that full access is provided to all of these documents and evidence.

As recently as yesterday, members of the VA Committee were barred from viewing the FBI background check. The Inspector General's report of 2012 on Rear Admiral Jackson was not provided to our committee, and other relevant evidence and documents may exist, but they have been denied.

I urge the administration to provide the facts, respond to the questions, and address the serious allegations that have been made, because they are consistent and credible and compelling. The more time goes on, the more serious and substantial these allegations become in their detail and depth and power. Time is not on their side, and so far, the administration has abjectly failed to respond.

I thank Senators Isakson and Tester for their leadership and for their insistence on integrity and character because our veterans deserve it. Most importantly, our veterans deserve the very best leader, not one who will be encumbered by the baggage of allegations, unrefuted and un rebutted so far. Our veterans deserve the very best in healthcare and employment opportunities and skill training. Our veterans deserve that we keep faith with them and choose the very best leader, with experience in management, as well as a commitment to the high standards of integrity that befit the Veterans' Administration. It has seen problems. It needs improvement and reforms. The path forward for the VA is with a person and a leader who has unimpeachable integrity.

I thank Senator ISAKSON and Senator TESTER for their leadership and insistence on that high bar in the Veterans' Administration for the sake of our veterans.

Thank you, Mr. President.
I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:31 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 26, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.