

flood our elections. It is going to mislead voters and turn people away from our elections, our democracy, and, quite frankly, will put our democracy at risk.

This is a very important joint resolution, and it is not the first time we have been here. During the Gilded era of the Copper Kings, this Nation's wealthy openly exercised their power over our democracy. Once again, they tried to buy it. In fact, in my home State of Montana, Copper King William Clark's solicitation for bribes during his campaign for the U.S. Senate was so blatant that Mark Twain called him "as rotten a human being as can be found anywhere under the flag." Today, I am concerned that the days of the Copper Kings have returned and are being ushered in, in part, by policies from this administration.

Back in July, the Treasury Department and the IRS took an unprecedented step and eliminated the requirements for certain tax-exempt organizations to report to the IRS the identities of their major donors.

I will say one thing about the Senator from Wisconsin's remarks—the Obama administration's view on this was that it opposed it because it would constrain the IRS in enforcing its tax laws. This administration's policy through the Treasury, through the IRS, created another safe haven for this country's wealthiest donors to hide in the shadows while they pulled the levers of power in our democracy.

Just like ordinary Americans took control of our government at the end of the days of the Copper Kings, when Senate seats were openly for sale—they acted—we have to act today. Today's vote will overturn that rule and shed more light on the folks who are trying to buy our elections.

In my reelection campaign over the past 2 years, over \$40 million of outside money was spent to influence just 500,000 voters. We will never know who those folks were. These out-of-State fat cats didn't know the State of Montana; they just wanted to write the large checks to try to influence and buy our State, just like the Copper Kings did 100 years ago. I guarantee that a lot of those dollars came from the same dark money groups that are opposing this vote here today. They don't want to see this joint resolution pass because it undermines their efforts to anonymously influence our elections—once again, taking away from the transparency of our government.

In addition to these wealthy few who are trying to buy our elections, these dark money policies open the door to foreign contributions to House, Senate, and Presidential campaigns. Of course, it is illegal for a foreign national to contribute to our Federal candidates for office, but when you do not know who is contributing the money, how do we know that it is not the Russians or that it is not the Saudis or other nations that are infiltrating our elections? Our adversaries are always look-

ing for the weakest link to try to destroy our country and destroy our democracy. One of our weak links today is our broken campaign finance system.

It is time to pass this bill, shore up the election infrastructure, and take a step toward eliminating the ability of our enemies to choose leaders in Washington, DC.

I thank the senior Senator from Oregon for his leadership and for helping to force a vote on this important legislation. Senator WYDEN and more than 30 Members of this body cosigned our discharge petition, and 35 Members of this body cosponsored this joint resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to force today's vote.

The public needs to know where the Senators stand. Do they stand on the side of transparency and accountability, or do they side with the dark money special interests who flood our elections with television ads and our mailboxes with misleading ads? It is past time to wrestle our country back from the wealthy few who are fighting to drown out the voices of regular folks. I urge the support of this joint resolution of disapproval so as to help take our country back.

I will close with one thing, and then I will be quiet—and thank you for your tolerance. This is about transparency. Tell me one time when transparency has not been a good thing. It is the antiseptic for good government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALEXANDER). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 260 Leg.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Collins	Hassan
Bennet	Coons	Heinrich
Blumenthal	Cortez Masto	Heitkamp
Booker	Donnelly	Hirono
Brown	Duckworth	Jones
Cantwell	Durbin	Kaine
Cardin	Feinstein	King
Carper	Gillibrand	Klobuchar
Casey	Harris	Leahy

Manchin	Peters	Tester
Markey	Reed	Udall
McCaskill	Sanders	Van Hollen
Menendez	Schatz	Warner
Merkley	Schumer	Warren
Murphy	Shaheen	Whitehouse
Murray	Smith	Wyden
Nelson	Stabenow	

NAYS—49

Alexander	Gardner	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heller	Roberts
Capito	Hoeben	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Corker	Inhofe	Sasse
Cornyn	Isakson	Scott
Cotton	Johnson	Shelby
Crapo	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Kyl	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Toomey
Enzi	Lee	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Moran	
Flake	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—1

Tillis

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 64) was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### TAX LEGISLATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, as the 115th Congress winds down, I would like to reflect on the enactment of the historic tax legislation, which passed last year, and what is ahead for us in the new year.

In December of 2017, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the most comprehensive reforms to the Nation's tax laws in more than three decades.

For years, both sides of the aisle have talked about the need for tax reform that would provide tax simplification, tax fairness, and increase America's economic competitiveness. With the enactment of the law called the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, we finally made all three of those goals a reality.

Significant simplification was achieved for individuals by nearly doubling the standard deduction. This means people will be able to pay less and avoid the tedious task of itemizing their taxes. Overall, roughly 90 percent of taxpayers will file their taxes by simply taking the standard deduction.

Moreover, thanks to a significantly higher alternative minimum tax, which we refer to as the AMT exemption, millions of middle-class taxpayers will no longer be faced with figuring out their tax liability two times: one time to calculate their regular tax liability and the second time to calculate their tax liability under the alternative minimum tax.