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Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Markup on Treasury and Tax Court Nominations
As Prepared for Delivery

The Finance Committee meets today to vote on four nominations.

Mr. Brent McIntosh is nominated to be Treasury Undersecretary for International Affairs. Mr. Brian Callanan is nominated to be Treasury General Counsel. Mr. Brian McGuire is nominated to be a Deputy Undersecretary of the Treasury for legislative affairs. And Mr. Travis Greaves is nominated to be a Judge of the United States Tax Court.

Mr. Greaves' and Mr. McGuire's nominations I plan to support today. I'd like to focus my remarks on the other two nominations.

These nominees are currently the top lawyers at the Treasury Department. They've been at the center of two of the most political actions the Treasury has taken under this president -- actions that appear tailor-made to protect the president and his associates rather than the American people.

First, the Treasury's handling of the Ways and Means Committee's request for the president's tax returns under Section 6103 of the tax code. This type of inquiry has always been routine, and it has never been political. The Trump Treasury Department has politicized it.

In May, I began investigating whether there was political interference in the decision to withhold the tax returns. I put forward a series of questions for the Treasury to answer, and the responses were extremely misleading. It took multiple attempts to get more concrete answers that accurately reflect the history of 6103 requests and show the unprecedented reach of the Trump administration's political interference in this process.

I'm also extremely concerned about the new dark money rule, which amounts to the Trump administration welcoming foreign money and dark money groups who want to buy elections in America. In fact, late yesterday, a federal district court issued a ruling that threw out the Treasury Department's repeal of the dark money rule, because it had been issued without providing for the necessary public notice and comment.

In effect, it looked like the Trump administration tried to sneak this pro-dark money rule by without anybody noticing. So a court has directly repudiated the position that the nominees advocated. The court made it clear that their decision to repeal the dark money rule, and do so in the dark, was unlawful.

In both of these cases, the administration has put out ridiculous legal arguments to support its actions. Now the committee is deciding whether to approve promotions for the Treasury's top lawyers. I say no. I cannot get behind nominees who act as partisan operatives rather than public servants. I will oppose these two nominations, and I urge my colleagues to join me.

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