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Wyden Hearing Statement on IRS Chief Counsel and Treasury Nominees

As Prepared for Delivery

This morning's hearing focuses on two important positions, IRS chief counsel and deputy under secretary at the Treasury Department.

I'll begin with Donald Korb, who is up for the chief counsel job, one of only two Senate-confirmed positions at the IRS.

Mr. Korb has fifty years under his belt as a tax attorney. He served as IRS chief counsel under President George W. Bush. His experience in tax law is not in question. I want to focus on some things he said during his meetings with committee staff.

Staff had questions for Mr. Korb about taxpayer privacy violations, which you'd expect given that the Trump administration is weaponizing the IRS as it snatches people off the streets and launches politically-motivated investigations of those Trump sees as adversaries.

Amid that context, the recent resignation of a career IRS official who served as acting commissioner came up. Mr. Korb said that the individual *should have been shot* for his decision to resign.

Mr. Korb also said that all the senior career officials who've made the decision to leave the IRS afterwards did so because they "wanted to show off to their woke friends."

This looks like a nominee with a clear political agenda.

He even praised Billy Long, who made it about an hour and a half on the job before he got booted to Iceland.

All signs of poor judgement.

I don't expect to agree with everybody that Donald Trump puts in charge of tax policy, but the top lawyer at IRS ought to be someone who can set politics aside and do the job fairly.

I just don't see how Mr. Korb will be that kind of chief counsel this time around.

One after the other, Trump nominees sit before this committee and tell us they're going to follow the law and do what's right. The reality is, this administration violates the law daily to gobble up power for Donald Trump and weaponize it against people who have no power of their own.

No Trump nominee gets the benefit of the doubt, not even somebody who's got lots of experience. At a minimum, they need to show better judgment than Mr. Korb did in his meeting with committee staff.

Next up is Jonathan Greenstein, nominated to be Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Finance. This is a job that deals with complex global markets and sensitive engagement with foreign governments. No doubt his job will be impacted by Trump's trade and tariff policy, as the Treasury secretary himself is one of the president's key negotiators on those issues.

Mr. Greenstein has been in the building for a while now, so he's probably familiar with the complete disaster that is Donald Trump's trade and economic policy.

Either Trump doesn't know what tariffs really are, or he lies about them constantly. He announces new tariffs and flip flops on them all the time, often in social media posts. The deals his administration strikes are flimsy at best. He inflames international markets in ways that hurt the U.S. and drive other countries closer to China.

Trump is creating chaos and jacking up prices for American farmers, businesses and families. Unemployment is on the rise. Our manufacturing sector is in a recession. None of our trading partners can trust a word out of Trump or his advisors. Bottom line, this is no way to run an economy.

At this point, I don't have much faith that this administration is going to right the ship. Mr. Greenstein will face key questions on these issues today.

Thank you to the nominees for joining the committee this morning. I look forward to Q&A.

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