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Congressman Nadler Resolution of Inquiry into Conflicts of Interest, Ethics Violations, and Russia Ties Voted Down in Party-Line Vote

Washington, DC, February 28, 2017

Tags: *Intellectual Property/Technology*

Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), senior Member of the House Judiciary Committee, offered a *Resolution of Inquiry* (H.Res. 111) in the House Judiciary Committee directing the Department of Justice to provide the House of Representatives with any and all information relevant to an inquiry into President Trump and his associates' conflicts of interest, ethical violations—including the Emoluments Clause—and connections and contacts with Russia. The *Resolution of Inquiry*, which was reported unfavorably out of the House Judiciary Committee in a party-line vote of 18-16, was the first time Members of Congress had a recorded vote on legislation concerning an investigation of Donald Trump's conflicts and Russia ties.



day, more questions arise concerning President Trump's foreign business entanglements and his inexplicably cozy relationship with Russia. Each day, Democrats on this Committee, and on other committees, have requested hearings and investigations into these serious issues. And yet, each day, with a few exceptions, we have been met with a deafening silence from our Republican colleagues.

"That is why I introduced this resolution, which directs the Department of Justice to provide the House of Representatives with any and all information it possesses related to any conflicts of interest, any ethical violations, and any improper ties to Russia by President Trump, or by his associates.

"This resolution is particularly important because Attorney General Sessions, who was involved in the Trump campaign, has refused to recuse himself from any investigation, and it is not clear that he could be impartial, or that he will even conduct an investigation at all. Recognizing Mr. Sessions' obvious conflict, one of our own colleagues, Mr. Issa, has called for a special prosecutor, but the White House has dismissed the idea, essentially saying, "Trust us, there's nothing there." Well, that should not be good enough for this House. We must ensure that we get access to any information the Department of Justice has so that we can do our own investigation.

"We also recently learned about coordination between the White House and the Chairmen of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, which calls into question the impartiality of those Committees' investigations. Our Committee must step up and ensure that there is a thorough and objective investigation of these serious issues.

"With respect to President Trump's breathtaking web of business entanglements, which he has refused even to disclose, here are just a few of the many questions that demand further explanation:

- Just blocks away from the White House sits the Trump International Hotel, on which the President is both the leaseholder, through the General Services Administration, and the lessee, through the Trump Organization. How does this not represent a clear conflict of interest?
- There have been reports that foreign diplomats are booking rooms at this hotel as a means of currying favor with the President. To what extent do these, and other payments to his properties from foreign governments, constitute a violation of the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution?
- The President owns properties, most of which bear his name, in dozens of countries. Is he trading policy favors for access to permits, or other government benefits, in these countries?
- We already saw China award the President a long-sought trademark shortly after he reaffirmed the One-China policy, which he had appeared to question. Could United States policy towards China be subject to the financial needs of the Trump Organization?
- How much of the hundreds of millions of dollars in debt on Mr. Trump's properties, at home and abroad, does he owe to foreign government entities, like the Bank of China, and what sort of leverage over the United States does that provide to those governments?



Transparency, it is essential that we get more information on his financial picture, and how it affects government policy.

“The other aspect of this resolution seeks information on the troubling ties between Russia and President Trump, as well as some of his close aides. Once again, the questions multiply by the day:

- Despite the unanimous agreement among the intelligence services that Russia hacked the Democratic National Committee, and released documents intended to sway the election for Donald Trump, why was he so reluctant to accept this conclusion?
- We know that top Trump aides were in communication with senior Russian intelligence officials over the course of the campaign. What did they discuss?
- What did White House Chief of Staff, Reince Priebus, say to the FBI to get them to downplay the seriousness of these charges? Did he violate any laws by doing so?
- More broadly, President Trump has shown no hesitation in challenging and insulting foreign leaders, even our allies like the leaders of Mexico, Australia, and, most recently, Sweden. Why, then, does he refuse to say a single unkind word about Vladimir Putin, who murders his opponents, has invaded Ukraine, and has interfered in our elections, just to name a few concerns?
- Does President Trump simply admire Mr. Putin? Does he not understand the threat that Mr. Putin poses? Or is there something more sinister going on?

“Between Mr. Trump’s potential conflicts of interest, and the potential coordination with a foreign power to interfere with our elections, and with our government, the security and integrity of our nation are at stake. It is unfortunate that we must resort to a resolution of inquiry to learn the truth about these serious issues. However, the House has so far abdicated its constitutional responsibility to provide meaningful oversight into the Trump Administration, and it is time that we do our duty.

“This resolution does not pre-judge the outcome of any investigation. All it does is provide us with some of the information we need to draw our own conclusions. The public deserves to know the truth about the President, and we must not stop until we get these answers.

“More than 130 Members have cosponsored this resolution, including every Democratic Member of this Committee. We have gotten phone calls from tens of thousands of our constituents who support it, and I have received over 837,000 signed petitions calling on us to pass it. They expect their representatives in Congress to help them discover the truth. I hope this Committee will take the first step today, rather than bury our heads in the sand.

“I urge the Committee to report this bill favorably, and I yield back the balance of my time.”



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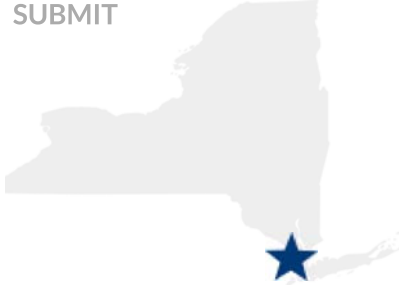


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