

**Testimony Submitted for the Record**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**Hearing on the Nomination of Jamieson Greer to be U.S. Trade Representative**

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Chairman Crapo, Ranking Member Wyden, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on Jamieson Greer's nomination to be U.S. Trade Representative.

I write on behalf of my organization, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), a non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to ensuring the integrity of our democratic institutions, combating the impact of monied special interests on our political system, and promoting ethical governance. While my organization takes no position on Mr. Greer's nomination to be U.S. Trade Representative, we write to raise concerns about how President Trump's tariffs raise serious conflicts of interest concerns and urge the Committee to examine if and how Mr. Greer will make sure that tariff decisions are based on the economic best interests of the American people and not the economic best interests of President Trump.

As Congress reviews President Trump's tariffs, it is critical to examine how his various financial entanglements and the conflicts of interest that arose from his refusal to divest from his business impacted economic policy, including tariffs, during his first term. Should President Trump refuse to divest from his business during his second term, this same pattern of corruption and corrupt influences on trade policy likely will continue. In December, CREW revealed that while President Trump publicly [campaigned](#) for the presidency on a platform of raising tariffs on Mexico in order to force companies to move to the United States, his company was quietly doing business in Mexico, applying for a trademark for a Trump Tower in the country. The public needs to understand how President Trump's conflicts and ethical failures threaten to impact economic policy and the economic futures of Americans who are looking to his new administration to reduce inflation and lower their costs.

During President Trump's first term, CREW tracked more than 3,700 [conflicts of interest](#) swirling around him and his businesses—an unheard of level of corruption caused by his unprecedented refusal to divest from his business empire. President Trump spent his first term as president promoting the businesses he profited from while in office and rewarded the patrons who lined his pockets, both [foreign](#) and [domestic](#), with access and influence in

his administration. These ethical violations not only undermine our trade and economic policy, but threaten our national security as well.

Prior to taking office and throughout his first term in the White House, the Trump administration and the Trump Organization claimed that President Trump had sufficiently dealt with the conflicts caused by foreign income by donating the company's revenue from foreign government sources to the U.S. Treasury. However, according to reporting, the company [only donated](#) \$459,000—a fraction of the estimated [\\$13.6 million in payments](#) to Trump businesses from foreign governments. These payments represent unprecedented violations of the Constitution's Foreign Emoluments Clause and serve as a reminder of the [further violations](#) President Trump has brought to his second term. The leader in foreign payments by far was China, which made payments totalling more than \$5.7 million to President Trump's business during his first term and is now subject to a [10% tariff](#). Other countries that made payments include the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Malaysia, and Ireland to name a few. President Trump's new [ownership](#) stakes in the social media and [cryptocurrency](#) sectors pose new avenues for foreign governments to line his pockets and influence his administration's trade policy.

During the first Trump term, the president's refusal to divest from his businesses led to numerous instances where President Trump acted in ways that appeared to benefit his own personal finances rather than the national interest of the country he served. It was concern over this kind of corruption, or even the appearance of corruption, that prompted the founders to include the Foreign Emoluments Clause in the Constitution in the first place. Conflicts of interest like President Trump's present far more concerns than direct payments and gifts alone. For example, President Trump's financial ties to foreign countries opened the door to those countries using those flows of money as leverage. Any of the countries paying hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent, fees or other costs to Trump properties could threaten to withdraw, and his properties in foreign countries could find themselves in financial jeopardy should President Trump anger powerful people in those countries.

These conflicts are especially salient when they come to tariffs, trade and economic policy. For example, in the wake of President Trump's trade tariffs in 2018, one member of the Canadian parliament suggested the need for targeted sanctions against [his businesses in the country](#). This was no minor threat: President Trump's extensive [business interests](#) and potential conflicts in Canada are well documented, including bringing in more money in his first term from Canadian business dealings—\$36.5 million—than from those in any other foreign country except the UK, according to [a CREW analysis of President Trump's tax returns](#). President Trump has already [announced](#) and [abruptly delayed](#) tariffs on Canadian products, with Canadian officials responding with [retaliatory](#) tariffs that could make life more expensive for everyday Americans.

One key Trump tariff target is China, which has had significant financial ties to President Trump for years. For example, one of Trump Tower's largest commercial [tenants](#) for many years was a Chinese government-owned bank, which paid lease to President Trump's businesses. The Trump administration [decided](#) against sanctioning the company, despite its [ties](#) to North Korea. As CREW documented in its [most recent emoluments](#) report, millions of dollars in [other payments](#) from China may have influenced President Trump's [attempts](#) to protect Chinese telecommunications company ZTE from sanctions, despite [warnings](#) from U.S. intelligence officials that the company's products may be used by the Chinese government to spy on Americans.

In 2019, Donald Trump's business received approval for two new [trademarks](#) in Argentina as the Trump administration was engaged in the process of reviewing its tariffs on Argentinian steel imports. President Trump's business applied for the trademarks in late December 2017. Shortly after the close of the trademark opposition period, in May of 2018, the United States [reached a deal](#) with Argentina and a few other countries to permanently eliminate tariffs on aluminum and steel, on the condition that the countries agreed to [limit](#) steel exports. After Argentina approved the trademarks in November, the Trump administration [restored the tariffs](#) on steel and aluminum. The president defended this abrupt action on [social media](#), claiming that Argentina manipulated its currency, making it cheaper to purchase its exports abroad.

It is certainly curious that President Trump did not reinstate the tariffs on Argentina until after his trademarks were approved, an issue that persisted throughout his first term which saw [72 foreign trademarks](#) granted to Trump businesses. PBS [reported](#) that given the unpredictability of President Trump's approach to tariffs, "Businesses have delayed investments, sapping economic growth, because they don't know if the agreements Trump reaches with other countries will last or what countries or products he will target next." Their reporting [continued](#) that, "[a]fter a brief spike in steel prices, U.S. steel producers have struggled since the Trump administration put tariffs into place last year" noting that domestic demand "slumped" and Pittsburgh-based U.S. Steel "laid off workers and shut down some of its blast furnaces" following a 43% drop in its stock price.

Donald Trump's first term was replete with examples of how his unchecked conflicts of interest likely impacted U.S. domestic and foreign policy decisions by President Trump and his staff. For example, in Türkiye, where President Trump had admitted as a first-time candidate that he had "a little conflict of interest" because of his "major, major building in Istanbul," President Tayyip Erdoğan [threatened](#) to remove the Trump name from his property in 2016 as a result of President Trump's proposed [Muslim Ban](#). President Trump then spent much of his presidency acting favorably to the country—suddenly pulling out of northern Syria, moving to abandon [America's Kurdish allies](#) after a [call with President Erdoğan](#) and staying silent as the Turkish president's bodyguards [beat peaceful protesters](#) in the street in Washington, D.C.

Another clear example of President Trump's financial conflicts intersecting with policy is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For example, within weeks of his first election, lobbyists representing the Saudi government [reserved](#) a block of rooms totaling an estimated 500 nights at President Trump's D.C. hotel. As president, Trump supported the [Saudi-led blockade](#) of Qatar, which houses a major U.S. military installation, and [openly questioned](#) the U.S. intelligence community's conclusion that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was responsible for the brutal assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a United States resident, in Istanbul. Trump also [vetoed](#) a bipartisan resolution demanding an end to U.S. military support for Saudi actions in Yemen due to the Saudi operation's massive [civilian death toll](#).

### **Conclusion**

President Trump's myriad financial conflicts and their impact on tariffs demonstrate how Donald Trump's corruption can and likely will threaten American jobs and those struggling with the costs of purchasing everyday goods. In considering Mr. Greer's nomination to be U.S. Trade Representative, this Committee needs to ask Mr. Greer probing questions about how he will ensure that President Trump's conflicts and financial entanglements will not impact American trade policy. Moreover, it is Congress' duty, should Mr. Greer be confirmed, to conduct robust oversight to ensure that is the case.