

In December, President Donald Trump selected Pruitt to lead the agency despite concerns from lawmakers.

A 2014 New York Times report claimed that Pruitt's ties to Devon Energy Corporation directly influenced decisions he made while in office in Oklahoma.

Through open records requests, the New York Times obtained a letter written by Devon's attorneys, which was then taken to Pruitt.

The article states, "The attorney general's staff had taken Devon's draft, copied it onto state government stationery with only a few word changes, and sent it to Washington with the attorney general's signature."

In 2014, KFOR asked for a comment to the allegations, but received a statement focusing on the benefits of the oil industry. . . . Six Senators from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee asked Pruitt to list his connections to energy companies so they can decide whether those interactions will affect how he will run the EPA. . . . The Center for Media and Democracy filed nine open records requests with the AG's office, beginning in January 2015.

"Probably the largest request we have is for communication: emails, phone calls, [and] scheduling related to his involvement with various energy companies, as well as his involvement with the republican attorney general's association," attorney Blake Lawrence said.

The group alleges that Pruitt received nearly \$350,000 in campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry. They want his dealings with those in the industry made public—and soon.

"Just last week our office contacted the Center for Media and Democracy to notify them that release of their request was imminent. The fact that they have now filed suit despite our ongoing communications demonstrates that this is nothing more than political theater," AG spokesman Lincoln Ferguson said in a statement.

According to the Hill, Democrats asked Pruitt for the documents as part of his confirmation hearing, but he declined. Instead, he told them to file public records requests themselves.

Now, a judge has ordered the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office to turn over close to 3,000 documents related to Pruitt's communications with oil, gas, and coal companies, according to E&E News.

Pruitt's office has until Tuesday to release the emails, but his confirmation vote was originally believed to be held Friday, Feb. 17.

Meaning today, in 5 more minutes.

"Scott Pruitt and Senate Republicans have made a mockery of the confirmation process, permitting the nominee to escape scrutiny and hide his deep ties to the fossil fuel industry. What is he hiding in all of these emails? The vote to confirm Pruitt must now be delayed until every senator can see just who Pruitt is and what he will do if permitted to run the EPA," a statement from the Sierra Club read.

That is where we are right now, ladies and gentlemen. We are 6 minutes to midnight on Thursday night. The vote is now scheduled in 13 hours 5 minutes here on the Senate floor.

These emails are going to be released next Tuesday so there can be a public examination of them, to finally determine what is the relationship between Scott Pruitt and these industries that he will be given responsibility to regulate.

What are they hiding? Why are they rushing? Why will they not give the

American people the ability to find out what is inside these emails before there is a vote on the Senate floor? Because once that vote takes place, he will be the head of EPA, and then we will find out what conflicts may exist, what relationships may exist, what decisions had been made. But, no, the Senate leadership will not give the American people the respect they deserve to ensure that all of that information is out for public viewing so they can make an informed judgment as to the exact nature of the relationships between this nominee for the EPA and industries that he has had responsibility for regulating in Oklahoma and he will have responsibility for regulating as the head of the national Environmental Protection Agency.

It is an absolutely unacceptable policy to know that critical information that makes it possible for the public and the Senate to understand a candidate for such a powerful office is to be available and yet not in fact considered as part of this historic decision.

For me, it is a "March of Folly." It is just another example of how the Republican Party, the GOP, has become the gas and oil party. That is really what it stands for now, just committed to ensuring that they cover up what is in these emails. They don't give the public the chance to be able to understand what these potentially explosive relationships may be so the Senate can deliberate fully on whether Mr. Pruitt does in fact qualify to be an impartial head of the Environmental Protection Agency of our country and ultimately of the world because the world looks to us to determine where climate change is going, where environmental protections are going, not just for our own citizens but for theirs as well. What we do is replicated inevitably, intricately in the rest of the world.

This man will have one of the most powerful positions on the planet. Emails are available right now if we just wait to help us in our deliberation. It is really a tragedy. It is a sad commentary upon this institution that rather than just delaying, examining, and then giving the public the information they need in the Senate, instead we rush to judgment. We rush to judgment, but ultimately the judgment of history is going to be on us if it is determined, through these emails, that Mr. Pruitt is unqualified for this position; that the conflicts which he has had disqualify him for this position; that the emails disclosed to us the conflicts of interest that are going to ultimately impair his ability to be impartial in his regulation of clean air and clean water and mercury and haze and soot and smog and this whole litany of issues that go right to the public health and safety of every American.

From my perspective, it is a sad day in the Senate when the information is now available, a brief delay would make it possible for each Senator to be able to make an informed decision, and yet the Senate moves on, not waiting,

not listening, not willing to give the American public the information they will need to make an informed decision that they can then give to their Senators to make a wise decision that could lead to much stronger protections that they can receive from this critical Agency that is the overseer of the environment in our country.

Again, I oppose Mr. Pruitt's nomination. I would ask for a delay. I know it is not going to happen. I understand why, but it is a sad day in the history of the Senate.

Mr. President, I wish to reclaim the remainder of my time and yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, the Committee on Rules and Administration has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 115th Congress. Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, on behalf of myself and Senator KLOBUCHAR, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION UNITED STATES SENATE

MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

Rule 1. The regular meeting date of the Committee shall be the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at 10:00 a.m. in room SR-301, Russell Senate Office Building. Additional meetings of the Committee may be called by the Chairman as he may deem necessary or pursuant to the provision of paragraph 3 of Rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

Rule 2. Meetings of the committee, including meetings to conduct hearings, shall be open to the public, except that a meeting or series of meetings by the committee on the same subject for a period of no more than 14 calendar days may be closed to the public on a motion made and seconded to go into closed session to discuss only whether the matters enumerated in subparagraphs (a) through (f) would require the meeting to be closed followed immediately by a recorded vote in open session by a majority of the Members of the committee when it is determined that the matters to be discussed or the testimony to be taken at such meeting or meetings:

(a) will disclose matters necessary to be kept secret in the interests of national defense or the confidential conduct of the foreign relations of the United States;

(b) will relate solely to matters of the committee staff personnel or internal staff management or procedure;

(c) will tend to charge an individual with crime or misconduct, to disgrace or injure the professional standing of an individual, or otherwise to expose an individual to public contempt or obloquy, or will represent a

clearly unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual;

(d) will disclose the identity of any informer or law enforcement agent or will disclose any information relating to the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense that is required to be kept secret in the interests of effective law enforcement;

(e) will disclose information relating to the trade secrets or financial or commercial information pertaining specifically to a given person if:

(1) an Act of Congress requires the information to be kept confidential by Government officers and employees; or

(2) the information has been obtained by the Government on a confidential basis, other than through an application by such person for a specific Government financial or other benefit, and is required to be kept secret in order to prevent undue injury to the competitive position of such person; or

(f) may divulge matters required to be kept confidential under the provisions of law or Government regulations. (Paragraph 5(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 3. Written notices of committee meetings will normally be sent by the committee's staff director to all Members of the committee at least a week in advance. In addition, the committee staff will telephone or e-mail reminders of committee meetings to all Members of the committee or to the appropriate assistants in their offices.

Rule 4. A copy of the committee's intended agenda enumerating separate items of legislative business and committee business will normally be sent to all Members of the committee and released to the public at least 1 day in advance of all meetings. This does not preclude any Member of the committee from discussing appropriate non-agenda topics.

Rule 5. After the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member, speaking order shall be based on order of arrival, alternating between Majority and Minority Members, unless otherwise directed by the Chairman.

Rule 6. Any witness who is to appear before the committee in any hearing shall file with the clerk of the committee at least 3 business days before the date of his or her appearance, a written statement of his or her proposed testimony and an executive summary thereof, in such form as the chairman may direct, unless the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member waive such requirement for good cause.

Rule 7. In general, testimony will be restricted to 5 minutes for each witness. The time may be extended by the Chairman, upon the Chair's own direction or at the request of a Member. Each round of questions by Members will also be limited to 5 minutes.

QUORUMS

Rule 8. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, a majority of the Members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting of legislative measures.

Rule 9. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(1) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, one-third of the Members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, including action on amendments to measures prior to voting to report the measure to the Senate.

Rule 10. Pursuant to paragraph 7(a)(2) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules, 2 Members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony under oath and 1 Member of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking testimony not under oath; provided, however, that in either instance, once a quorum is established, any one Member can continue to take such testimony.

Rule 11. Under no circumstances may proxies be considered for the establishment of a quorum.

VOTING

Rule 12. Voting in the committee on any issue will normally be by voice vote.

Rule 13. If a third of the Members present so demand a roll call vote instead of a voice vote, a record la vote will be taken on any question by roll call.

Rule 14. The results of roll call votes taken in any meeting upon any measure, or any amendment thereto, shall be stated in the committee report on that measure unless previously announced by the committee, and such report or announcement shall include a tabulation of the votes cast in favor of and the votes cast in opposition to each such measure and amendment by each Member of the committee. (Paragraph 7(b) and (c) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

Rule 15. Proxy voting shall be allowed on all measures and matters before the committee. However, the vote of the committee to report a measure or matter shall require the concurrence of a majority of the Members of the committee who are physically present at the time of the vote. Proxies will be allowed in such cases solely for the purpose of recording a Member's position on the question and then only in those instances when the absentee committee Member has been informed of the question and has affirmatively requested that he be recorded. (Paragraph 7(a)(3) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules.)

AMENDMENTS

Rule 16. Provided at least five business days' notice of the agenda is given, and the text of the proposed bill or resolution has been made available at least five business days in advance, it shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless such amendment has been delivered to the office of the Committee and circulated via e-mail to each of the offices by at least 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled start of the meeting.

Rule 17. In the event the Chairman introduces a substitute amendment or a Chairman's mark, the requirements set forth in Rule 16 shall be considered waived unless such substitute amendment or Chairman's mark has been made available at least five business days in advance of the scheduled meeting.

Rule 18. It shall be in order, without prior notice, for a Member to offer a motion to strike a single section of any bill, resolution, or amendment under consideration.

Rule 19. This section of the rule may be waived by agreement of the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Rule 20. The Chairman is authorized to sign himself or by delegation all necessary vouchers and routine papers for which the committee's approval is required and to decide in the committee's behalf all routine business.

Rule 21. The Chairman is authorized to engage commercial reporters for the preparation of transcripts of committee meetings and hearings.

Rule 22. The Chairman is authorized to issue, on behalf of the committee, regulations normally promulgated by the committee at the beginning of each session.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

Rule 23. The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, acting jointly, are authorized to approve on behalf of the committee any rule

or regulation for which the committee's approval is required, provided advance notice of their intention to do so is given to Members of the committee.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate Black History Month, a time to honor and reflect on the many achievements and sacrifices of African Americans throughout our Nation's history.

This February, we highlight the titans of African-American history. We honor the culture-shifting accomplishments of civil rights icons such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Dorothy Height, and our esteemed colleague, Congressman JOHN LEWIS.

As the senior Senator from Maryland, I would be remiss if I didn't also honor Harriet Tubman, Thurgood Marshall, and—perhaps one of the greatest Marylanders in our long history—Frederick Douglass. There are some out there who may not know it, but Douglass was born in Maryland around 1818. He learned to read and write in Baltimore before escaping slavery. Despite unknowable hardship and systemic discrimination, he went on to become one of the most influential writers, orators, publishers, and abolitionists of his time. Though Douglass fiercely and vocally opposed slavery, he would want us to remember that he stood for the rights of all Americans, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin. These views—revolutionary for the time—gained him increasing prominence, leading to 1872, when Victoria Woodhull chose him as her Vice Presidential nominee.

Frederick Douglass was the first Black American ever to hold that title. His legacy continues to make Maryland proud.

While we take time to recognize Frederick Douglass and others this month, we must also celebrate the countless men and women whose names and heroism will never grace the history books. Let us never forget all of those who suffered discrimination in silence, who endured civil rights abuses without recognition, who sat-in and stood up to oppression without accolade. We should use this month to lift up their memories and to recommit to the causes of justice and equality for which they also fought so diligently.

In particular, we should honor the Black teachers who taught generations of children in the dark, against the odds and sometimes the law, with little more than old, secondhand books and makeshift buildings. We honor the businessowners who laid the foundations of the Black community in places like Baltimore, Harlem, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Tulsa. We honor the civil rights movement foot soldiers who rejected subservience and embraced rebellion by marching in the streets of Selma and Birmingham. We honor the factory workers who left the South behind with hopes of a brighter