

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 609, Megan Blair Benton, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Pete Ricketts, John Cornyn, Jim Banks, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Kevin Cramer, David McCormick, Jon Husted, Dan Sullivan, Lindsey Graham.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 612.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Brian Charles Lea, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 612, Brian Charles Lea, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

John Thune, Markwayne Mullin, John R. Curtis, Tim Sheehy, Joni Ernst, Pete Ricketts, John Cornyn, Jim Banks, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Kevin Cramer, David McCormick, Jon A. Husted, Dan Sullivan, Lindsey Graham.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, over the course of the last year, President Trump has been engaged in just a

stunning array of acts to enrich himself and his family using government policy, the power of the White House to essentially trade away U.S. policy, U.S. national security secrets in exchange for investments in Trump himself, making himself rich off of being President of the United States.

I am coming to the floor today because over the weekend, through good old-fashioned investigative journalism, we discovered what might be the most corrupt act in this administration amidst a dizzying array of daily corruption.

The Wall Street Journal reported over the weekend that 4 days before Donald Trump's inauguration, an investment firm closely tied to the United Arab Emirates secretly signed a deal with the Trump family to purchase a 49-percent stake in a company called World Liberty Financial. That is the Trump family's fledgling cryptocurrency venture. They run that business in coordination with the Witkoff family—the Witkoff family, of course, headed by Steve Witkoff, who is, not coincidentally, the President's chief Middle East adviser.

The company that made the investment that took this 49 percent stake is backed by an individual named Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al Nahyan. That is UAE's National Security Advisor. But he is also deeply embedded in a number of very important companies that dole out investments from the United Arab Emirates.

One of the companies he is involved in—Tahnoun is involved in—is an AI firm called G42. This is all important to understand the scope of what we just discovered over the weekend.

On behalf of his company, G42, Tahnoun has been arguing that the United States should sell G42, a UAE company, our most sensitive AI chips. We have not sold this hardware to UAE in the past. Both Republican and Democratic administrations, both Republican and Democratic Members of the Senate, both Republican and Democratic Members of the House have said we cannot sell this advanced AI hardware to UAE because of the well-known integration of UAE's national security service, including this individual, with China.

So we have never sold these chips to UAE because we were pretty sure—and, again, this was a bipartisan consensus. We were pretty sure that these chips would just flow straight to China, and China cannot—cannot—get control of this advanced AI hardware.

It was shocking to most national security experts, shocking to Republicans and Democrats in Congress, when, shortly after the President's inauguration, he decided, against the advice of his national security advisors, to sell these chips to the UAE and, in particular, to this company owned by Sheikh Tahnoun.

Let me just accentuate the bipartisan nature of the opposition to this decision to transfer the technology to

the UAE. In 2024, the Republican chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, MICHAEL MCCAUL, raised the concern and asked for a probe of Microsoft's \$1.5 billion investment into G42. Again, this is Republican Chairman MCCAUL says to the Biden administration: I need you to do an investigation into—not the U.S. Government transfer, but Microsoft's investment into G42—citing integration between the UAE and China.

As I noted, it has been reported that this decision to sell these chips, valued at \$1 billion, was done over the objection of the senior national security officials, including the Senior Director for Technology at the NSC who argued for restricting access to these advanced chips.

But Trump goes through with the sale, leaving everybody scratching their heads. This is really bad for American national security. Everybody knows if you give these chips to the UAE, they are going to likely find their way into Chinese hands, but he green-lights the sale of \$1 billion of these advanced chips.

And this weekend we found out the likely reason: Secretly, days before the administration, this UAE company, helmed by the individual who stands to benefit by the sale of the chips, makes an investment of \$500 million secretly in Donald Trump's company World Liberty Financial.

Now, just so you have no illusions, there is no separation between Donald Trump, Steve Witkoff, and World Liberty Financial. World Liberty Financial is affiliated with a company called DT Marks DEFI LLC, and President Trump reportedly owns 70 percent of that company. The rest of the 30 percent is believed to be split amongst Trump's sons.

DT Marks, by the way, is not held by the Trump Organization or any of its companies; it is a company owned directly by Donald Trump.

Steve Witkoff said that he was divesting his stake in this company, World Liberty Financial, but in a disclosure that he filed as late as September of last year just months ago, he still had a stake, a financial interest in that company.

So Steve Witkoff, the Middle East adviser, Donald Trump, the President of the United States, direct owner stakes in World Liberty Financial, days before the inauguration, a \$500 million payment, a deal to pay World Liberty Financial \$500 million for a 49-percent stake is done in secret.

Now, we don't know the full extent of that sale, but at the very least, \$187 million is going directly from this UAE company into the Trump family's pockets, at least \$31 million is going directly from this UAE company into the pocket of the Witkoff family.

It is not a coincidence that a secret deal is done in which a foreign government puts money directly into the hands of the President of the United States, secretly, and then very soon

thereafter we find out that the President is throwing out years of national security policy. He is discarding the advice of his advisers, and he is going to hand that country that just gave him \$187 million national security secrets.

Now, of course, this isn't the first time that President Trump has done business with this particular individual, because Sheikh Tahnoon also runs a company called MGX. MGX put \$2 billion worth of investment towards the President's business empire earlier in the year.

Now, this was done in public, so we saw it all for ourselves. But it was no less corrupt just because it wasn't discovered by journalists. In that deal, this UAE company decided to finance an investment in a company called Binance with Donald Trump's cryptocurrency. At the time, Trump's cryptocurrency was a fledgling product in the market. It did not have any big backers.

Guess who comes to the rescue? Sheikh Tahnoon with another one of his companies. He finances a \$2 billion investment in Binance with Trump's cryptocurrency, almost overnight making that cryptocurrency one of the most successful—one of the most highly traded in the industry.

Now, in that case, the investment wasn't directly by UAE into Donald Trump's company. It was financing a venture in Binance with Trump's cryptocurrency. But just because the corruption was a little bit more oblique, doesn't mean that it wasn't corruption.

In this case—in this case—it is a direct investment by a foreign government, a half a billion dollars directly into a company controlled and run by the President of the United States.

There is no record in the history of the United States of a foreign government making a direct investment in a company owned by the President of the United States. No wonder they did this in secret. No wonder they tried to get away with it without anybody knowing.

The UAE doesn't give this money away for nothing. They were asking for these national security secrets. They were asking for this advanced chip technology.

And it is just not a coincidence. You don't have to be born yesterday to understand that there is a connection between the payment to Donald Trump, the investment in his business, and the transfer of the national security secrets.

I just don't want this to become normal. I just don't want us to paper over multimillion-dollar corruption—the President of the United States, every single day, profiting off of his position. I don't understand why our Republican colleagues excuse this. The White House has become a nonstop corruption machine.

Never, ever before in the history of the country has the President of the United States so openly, so brazenly,

so consistently worked to use the immense power of the Presidency to enrich himself. Never before in the history of the Nation has something like this happened in secret: The President of the United States taking payments from foreign governments, put in his own pockets, and then handing them national security favors that the United States had never been willing to do in the past.

You know, back during the Biden administration, there were endless hearings. There were nonstop speeches on this floor about the Biden crime family. You guys went wild over this, despite not a single allegation ever being made of an exchange by President Biden giving favorable government treatment in exchange for a personal benefit to the President.

The closest Republicans ever came was that the President's son Hunter Biden had been named to the board of an energy company in Ukraine when his father worked on Ukraine policy.

You know how many boards the Trump kids have been named to in the last 12 months? You know how many contracts, government contracts, have been given to those companies that the Trump kids just got put on the boards of magically when their father became President?

Listen, what Hunter Biden did was wrong. I said it at the time. He shouldn't have been on that board. But there was never a single allegation that President Biden did anything for that company that his son was on the board of or got a single dollar in exchange for his son's service on that board—investigations, speeches, hundreds of hours on FOX New—not a single allegation.

Trump enriches himself every single day off his office—every single day. Foreign governments buy him things—luxury planes, investments in his companies, sweetheart deals, licenses to build hotels—all in exchange for favorable treatment from the U.S. Government. It is all out there in the open for people to see.

This was a case in which they knew it was so egregious—it was so wrong—that they did it in private. What we are talking about here is stunning: a secret payment of at least \$187 million to Trump's family; a payment of at least \$31 million to the family of Trump's top Middle East adviser; and then, soon after, a gift of national security secrets to the UAE that, up until those two secret payments, every American President had refused to give. That is corruption. Those are the elements of a bribe. This is potentially criminal conduct.

The rule of law may be suspended today. Republicans may not be willing to do anything about this corruption simply because the President is of your party. For now, Trump and his friends may get away with these crimes and with this corruption, but the rule of law is coming back. And when it does, everyone who has greased their palms

off government service—trading government favors for cash and violating the laws of this Nation—are going to jail.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORENO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. MORENO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call in relation to the Fowlkes nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2026

Mr. MORENO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, February 3; and that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of Executive Calendar No. 610, David Fowlkes; further, notwithstanding rule XXII, at 11:30 a.m., the Senate vote on confirmation of the Fowlkes nomination; and if cloture is invoked on Executive Calendar No. 611, Nicholas Ganjei, the Senate vote on confirmation at 2:15 p.m., and the Senate recess following the cloture vote on the Ganjei nomination until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings; finally, and if any nominations are confirmed during Tuesday's session of the Senate, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MORENO. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the rollcall vote on the cloture of the Fowlkes nomination, remarks of Senator KENNEDY, and resuming of legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MORENO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the rollcall vote commence immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the