

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Supports introduction of legislation to stop use of taxpayer dollars at Trump properties

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin today helped introduce the *Heightened Oversight of Travel, Eating, and Lodging (HOTEL) Act* to immediately stop the federal government from spending taxpayer dollars at properties owned by the President, Vice President and Cabinet officials.

The legislation, led by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Ranking Member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, aims to prevent potential conflicts of interest and abuse of taxpayer dollars by making clear that all three branches of government may not approve any spending, including travel expenditures, at businesses owned or controlled by the President and other high-ranking government officials.

“President Trump is a walking, talking, tweeting conflict of interest and it is wrong for him to line his own pockets with the abuse of taxpayer dollars. This reform will make sure taxpayers are not funding profits for Trump’s business interests – period,” **Senator Baldwin said.**

“Since President Trump took office, the American people have witnessed an unprecedented arrangement that has funneled taxpayer dollars into the President’s pockets. As elected officials, we must hold ourselves to the highest ethical

standards and ensure that we are using taxpayer dollars responsibly,” **said Senator Peters**. “This commonsense bill will ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent to benefit hardworking middle class families in Michigan and across the country – not the President’s bottom line.”

The *HOTEL Act* makes it clear that taxpayer funds may not be spent at any lodging properties owned by the President, Vice President or the head of an executive branch agency, including for lodging or dining services and room rentals. The legislation exempts spending that falls under the protective missions of the United States Secret Service and other agencies, but provides heightened oversight and transparency of these expenses by requiring any such spending to be reported to ethics officials and Congress.

Below are statements in support of the legislation:

“The Constitution’s Take Care Clause requires the president to serve the public interest, not his personal interests. President Trump steering taxpayer dollars towards his own businesses is corruption, plain and simple, and it is the type of abuse of power that erodes trust in our democracy,” **said Justin Vail, Policy Advocate at Protect Democracy**. “The *HOTEL Act* is an important step towards ensuring that president is not permitted to use the office to enrich himself. Protect Democracy applauds Senator Peters’ leadership on this issue and calls on Congress to pass a full package of measures to prevent presidential abuse of power.”

“Foreign diplomats, lobbyists and administration officials who are eager to curry favor with the President have spent millions of dollars at Trump-owned properties, sometimes without even using all the rooms they booked,” **said Aaron Scherb, Director of Legislative Affairs at the non-partisan government watchdog Common Cause**. “Because President Trump has refused to divest from his businesses, unlike every modern President before him has, he’s reaping the profits, often at taxpayers’ expense. We appreciate Senator Peters’ leadership for introducing the *HOTEL Act* to prevent President Trump from lining his own pockets with taxpayers’ hard-earned money.”

“One of the most basic rules of serving in the government is to avoid conflicts of interest. The breakdown of that principle over the last two plus years has done immeasurable damage to our citizens’ faith in government and to our democratic institutions,” **said Noah Bookbinder, Executive Director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)**. “The clear rules included in

this bill would help agencies ensure that they are living up to this crucial obligation going forward, and help Congress ensure that the taxpayer dollars it appropriates are not subject to waste, fraud or abuse.”

“President Trump’s intention to profit off the presidency has been clear since he first stepped off the golden escalator and launched his campaign,” **said American Oversight Executive Director Austin Evers.** “Since taking office, the president has used the trappings of the White House to promote his brand and line his pockets. It’s time for the law to align with our most deeply held beliefs about public service and prevent the president from profiting off his position.”

“At levels never before seen, millions and millions of taxpayer dollars are going straight into the pocket of the president of the United States,” **Craig Holman, Government Affairs Lobbyist, Public Citizen.** “Government agencies and federal employees are using our money to flock to Trump hotels, golf resorts and restaurants for ‘official business’ in an effort to buy the endearment of the White House. Senator Peters’ *HOTEL Act* would finally bring an end to this costly use of taxpayer dollars for political gain.”

Joining Senators Baldwin and Peters in cosponsoring the *HOTEL Act* are U.S. Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Patty Murray (D-WA), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Jon Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Ron Wyden (D-OR).