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# OLYMPIA INDIVISIBLE

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*Research Report: July 1, 2017*

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## I. Healthcare - Stop TrumpCare in the Senate!

### Summary:

- *Current status:* While Senate Republicans failed to vote on their Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July recess, they are still trying to complete a repeal bill by July 30. Leadership and the White House are offering “deals” to individual senators to garner votes for the bill.
- *Uninsured will soar:* The Congressional Budget Office found the bill would increase the number of uninsured by 15 million in 2018 and 22 million over 10 years.
- *Medicaid cuts:* It would dramatically cut Medicaid spending, phasing out the ACA expansion over six years and ending Medicaid as an entitlement. It would cut Medicaid spending by 24% in 2026. However, these cuts accelerate over time and, by 2036, Medicaid funding under the Senate bill would be 35% below what it would be under current law. States will be forced to cut people from Medicaid, cut benefits, or cut provider reimbursement. Since most Medicaid spending is for disabled and elder enrollees, they will be the most adversely affected.
- *Insurance:* Average monthly premiums even after tax credit would be 74% higher in 2020 and copays and deductibles would rise sharply. However, the changes hurt lower income enrollees more: those with incomes below 200% of poverty would see an average increase in their premium costs of 177%, while higher income enrollees would see an increase of 57%.
- *Who benefits?* The sole beneficiary of the bill would be wealthy people and corporations who would benefit from a massive tax cut. Millions will lose coverage and thousands will die from lack of coverage for the sole purpose of enriching the top 1%.

### To Do:

- Call Senator Patty Murray ([\(253\) 572-3636](tel:2535723636)) and Senator Maria Cantwell ([\(253\) 572-2281](tel:2535722281)).
- Script: Please tell Senator \_\_\_\_\_ thank you for opposing the bill. I encourage her speak out in the media or on the Senate floor against repeal of the Affordable Care Act. She needs to make it clear that she wants to protect people with pre-existing conditions, those on Medicaid, and everyone else who depends on the Affordable Care Act for health and wellbeing. This is extremely important to me and I will be watching closely for her public statements in opposition. Thank you for your time.
- Call Republicans who have been on the fence about their vote for the bill. The following members represent states that stand to lose the most.
- Script: I am calling Senator \_\_\_\_\_ to urge him/her to oppose the ACA repeal bill, which will strip protections for people with pre-existing conditions, make insurance unaffordable to older/sicker people, and cause untold harm to children, disabled and elderly on Medicaid. The beneficiaries of these drastic cuts will be wealthy elites who will get tax cuts. This is just wrong. Thank you for your time.

#### Lamar Alexander (TN)

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Washington, DC 20510-0001  
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#### Shelly Capito (W. Va)

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#### Bill Cassidy (LA)

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**John McCain (AZ)**

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**Lisa Murkowski (AK)**

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## II. Russian Interference in the Election

### Summary:

- The Washington Post released a major story on what the Obama Administration knew about Russian hacking and how the Obama Administration responded.
- Russia probed state voting systems in 2016.
- Jared Kushner received major bank loan from Deutsche Bank a month before Election Day.
- Paul Manafort just registered as a foreign agent for work for Ukraine political party in 2012-14.
- The FBI is investigating financial transactions involving Manafort and his son-in-law.
- Senate Intelligence Committee will get copies of the Comey memos, and is trying to finish its work by the end of 2017.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee appears to be trying to undercut the Russia investigation.

### Talking Points:

- In August 2016, the CIA sent the White House a report compiled from sources inside the Russian government that detailed Putin's direct involvement in a cyber campaign to disrupt and discredit the US presidential race. It included Putin's specific instructions on the operation's objectives—to defeat or damage Hillary Clinton and to help elect Donald Trump.
- Obama and aides took months to decide how to respond to this intelligence. Obama approved a covert measure authorizing the planting of cyber weapons in Russia's infrastructure, which could be implemented in an escalating cyber exchange with Russia. This operation was still in its planning stages when Obama left office.
- Obama did not respond forcefully before the election because Russia had probed numerous state election systems during the past year and he feared that in a cyber dispute, it might be able to change voting systems, voter rolls or vote totals in the November election.
- Russian hackers targeted 21 state election systems in the 2016 election. A small number of the systems were breached during the campaign. The only states that have confirmed that they were hacked are Illinois and Arizona. This is likely a concern for future elections.
- Jared Kushner received a \$285 million loan for Times Square real estate from Deutsche Bank a month before Election Day. This took place as Deutsche Bank was negotiating to settle a federal mortgage fraud case and charges from New York State regulators that it aided a Russian money-laundering scheme. Those cases were settled in December and January.
- Paul Manafort's consulting firm filed forms showing that it received \$17.1 million from Ukraine's former pro-Russian ruling party between 2012 and 2014. The law requires foreign agents to register within ten days of agreeing to conduct work for the foreign entity and to provide updates every six months on political activities.
- The FBI is examining financial transactions involving Paul Manafort and his son-in-law. The transactions involve the financing of apartments and luxury homes in New York and California using money from Mr. Manafort. The New York State Attorney General's office has also opened an inquiry into Manafort's real estate dealings in New York. There is some suspicion that Manafort was using the real estate deals and banks in Cyprus to launder money received from Ukraine and Russia.
- The Senate Intelligence Committee announced that it would get copies of the Comey memos. The committee hopes to finish its investigation by the end of 2017 and plans to double its witness interviews to nearly 90 before the August recess.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee appears to be trying to undercut the Russia investigation. Chairman Grassley and Lindsay Graham are asking the FBI to turn over its proposed and final applications for warrants

to the FISA court of people suspected of helping Russia in the 2016 election. Grassley is also attacking acting FBI director Andrew McCabe, asking questions about possible conflicts of interest. Conservative media outlets are currently airing attacks on McCabe, Comey and Mueller, all involved in the Russia investigation.

**Our MoCs:**

- Both Senators called for a special prosecutor to be appointed by the Justice Department, and praised appointment of Robert Mueller to that post.
- Senator Cantwell released a statement after the Comey testimony that ended “We have to make sure that the White House is not trying to obstruct the investigation. No one is above the law, not even the president.”
- Congressman Heck has called for an independent commission for some months and signed discharge petition to move H.R. 356 (which would establish a commission) to the House floor.

**To Do:**

- Continue to ask our Senators to push for an independent commission with subpoena power. Thank Congressman Heck for doing so. Only an independent commission can conduct an independent investigation that can also share facts with the public.
- Encourage Congressman Heck to continue to push for an aggressive House Intelligence Committee investigation. Encourage our Senators to continue to support an aggressive Senate Intelligence Committee investigation. In the absence of an independent commission, the congressional investigations are the best way to get information on Russian involvement in the election and possible collusion out to the public. Members should not to let the appointment of a special prosecutor end or impede the congressional investigations.
- Urge moderate and concerned Republican senators to be vigilant regarding the congressional Russia investigations. They may include Burr, McCain, Collins, Murkowski, Sasse, Flake. While not all of these members are certain to support aggressive investigations, all have shown concern about the Russian connection at one time, or are seen as more moderate.
- Thank our members of Congress for continuing to stand up for democratic accountability and public transparency in this investigation.

### III. Block Industry Insider Joseph Otting's Nomination to the Treasury Department

#### Summary:

- Trump has nominated Joseph Otting to run the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), an independent agency within the Treasury Department that supervises the daily operations of banking units of major financial firms including Wall Street giants such as JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Bank of America. If confirmed by the Senate, he will play a central role in easing rules in the Dodd Frank Act of 2010 that the administration blames for stunting economic growth. The appointment would mark a reversal in roles for Otting, as the OCC regulated OneWest when he was the bank's chief executive officer.

#### Talking Points:

- Mr. Otting was the CEO of OneWest between 2010 and 2015, under the chairmanship of Steve Mnuchin. Critics raised concerns about the company's foreclosure practices, using illegal tactics such as "robo-signing", where false and forged execution of mortgage assignments and other legal documents related to mortgage foreclosures were created in mass by people without knowledge of the facts being attested to.
  - During Otting's time at OneWest, the bank seized properties from tens of thousands of homeowners, foreclosures that some Democrats have called unfair and improper.
  - "The president's choice for watchdog of America's largest banks is someone who signed a consent order — over shady foreclosure practices — with the very agency he's been selected to run," said [Senator Sherrod Brown](#), Democrat of Ohio, referring to a 2011 consent decree between OneWest and the Office of Thrift Supervision, which was later folded into the comptroller's office. "If Mr. Otting didn't deal fairly with the customers at his own bank, it's difficult to see why he's the best choice to look out for the interests of customers at more than 1,400 banks and thrifts across the country," said the senator, who is the top Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee.
- Financial Freedom, a subsidiary of OneWest, reached an [\\$89 million settlement with the Department of Justice](#) last month over shady reverse mortgage practices, including defrauding the Federal Housing Administration, between 2011 and 2016.
- Otting misrepresented a college degree on his resume, in which he claimed to be a graduate of the School of Credit and Financial Management at Dartmouth. Dartmouth has no such program; the course is offered by the National Association of Credit Management, and is a continuing education program consisting of two 2-week sessions. The course was previously held at Dartmouth, but was unaffiliated with the school.
  - Otting holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa. He would be the first comptroller of the currency since 1981 without an advanced academic degree. Most comptrollers hold a law degree.

#### To Do:

- Call Senators Murray and Cantwell, and ask them to reject Otting for Comptroller of the Currency.
- Your Script: "My name is [name], and I'm calling from [city, zip]. I am calling ask Senator [name] to reject the nomination of Joseph Otting for Comptroller of the Currency. Otting was involved in shady business practices when he ran OneWest from 2010 to 2015. The financial crisis of 2008 shows that we need real supervision of our biggest banks; we can't allow Trump to put another fox in charge of our financial hen house."

**Articles:**

- [Bloomberg - Trump Picks Ex-Banker Otting to Regulate Wall Street at OCC](#)
- [NYT - Trump Picks Former OneWest Chief to Oversee Banks](#)
- [LA Times - Trump nominee for powerful bank regulator post misrepresented college degree](#)
- [DOJ - Financial Freedom Settles Alleged Liability for Servicing of Federally Insured Reverse Mortgage Loans for \\$89 Million](#)

## IV. Block Lifetime Appointment of John K. Bush to the U.S. Court of Appeals of the Sixth Circuit

### Summary/Talking Points:

- On Wednesday, June 14th, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the nomination of John K. Bush for a lifetime appointment to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.
- The Civil and Human Rights Coalition urges the Senate to reject Bush, as "John K. Bush is unworthy of a lifetime appointment as a federal judge. His extreme ideology and record show a hostility to women and LGBT people, campaign finance reform, and Democrats. Federal judges should be able to rule with impartiality and fairness, which are two qualities it's clear Bush lacks. We urge the Senate to reject this nominee."
- John K. Bush has zero experience as a judge. He is a commercial litigator and the president of a chapter of The Federalist Society, a group of conservatives and libertarians that promotes "originalism" - the view that the words of the Constitution should be interpreted as intended or understood by the authors.
- This interpretation results in deeply conservative interpretations of a broad range of issues. For example, from this perspective Bush criticizes a Supreme Court ruling (NYT vs Sullivan) that protects freedom of press from libel accusations. This willingness to suppress and punish freedom of press is especially alarming in the context of Trump's statement last year: "I'm going to open up our libel laws so when they write purposely negative and horrible and false articles, we can sue them and win lots of money."
- In addition to signaling a willingness to shield Trump from media scrutiny, Bush has made a number of deeply concerning statements and actions. He opposes public financing of political campaigns, the Affordable Care Act, and said abortion was one of the "two greatest tragedies in our country" (slavery being the other).
- He also wrote after the 2016 Republican National Convention that "the Democrats are trying to win with the same game plan as in 2008, only substitute woman for Black".
- The Senate will ultimately decide on Bush's appointment, and Senators need to hear from their constituents about their opposition to this highly problematic candidate.

### To Do:

- Call Cantwell and Murray
- Your script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from Olympia. I'm calling today because I'm highly concerned about the potential appointment of John K. Bush to the US Court of Appeals. Bush has extreme ideology and I am concerned about the quality of his decisions. I ask that Senator Maria Cantwell vote against his appointment. Thank you for your hard work answering the phones. [IF LEAVING A VOICEMAIL: please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied]

### Articles

- [The Strange Civil Rights Views of Trump's Latest Court Nominees, Politico](#)
- [Chairman Grassley Rushes to Rubber Stamp Trump's Judges, Huffington Post](#)
- [Trump's First Judicial Nominees – A Right Wing Blogger, An Anti-Gay Lawyer and Two Obama Holdovers](#)

## V. Sessions Orders Review of Consent Decrees – Support Police Reform

### Summary/Talking Points:

- On March 31st, Jeff Sessions issued a memo to the Department of Justice (DOJ) calling for the department to review all reform agreements between the Department of Justice and police departments nationwide, such as a recent consent decree entered to overhaul the troubled Baltimore Police Department.
- Sessions wrote that “it is not the responsibility of the federal government to manage non-federal law enforcement agencies.” The review - which will be led by Sessions’ two top deputies - was ordered as part of a broader assessment of all DOJ activities.” This statement ignores the federal statute that gives national authority to investigate local departments suspected of being in violation of civil rights.
- Consent decrees are agreements between the DOJ and local police departments and designed to encourage policing reform. Criminology experts and studies on policing have demonstrated that consent decrees can be helpful in reducing police violence. It’s widely believed any roll back of consent decrees would kill efforts to end racial bias in police practices.
- Under Sessions' orders, the DOJ could reverse their focus on evidence-based police reform. On June 15th, ProPublic reported that the DOJ's Civil Rights Division has indeed been issuing verbal agreements to seek settlements without consent decrees, effectively ending federal oversight.
- In the last 8 years, investigations and consent decrees have been launched in dozens of cities across the country. The Obama DOJ opened 25 civil rights investigations into police departments and enforced 14 consent decrees and mandated reforms. In cities like Baltimore and Chicago, investigations revealed racially discriminatory practices, sexual assault, and unconstitutional searches and arrests. The consent decrees crafted in these cities in partnership with local police leadership were meant to guide reform efforts. However, these consent decrees have yet to be enforced, and civil rights advocates now fear that Sessions' step backward may delay them indefinitely, preventing much-needed policing reform.
- In light of the Philando Castile and Terence Crutcher cases, in which police officers were acquitted of all criminal charges despite graphic video footage depicting their unnecessary use of excessive force, it is even more crucial that police departments across the country reexamine their training, enforcement practices, and systemic racial bias before more innocent lives are lost. The tragic murder of Charleena Lyles by Seattle police after she called them for assistance further illustrates the need for enforcement of consent decrees; the Seattle Police Department was operating under a consent decree when they killed Lyles, who was pregnant, in front of her children.
- A relaxation (or abandonment) of federal oversight dovetails with Sessions’ desire to aggressively prosecute individuals who have entered the US illegally or overstayed their visas, as well as his new War on Drugs 2.0 and his push to return to mandatory minimum prison sentences.

### To Do:

- Call the Department of Justice/Attorney General, 202-353-1555
- Your script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a citizen from Olympia. I'm calling to express my disapproval of the Justice Department's delay in enacting consent decrees made with police departments across the country. Our criminal justice system is in need of major reform, and any rollback of these efforts could prove detrimental to the safety of many Americans. Thank you for your time and attention. [IF LEAVING A VOICEMAIL: please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied]

### Articles:

- [Mother Jones article](#)
- [USA Today Op-Ed](#)

## VI. The Justice Safety Valve Act (S.1127/H.R. 2435) – Stand Up Against Mass Incarceration

### Summary/Talking Points:

- Attorney General Jeff Sessions seems determined to return our country to the past when prosecutors and judges were required to impose mandatory minimum sentences, even for non-violent offenders. This was a key “weapon” in the failed War on Drugs policy pursued in the 1980’s, which jailed a disproportionate number of poor urban black and Hispanic Americans, swelled prison populations, placed state and local governments in the impossible situation of funding and managing overcrowded prisons, and deprived millions of the right to vote.
- Mandatory minimum sentencing, which has been recognized by conservatives and liberals alike as restrictive and destructive, will only harm another generation of poor Americans.
- The ACLU reports that black Americans are 4-5 times more likely to be convicted for drug possession, even though blacks and whites use drugs at roughly the same rates. More troubling still is that even after convicts have served their time, many cannot vote, obtain employment, get loans, or even rent apartments. **The downstream effects of mass incarceration on poor urban families and communities are nearly insurmountable.**
- The response from legislators on both sides of the aisle has been a swift and clear "no." Senators Rand Paul (R-KY), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and Representatives Thomas Massie (R-KY) and Bobby Scott (D-VA3) have reintroduced the Justice Safety Valve Act, which allows prosecutors and judges to use their discretion to consider each case separately. It amends Title 18, USC, to prevent unjust and irrational criminal punishments. The Justice Safety Valve Act is a crucial check on the unjust and regressive actions of the Attorney General.
- **H.R.2435** was submitted and referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary and to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations.
- **S.1127** was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

### To Do:

- Call our MoCs to sponsor/support H.R. 2435 and S.1127
- Your script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I’m a constituent from Olympia. [IF CALLING COMMITTEE, ADD: I'd like to leave a message for the Chairman and members of the committee.] I’m calling today in support of [S.1127 for Senate/ H.R. 2435 for House], the Justice Safety Valve Act. Prosecutors and judges should use their own discretion to consider each case, instead of imposing arbitrary mandatory minimum sentences that result in mass incarceration. Thank you for your hard work answering the phones. [IF LEAVING A VOICEMAIL please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied]

### Articles:

- [Politico](#),
- [Washington Post Op-Ed](#)
- [S 1127, Congress.gov](#)
- [HR 2435, Congress.gov](#)

## VII. Oppose Trump's Mass Deportation Agenda (H.R. 2431 & H.R. 2406)

### Summary/Talking Points:

- On May 23rd, the House Judiciary Committee passed a set of immigration bills that collectively would enable and expand Trump's mass deportation agenda. Each of these bills drastically increases the power of federal and local immigration enforcement with the goals of restricting immigration and increasing deportation.
- This includes the revoking of visas and limiting of new visas, expansion of ICE, increased deportation of undocumented people, punishment for sanctuary cities, and arming of deportation officers with M-4 rifles.
- "If enacted, the bills would raise a host of constitutional concerns, undermining public safety and harming immigrants and U.S. citizens alike," said Ronald Newman, policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union. "They would also lead to significant, unnecessary federal spending and erode US values and norms. They would provide rocket fuel for President Trump's mass deportation agenda."
- The first of these bills, [H.R. 2431](#), the **Davis-Oliver Act**, would substantially increase the capabilities of federal and local immigration enforcement, including empowering state and local law enforcement to enact their own immigration laws and penalties.
- The second bill, [H.R. 2406](#), the **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Authorization Act of 2017**, would increase the number of deportation officers (mandatory hiring of 2,500 more) and ensure that each one has access to an M-4 rifle "or equivalent."

### To Do:

- Call Denny Heck
- Your script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from Olympia. I'm calling today because I'm extremely concerned about the expansion of Trump's mass deportation agenda through H.R.2431, the Davis-Oliver Act, and H.R. 2406, the ICE Authorization Act of 2017. I ask that [REP/SEN NAME OR COMMITTEE] vote against these harmful bill. Thank you for your time and attention. [IF LEAVING A VOICEMAIL: please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied]
  - OPTIONAL: Share a personal story about why this matters to you, for example:
    - I am an immigrant (and/or have immigrants in my family) that works hard to support my family and community, and I fear [I/they] will be targeted for harassment if this bill passes.
    - Immigrants are an integral part of my workplace and community and they do not deserve unfair harassment.
    - I believe diversity benefits us all and targeting of immigrant communities harms us all.

## VIII. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Authorization Act (HR 2407)

### Summary/Talking Points:

- On May 23rd, the House Judiciary Committee voted to submit [H.R. 2407](#) to the full House for a vote. H.R 2407, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Authorization Act, would shift the focus of USCIS (which oversees granting of visas) away from nurturing a healthy work ecosystem that includes immigrant workers, towards fraud prevention and protection of American jobs.
- The bill includes permanent reactivation of the flawed “E-Verify Program”, despite known system errors that delayed or prevented entry for thousands of workers.
- The impact would be a severe reduction in visas for immigrants, with negative impacts on the families, communities, and workplaces who count on new immigrants to support and contribute to them.
- This bill, along with others in currently in the House, collectively would enable and expand Trump’s anti-immigration agenda, with the goal of restricting immigration and increasing deportation. This includes the revoking of visas and limiting of new visas, expansion of ICE, increased deportation of undocumented people, punishment for sanctuary cities, and arming of deportation officers with M-4 rifles.

### To Do:

- Call Denny Heck
- Your script: Hi, my name is [NAME] and I'm a constituent from Olympia. I'm calling today because I'm extremely concerned about changes to the granting of immigrant worker visas through H.R. 2407, the USCIS Authorization Act, and I ask that Representative Heck vote against this harmful bill. Thank you for your time and attention. [IF LEAVING A VOICEMAIL: please leave your full street address to ensure your call is tallied]
- OPTIONAL: Share a personal story about why this matters to you, for example:
  - Immigrants are an integral part of my workplace and restriction of visas will be a severe challenge for my company.
  - I believe diversity benefits us all and a decrease of visas will negatively impact my family/community.

## IX. Betsy DeVos Picked a Student Loan CEO To Run The Student Loan System

### Summary:

- On June 20<sup>th</sup>, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced her intent to appoint Dr. A. Wayne Johnson as Chief Operating Officer of the \$1.3 trillion Federal Student Aid office (FSA).
- There was no indication in her statement on when Johnson will start.
- The appointment, when it occurs, will not be subject to Senate confirmation.
- Johnson is founder and CEO of Reunion Student Loan Finance Corporation, based in South Dakota. Reunion focuses on re-financing student debt.
- Johnson started his career as a financial consultant and ascended to executive-level positions with credit card and banking firms before starting his own student loan company in 2013.

### Talking Points:

- Johnson's ties to Reunion increase concerns about the Trump administration ceding student lending to private companies that do not offer borrowers as many consumer protections as the federal government.
- Aside from his doctoral research on student debt, Johnson has limited experience.
- James Runcie, the former top official at the federal Office of Financial Aid, recently [resigned](#) after butting heads with DeVos and her plan to make sweeping changes to federal student loan programs. Runcie warned about brewing management problems within the Education Department. He [complained in a letter](#) to staff of being "encumbered from exercising" his "authorities to properly lead."
- DeVos didn't elaborate on how the Department plans to modernize the Financial Student Aid office, but since she was confirmed as Education Secretary she's made sweeping changes to federal student aid programs, like [taking away protections from borrowers](#) and [putting all loan servicing in the hands of one private firm](#).
- Last month, she also revealed the agency's [2018 budget, which included cuts to federal student loan repayment and loan forgiveness programs, among other things](#).
- This appointment is part of the continuing pattern by DeVos and the Trump administration to weaken protections for those who deserve them and increase profits for the most wealthy people and corporations.

### Our MoCs:

- Senator Murray is ranking member on the Education committee and has been pushing back against DeVos.
- Senators Murray and Cantwell in [June 27 press release blast DeVos for Harmful Actions on Civil Rights Protections, Enforcement in Schools](#)
- [Senator Cantwell June 12 press release](#): Cantwell joined a group of over 150 Members of Congress to send a letter to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos highlighting concerns surrounding the U.S. Department of Education's decision to make changes to the student loan servicing contract procurement process and remove key requirements that were intended to support and protect student loan borrowers and help them repay their loans. The Members of Congress also cited concerns with Secretary DeVos' decision to give all \$880 million in annual federal student loan servicing contract funding to a single company, a move that could create an unresponsive and "too big to fail" student loan system that would produce poorer results for both borrowers and taxpayers.

**To Do:**

- This appointment doesn't need Senate approval, but you can contact your MoC to say thanks/kudos for pushing back against DeVos and encourage them to fight huge budget cuts to the Department of Education.
- Monitor what DeVos does
  - Join Elizabeth Warren's [DeVos Watch](#)
  - Check (or subscribe to) Politico's daily Education news feed, [Morning Education](#)

**Articles:**

- [BuzzFeed](#)
- [Washington Post](#)
- [Consumerist](#)

## X. Decision Time on Whether to Continue Sanctions against Sudan

### Summary:

- The Obama Administration relaxed sanctions against Sudan after perceived improvements by Sudan in 5 key areas of governance and human rights. Among those five areas, the US perceived improvements by the Sudan government in (1) helping the US combat terrorism, (2) allowing humanitarian access to Sudanese citizens and others within Sudan, and (3) easing of internal conflict, including attacks by the government against its people and continued attacks against religious minorities. The relaxation of sanctions was set to expire by July 12, 2017, by which time the US Secretary of State is required to advise Trump on whether to dispense with sanctions, continue with the modified sanctions, or return to the old sanctions or institute new, modern, comprehensive sanctions.

### Talking Points:

- The Sudan is one of three countries on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. The other two are Iran and Syria.
- The US concerns regarding Sudan include: the Sudan government wages war on what it perceives to be its internal enemies, suppresses speech, persecutes religious minorities, and launders proceeds from corruption through its banks.
- The Sudan president is wanted by the International Criminal Courts for war crimes, genocide, and crimes related to the Darfur region.
- The US lifted some of its economic sanctions when it appeared the Sudan government was making progress in its humanitarian efforts. Those efforts, though, appear to be very minimal according to the Bloomberg report: “The notion that humanitarian access is at acceptable levels is simply perverse, and completely expedient as an assessment,” said Eric Reeves, a senior fellow at Harvard University’s François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights. “Nobody who actually works in the humanitarian world in Sudan believe that access is at acceptable levels.”
- Removing sanctions – which Sudan very much wants – will assist the US in working more closely with Sudan in helping the US in its efforts to combat terrorism.
- On the other hand, the Sudanese government’s record on human rights is more than abysmal. And an easing of sanctions on Sudan mocks the imposition of new restraints in our relationship with Cuba purportedly because of Cuban’s human rights violations.

### To Do:

- Ask our MoC to sponsor legislation that will require the US government:
  - To require that the US Government continue to impose sanctions against Sudan, to require Sudan to focus on promoting fundamental human rights and religious freedom, stop financial corruption, and restore peace in its borders.
  - Use modern financial pressure, including anti-money laundering efforts, to stop the financial corruption in Sudan.
  - Allow easing of sanctions in the future when Sudan sustains progress in helping fight terrorism, allow comprehensive humanitarian access, and stop internal conflict.
- Ask our MoC to communicate to the Trump Administration that modified sanctions should be continued against Sudan effective July 12, and until real sustained progress has been made by Sudan.