

Republicans vote to block resolutions on Trump's tax returns



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The House and its tax-writing committee voted on Tuesday to block Democratic resolutions demanding President Trump's tax returns.

The votes were the latest of many Democratic attempts to get Congress to request Trump's tax returns. While none of the attempts have been successful so far, Democrats are pushing the topic to force Republicans to go on the record about Trump.

During a markup that got heated at times, the House Ways and Means Committee rejected a measure to direct the Treasury Department to provide the House with Trump's tax returns and other financial information.

The panel voted to report the measure to the House floor "unfavorably" on a party-line vote of 24-16.

The Ways and Means vote occurred after Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) offered a "resolution of inquiry" that would have gotten a House floor vote if it wasn't considered in committee within 14 legislative days.

The resolution would have directed Treasury to provide the House with 10 years of Trump's tax returns. It also would have instructed Treasury to provide documents it has about any debts Trump has that are held by foreign governments, any investments Trump has in foreign companies and businesses and any use by Trump of tax loopholes.

Pascrell and other Democrats argued that it's important to review Trump's tax returns to learn more about the president's relationship with Russia and potential business conflicts. They also argued that it's important to learn how Trump would be affected by tax-reform legislation.

"If there ever were a president who needed to disclose his tax returns, it's President [Donald Trump](#)," said Rep. Sandy Levin (D-Mich.).

But Republican lawmakers argued that the resolution was a political effort and that requesting Trump's tax returns raises privacy concerns that could set a bad precedent.

Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Ohio), a certified public accountant, said that much of the information that Democrats are interested in cannot be found in tax returns.

"Tax returns do not list investments. They don't," he said, adding that financial disclosure forms do list investments, and Trump has filed those.

The Republican chairman of the committee, Rep. [Kevin Brady](#) (Texas), said that Treasury would not be able to legally comply with the resolution as written, since it would direct the department to provide the returns to the House rather than the Ways and Means Committee.

Under federal tax law, the chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Finance Committee and the Joint Committee on Taxation can request tax returns from Treasury that can be reviewed in a closed session.

The resolution "does absolutely nothing to promote a substantive policy discussion on the real-life challenges facing the people, families, and job creators we were sent here to serve," Brady said.

In addition to the Ways and Means vote, a resolution on the House floor from Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) failed on a procedural vote of 228-190. It was the fifth time in as many weeks that House Democrats forced a floor vote related to Trump's tax returns.

As with the past votes, two Republicans who have called on Trump to release his tax returns broke with their party. Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) voted with Democrats, and Rep. Mark Sanford (R-S.C.) voted "present."

Lofgren's resolution would have directed the House to request 15 years' worth of Trump's tax returns so lawmakers could determine whether he is violating the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution. The clause prohibits government officials from receiving gifts or payments from foreign leaders.

She had offered the resolution Monday night, but the GOP's vote to kill it was delayed until Tuesday afternoon.

"I think it is absolutely essential for the president's tax returns to be released so that the members of the Judiciary Committee can do their job to research whether the Emoluments Clause has been violated and whether permission should be given to the president to receive payments from foreign states," Lofgren said.

Trump was the first major-party presidential nominee to not release his tax returns during the campaign in 40 years. He has claimed the reason is because he is under audit, but the IRS has said an audit does not prevent a person from releasing personal tax information.

Cristina Marcos contributed to this report.