

Senator Says White House Is On Its Way To Being The Most Corrupt In U.S. History

WASHINGTON—**U.S. Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.)** on Thursday spoke on the U.S. Senate floor to expose the unprecedented corruption of the Trump administration's first six weeks in office. Murphy condemned Trump's normalization of pay-to-play politics, where billionaire donors dictate policy and taxpayer money is funneled into the pockets of the president, Elon Musk, and the corporate elite.

“In the first six weeks of the Trump presidency, Trump and Elon Musk and their billionaire friends have engaged in a stunning rampage of open public corruption,” **Murphy said.** “It's not fundamentally different than what happened in Russia. These are efforts to steal from the American people to enrich themselves. And their strategy is to do it all out in the open, to do it at such a dizzying pace that the country just gets overwhelmed or anesthetized or dulled into a sense that we just all have to accept the corruption – or, maybe more charitably, that this is just how government works, that government is just corrupt, and so the fact that it's happening out in the open instead of happening secretly, well, it's really nothing new.”

Murphy laid out more than 20 examples of blatant corruption from just the first six weeks of the Trump presidency, including:

1. The launch of Trump's meme coin, enabling anyone seeking to influence the administration to privately funnel money directly to the president.
2. The gutting and manipulation of watchdog agencies like the NLRB, CFPB, and OSHA to benefit Elon Musk, the billionaires in Trump's cabinet, and other elites.
3. The Eric Adams quid pro quo and the weaponization of the DOJ to reinforce a system of political retribution and favoritism.
4. The use of government contracts and stock deals to reward Trump's allies, enriching them through taxpayer-funded opportunities and further consolidating political power.

“This is how democracies die,” **Murphy continued.** “Democracies die when the very powerful people steal from us so regularly, so openly, so unapologetically, that we come to believe that it's normal. And listen, I understand that many Americans may think that all of this stuff just used to happen quietly, and the only difference is that Trump and Musk are just putting it all out in the open. And I'm not saying that there haven't been instances of corruption. Democrats and Republicans in this body have been accused of, and convicted of, acts of corruption. It has been a fact of life in American politics for a long time. But never before has the corruption happened this openly or this frequently. And so I lay it all out for you this afternoon in the hopes that it is not too late for us to decide to stand up, as a body and as a nation, to say that this isn't okay.”

He concluded: “The Trump meme coin is not okay. It's not okay for people who have interest before the federal government to be able to anonymously

funnel money to the president of the United States. It's not okay for Elon Musk to have access to Department of Labor enforcement data, against him or his competitors, that nobody else gets access to. It's not okay to just cancel contracts that were going to Musk's competitors and substitute in his own business, just because he has the ability to do it as a friend of Donald Trump. The rule of law matters. Doing things by the rules matter. This level of corruption was not occurring behind the scenes prior. It is not just that the cover got pulled off of it all. And it's our decision, as a body and as a country, to decide not to normalize this scale of corruption."

A full transcript of his remarks can be found below:

MURPHY: "Mr. President, I'm a big Boston Red Sox fan. One of the most famous players in Red Sox recent history is Manny Ramirez. Manny Ramirez was a good baseball player, but he had a habit of doing some pretty ridiculous things on the field and off the field that were really detrimental to the team, some really bizarre on-field behavior – cutting off throws from other outfielders before they got to the infield – bizarre off-the-field behavior that disrupted the team. It became so regular that a phrase was adopted among the Red Sox fans: 'That's just Manny being Manny.' Over the years it just was accepted that every year Manny Ramirez was going to do a whole bunch of stuff that was really detrimental to the team. And over time, it just kind of became accepted, that that was a fact of life, a way of life with Manny Ramirez. And as time went on, people reacted less hostilely. It barely got noticed in some cases when he was engaged in these detrimental forms of conduct.

“And I tell that story because it stands for kind of a universal concept: when bad behavior gets normalized, it no longer feels like bad behavior. Even if that behavior is hurting people. Today, the world is littered with corrupt governments, governments where the leaders and the really rich men who surround the leaders – the oligarchs – steal from people. That's what they do, the leaders and the leaders' friends just keep a hand constantly in the government treasury and they steal taxpayer dollars. They rig the rules of the economy in order to make themselves fabulously rich. They hurt the citizens of those countries.

“Vladimir Putin, for instance, has never had a job outside of government, but he's reportedly worth \$200 billion. One of his many houses cost \$1.4 billion to build, supposedly the landscaping costs on an annual basis for that house are \$2 million alone. That \$1.4 billion house was paid for by money he stole from the Russian treasury. In other words, he stole it from the Russian people. Putin and his friends have been doing it for so long and doing it so openly and brazenly – Putin, for instance, wears a watch that retails for half a million dollars, even though his official salary is only \$140,000. They've been doing this so openly and brazenly, they're so public in their corruption in Russia, that it's just accepted. It's just mainstream, the fact that Putin and his cronies steal from the Russian people.

“That's what's happening in America today. And it's heartbreaking for me to say this, but in the first six weeks of the Trump presidency, Trump and Elon Musk and their billionaire friends have engaged in a stunning rampage of open public corruption. It's not fundamentally different than what happened

in Russia. These are efforts to steal from the American people to enrich themselves. And their strategy is to do it all out in the open, to do it at such a dizzying pace that the country just gets overwhelmed or anesthetized or dulled into a sense that we just all have to accept the corruption – or, maybe more charitably, that this is just how government works, that government is just corrupt, and so the fact that it's happening out in the open instead of happening secretly, well, it's really nothing new.

“But this is not how government works. The things that have happened over the last six weeks are unprecedented. The president and his billionaire friends are not supposed to steal from us. They are not supposed to use their power and their access to power – their access to government levers – to rig the rules to enrich themselves. That has always been wrong. It is still wrong. And we do not have to accept this.

“And so in the next few minutes, I want to try out an exercise. I want to try to lay out for you as quickly as I can just some of the most significant instances of blatantly corrupt activity that's happened in just the first six weeks of Trump's presidency. When you see it all together, there is no way to avoid a simple conclusion. This White House is on its way to being the most corrupt in the history of the country. And just because they are doing it out in the open for everybody to see doesn't mean that it's not corrupt.

“My hope is that if you see it all in one place, the gravity of this moment may hit you. My hope is that my colleagues and the public choose not to normalize a president or his advisors using the Oval Office as a blunt mechanism to make themselves even wealthier. It is our decision – our decision – to have

zero tolerance for corruption. It's also our decision to just decide to become a place like Russia where our leaders are allowed to routinely steal from us.

“This is a heartbreakingly long list. This is just 20 or so examples of corrupt behavior in the first six weeks of the Trump presidency. So here it goes. We're going to start on January 17.

“On January 17, Trump launches the meme coin. This is maybe the most corrupt of all of the acts, because what is the meme coin? The meme coin is essentially a mechanism by which Russian oligarchs or corporate CEO's can literally send money privately directly to Donald Trump. Nobody knows who buys the meme coin, but Trump makes money when people buy it. And so it is just an open sewer valve that allows for anybody who is trying to influence the Trump administration to be able to secretly funnel money to Donald Trump. He reserves 80% of the coin. He waits to release that coin until the price jumps back up again, which essentially means he's waiting for people who want favors from him to buy a bunch of the coin to inflate the value so that he releases more and makes more money. It's a disgusting kind of corruption because this is essentially Trump just posting his Venmo for anybody secretly to wire him as much money as they want. We've never seen something like this before where anybody who has anything to gain from the Trump administration, through a manipulation of the value of Trump's meme coin, can funnel money directly to the president, whisper in his ear, 'That was me. That was me that purchased all that coin, that jumped up the value that allowed you to release new coin. Hey, take care of me on the back end.'

“On January 20, when he's sworn in, he institutes his new energy agenda. Now, open reporting suggested that during the campaign he met with the oil and gas industry and they cut a deal in which the oil and gas industry would give him a billion dollars of campaign contributions in order to receive favorable treatment when Trump was sworn in. And guess what happens on January 20? Trump unveils his energy strategy, and what does it do? It preferences oil and gas and it punishes oil and gas' competitors. It, for instance, freezes all permits on wind projects, both for the land and the sea. It undercuts permitting processes, not for oil and gas but for oil and gas' competitors. Oil and gas got exactly what they asked for. They gave a campaign contribution and they got the favorable treatment. Five days later, Trump fires 17 inspectors general. What do inspectors general do? They look for corruption inside of these agencies. What do you do if you are trying to engage in corruption, if you are trying to steal from the American people? You fire the inspectors general.

“Two days later, on January 27, Trump fires Gwynne Wilcox from the NLRB, the National Labor Relations Board. When she's fired, the National Labor Relations Board cannot function any longer? Why does this matter? Because the person that's been put in charge of reviewing the hirings and firings of these agencies is Elon Musk, who, by the way, has lots of cases before the NLRB. So do the people that are standing behind Trump during the inauguration. Almost all of them have active cases before the NLRB. The billionaires supporting Donald Trump now don't have to worry about the NLRB because on January 27, the NLRB is rendered powerless.

“Three days later, on January 30, Trump awards more than \$800,000 worth of stock to several of the board members of the Trump Media and Technology Group. This is the publicly traded company behind his social media platform. So now his Cabinet members – people like Kash Patel and Linda McMahon – are owning equity in Trump's media platform; equity that can be cashed out, sold to people who want to buy them out of their interest at any time. Those people who might want to buy them out, Cabinet members, could be individuals with issues before the Department of Education, before the FBI. Yet another avenue in which people who have influence, who want to gain influence inside the Trump administration, have a conduit to be able to move cash from their pocketbooks, from their treasury, from their bank accounts, into the bank accounts of Trump cabinet members.

“Shortly thereafter, we start to see the weaponization of the DOJ. On February 23, a civil complaint from DOJ that had been pending against SpaceX– Elon Musk's signature company – is dropped. Eight days later, the DOJ drops a case against a Republican Congressman. On February 19, two or three weeks later, the DOJ opens up something called Operation Whirlwind, which threatens anyone who dares to criticize the work of Elon Musk and DOGE. Over the course of the next three weeks, the DOJ is turned into an entity that drops cases against those who are loyal to Donald Trump and pursues aggressively investigations against those who are trying to criticize Donald Trump.

“On February 1, Trump fires the director of the CFPB and announces plans to shut down – to shutter – the Consumer Financial Protection Board. Again, very much like the NLRB, this is an agency that was, at the moment that it was

rendered powerless, investigating Elon Musk and many of the biggest financial backers of Donald Trump. So once again, those that have access to Donald Trump, the billionaires that are close to him, now don't have to worry about labor violations being investigated by the NLRB, now they don't have to worry about consumer protection actions being taken against them by the CFPB.

“On February 4, there is the first of two extraordinary meetings in the White House in which Donald Trump convenes his business partners – his business partners – the Saudi Golf League and the PGA to try to negotiate a solution to the dispute between those two golf leagues. Why? Because Trump has a business interest in that dispute being resolved. The Saudi Golf League plays tournaments at Trump’s courses in the United States, so if the White House, using its official power, can try to negotiate a settlement between those two groups, Trump stands to make money.

“On February 6, something absolutely stunning happens. Pam Bondi, the AG, issues a memorandum in which she proposes to dull the criminal enforcement of the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

If you are representing a foreign government before the United States, you have to register so that we know if you are acting on behalf of American interests or you are acting on behalf of foreign interests. In the prior Trump administration, Trump officials got in big trouble for secretly working for, and getting paid by, foreign governments without registering. Well, what does Trump announce? That they are going to limit the applicability of the enforcement of that statute, making it much easier for Trump's friends – for

his MAGA crowd, for the people who show up to Mar-a-Lago – to get paid quietly by foreign governments in order to influence Donald Trump.

“On February 10, maybe aside from the meme coin, the most stunning act of corruption: the Eric Adams quid pro quo, in which Eric Adams, indicted for corruption, is let off the hook. His charges are dismissed in exchange for the mayor's pledge of political loyalty to Donald Trump. They literally went on TV and announced the deal that we're getting rid of the charges against Eric Adams, as long as the mayor pledges political loyalty to the President. That was so corrupt that six or seven DOJ officials resigned, because they refused to withdraw those charges, but the deal went through because the seventh, or the eighth, or the ninth official finally filed the withdrawal.

“And now in America, it is 100% clear that if you want to get away with corruption, if you want to steal from your constituents and you're an elected official in this country, all you have to do is just sign up for political loyalty with Donald Trump, and he will instruct the Department of Justice to let you get away with it.

“On February 10, Donald Trump directs the DOJ to pause enforcement of U.S. laws that prohibit companies from paying bribes overseas. Come on! Like, come on! He instructs the DOJ to pause enforcement of U.S. laws that prohibit companies to pay bribes overseas. Here's an example: Goldman Sachs was engaged in outright bribery—they were paying bribes to Malaysian officials, so that they could get a contract to manage the resources of the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund.

“American companies should not be overseas bribing foreign governments. That compromises America's reputation and America's national security. But now, we are going to pause enforcement of the laws that stop American companies from bribing foreign governments, because corruption is now being normalized. This is what you do if you want to normalize corruption, is that you make it legal for American companies to engage in corruption overseas. That makes it easier for Trump to get away with corruption here.

“Two days later, on February 12, the announcement comes out that the State Department is going to buy \$400 million of armored Teslas. Okay, so now it's getting even more blatant. It's getting even more brazen. The State Department is just going to buy a whole bunch of product from Elon Musk, product they were not previously scheduled to buy. It is true that the Biden administration had a blueprint that was going to buy some electric vehicles, but it was around \$483,000-worth of vehicles. Trump revises that blueprint of spending so that now the federal government is going to spend \$400 million on armored Teslas from Elon Musk.

“Let's see: that's February 12. That same day, Elon Musk's people infiltrate the Department of Labor. And reporting suggests that during that infiltration, Elon Musk's personal representatives get access to enforcement information at OSHA, not only against Elon Musk's companies—and by the way, SpaceX has an employee injury rate that is nine times higher than the industry average—but also workplace safety violations against Elon Musk's competitors. Here's the message: if you are close to Donald Trump personally, if you support him politically, you can get secret access to enforcement data against your

companies and your companies' competitors. That's what happens on February 12.

“Three days later, there's some suspicious firings at the FDA. Again, related to Elon Musk's personal financial interests. Elon Musk owns a medical device company called Neuralink. It is currently being reviewed by the FDA. And guess what? On February 15 and 16, all over a weekend, there are 20 people fired from the FDA's Office of Neurological and Physical Medicine Devices. Fired by DOGE, run by Elon Musk. Clear message: you're going to get fired if you aren't on the right side of Elon Musk's application. Now, whether that was explicit or not, if the guy who is firing you has a pending application before your department, aren't you going to think twice? Aren't you going to think twice about ruling against his interests? This is why this is all unprecedented. Again, this feels normal because it's been happening every day. But never before in American history have we allowed someone who has a pending application for approval of a medicine or a medical device to be able to personally decide who gets hired and who gets fired at the regulatory agency making the decision over that medical device.

“But now, this stuff is happening every day. Because on February 15 as well, that same weekend, there's an announcement that the FDA cuts are going to be even deeper, perhaps as big as 50%. That means that hundreds of drugs and devices won't get approved at the FDA. And you know who benefits from that? The folks that are selling the snake oil products. And guess who's selling the snake oil products? The people who work for Donald Trump, selling vita-gummy scams. The Director of the FBI is selling vaccine reversal pills. When

the FDA gets gutted, it's the people who sell those unregulated products who stand to gain.

“On February 19, four days later, we find out that the IRS is going to be cut by 7,000 people. And the biggest chunk of the folks who are going to be laid off are the people who do the audits of the billionaires, and the millionaires, and the corporations. And so once again, Elon Musk and the people standing behind Donald Trump on Inauguration Day are going to get off, because the IRS just had its enforcement powers—its audit powers—absolutely gutted.”

“That same day, on February 19, you start to receive word that advertising on Elon Musk's platform is starting to grow again. And the reporting on February 19 indicates that American companies have come to the collective decision that they need to keep advertising on Elon Musk's platform, because Elon Musk has so much regulatory power inside the federal government. That they need to make sure they're paying Musk through Twitter and through X, so that if they ultimately need something from the federal government, they can get it. This, again, is why we have never, ever in the history of this country, allowed for the richest man in the world, somebody who controls major companies, to also have an official position inside the government. Because, of course, of course, it opens up these clear avenues where people are going to do business with him privately to try to curry favor with him publicly.

“I'm not done. It just keeps going. The next day, on February 20, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices's monthly meeting is canceled and not rescheduled. And so we were very worried that Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who makes money off of his attacks on vaccines, would continue those attacks

when he took over HHS. Because if faith in vaccines continues to plummet, it is very likely that RFK Jr. will make money. Why? Because the not-for-profit that he will likely return to, the company that he will return to after he leaves, makes money as vaccine misinformation spreads, and he also continues to collect fees for referring cases to a company that handles claims of personal injury due to vaccines. And so when the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is canceled, it is a clear indication that yes, this campaign of assault on vaccines is going to continue, which, not surprisingly, is likely to make RFK Jr. even more money.

“On February 26, we see Trump's MAGA hats, that are for sale on his website, displayed in the Oval Office. And it's just a reminder that so many people inside Trump's universe continue to sell merchandise on the side in order to make money. Donald Trump has always done this, and we've just accepted it, even though it is a kind of corruption in and of itself. But Kash Patel, the Director of the FBI, is still selling Kash-branded merchandise even while he's going to run the FBI. Elon Musk and others are selling DOGE merchandise. So as they trumpet their brand inside the government, they're making money off their brand outside of the government.

“On February 26, maybe the third-most significant [instance] of brazen corruption happens. News breaks that Elon Musk is just going to have the FAA cancel a contract with Verizon that has been in the works for years, and instead just substitute in Starlink for Verizon. Just extraordinary that this is happening in plain view of everybody. Elon Musk takes his private company, uses his access to government to just shove out of the way his competitors,

and instead insert himself and his company. Again, we've never seen this ever before in American history, and now it's happening on a daily basis.

“And now we get to this week. This week, Wired reports that guests are paying millions of dollars to dine with Donald Trump at Mar-A-Lago, and business leaders are being targeted with advertisements that sell access to a one-on-one meeting with the President of the United States for \$5 million. Come on! Like, seriously! There's advertisements that say if you're a business CEO and you pay \$5 million to Donald Trump, you can get a meeting with him. This isn't okay! And yet, because it happens every single day, every single day they're asking for us to pretend that this is normal. This is just six weeks. It's just six weeks. And the last thing on the list is an offer to meet with the president for \$1 million or \$5 million. If any previous president had sent out an advertisement suggesting that you can meet with them for a payment to them of \$1 million to \$5 million, in and of itself we would deem that to be unacceptable. But Donald Trump and Elon Musk believe that because they have arranged this dizzying pace of corruption, in which not a day goes by in which something doesn't happen inside our government in which Elon Musk or Donald Trump use their power in order to rig the rules to enrich themselves, that we are all going to feel that it's normal.

“This is how democracies die. Democracies die when the very powerful people steal from us so regularly, so openly, so unapologetically, that we come to believe that it's normal. And listen, I understand that many Americans may think that all of this stuff just used to happen quietly, and the only difference is that Trump and Musk are just putting it all out in the open. And I'm not saying

that there haven't been instances of corruption. Democrats and Republicans in this body have been accused of, and convicted of, acts of corruption. It has been a fact of life in American politics for a long time. But never before has the corruption happened this openly or this frequently. And so I lay it all out for you this afternoon in the hopes that it is not too late for us to decide to stand up, as a body and as a nation, to say that this isn't okay.

“The Trump meme coin is not okay. It's not okay for people who have interest before the federal government to be able to anonymously funnel money to the president of the United States. It's not okay for Elon Musk to have access to Department of Labor enforcement data, against him or his competitors, that nobody else gets access to. It's not okay to just cancel contracts that were going to Musk's competitors and substitute in his own business, just because he has the ability to do it as a friend of Donald Trump. The rule of law matters. Doing things by the rules matter. This level of corruption was not occurring behind the scenes prior. It is not just that the cover got pulled off of it all. And it's our decision, as a body and as a country, to decide not to normalize this scale of corruption. I yield the floor.”