

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 15, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
H-232, United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan,

We are deeply concerned by your comments yesterday when asked about your confidence level in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt that you “haven’t paid that close attention” to the unending scandals involving Mr. Pruitt. Mr. Pruitt’s breach of public trust and self-dealing has been well documented and found bipartisan condemnation. Congress has a responsibility to provide robust oversight of these abuses against the person charged with protecting public health and safety, and to ensure the appropriate and ethical use of taxpayer dollars. For your review, we would like to provide the current list of allegations and investigations into Mr. Pruitt’s conduct:

1. Mr. Pruitt’s Rent Deal: The House Oversight Committee is investigating reports that Administrator Pruitt rented a condo that was owned by the wife of J. Steven Hart, a prominent energy lobbyist and donor to Mr. Pruitt’s Oklahoma Attorney General Campaign. Furthermore, Mr. Pruitt’s rent was only \$50 per night, far below the market rate.
2. Retaliation: In an interview with House Oversight and Government Reform staff, Kevin Chmielewski, the former Deputy Chief of Staff at EPA, stated that he was forced out of his position after raising concerns about Pruitt’s spending on first class travel and refusing to sign off on first class travel for one of Pruitt’s aides.
3. Lavish Travel: The EPA’s inspector general is investigating the Administrator’s ongoing expensive travel habits. According to EPA staff, Administrator Pruitt provided his aides with a list of places he wanted to visit and told them to find things for him to do there that would qualify as official business. Mr. Pruitt’s trips to Morocco and Italy – with the help of lobbyists – cost taxpayers \$100,000 and \$120,000 respectively and consisted of little official business. Additionally, \$40,000 was spent for staff to conduct advance work in Australia for a trip Administrator Pruitt had planned to go on before it was cancelled due to Hurricane Harvey.
4. Charter Flights: In February, our colleague, Chairman Gowdy felt compelled to request Mr. Pruitt release to Congress documents related to his costly air travel. In the first few weeks of June alone, the New York Times reported that Mr. Pruitt’s team spent \$90,000 on airfare.
5. 24-7 Security Detail: Mr. Pruitt requested a 24-7 security detail, a request not made by any former EPA Administrator, and spent nearly \$3.5 million in his first year on security.
6. Private Security Booth: In April 2018, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) ruled that the Administrator violated two laws when he purchased a \$43,000 phone booth.
7. Requesting Staff to Find Housing: The Washington Post reported in May that Mr. Pruitt may have violated federal law earlier this year when he had two EPA aides help him search for new housing – a fact the Administrator has admitted.
8. Providing Bonuses to Political Allies: Mr. Pruitt gave two of his political appointees salary increases of \$57,000 and \$28,000, even after the White House denied the pay bumps.

9. Fountain Pens: In June, it was reported that the Administrator spent \$1,560 of U.S. taxpayer money on 12 customized fountain pens which he purchased from a high-end Washington jewelry store.
10. Trump Hotel Mattress: Mr. Pruitt reportedly asked EPA staff to run inappropriate personal errands on his behalf including tasks like finding out how to purchase a used mattress from Trump Hotel, and picking up dry cleaning, protein bars, Greek yogurt, and moisturizing lotion.
11. Chick-Fil-A: Mr. Pruitt asked a political aide to help him seek a “business opportunity” for his wife with the fast-food chain Chick-fil-A. This went as far as Mr. Pruitt inviting the company’s chief executive to discuss by phone a “potential business opportunity.” The call was scheduled and canceled before Mr. Pruitt revealed he was interested in a franchise for his wife.
12. Seeking Employment for Family Members: Administrator Pruitt approached a New York non-profit, Concordia, which had invited him to speak at its conference in 2017, to hire his wife, Maryln Pruitt. Mrs. Pruitt was employed for three days at the conference and paid \$2,000.
13. Law School Admission: The Washington Post reported today that Mr. Pruitt enlisted his aides at EPA to ask former Speaker of the House for the Virginia House of Delegates, Bill Howell, to help Mr. Pruitt’s daughter gain acceptance to the University of Virginia.
14. Rose Bowl Tickets: It was also reported today that Mr. Pruitt leaned on an energy executive to secure four tickets for his family to attend the Rose Bowl.

These ethical lapses are of serious concern, and we hope that as Speaker of the House you will pay closer attention, and maybe even provide basic oversight of what is happening at an agency charged with protecting public health and safety. Given this information, will you now answer the question about your confidence level in the EPA Administrator?

We look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,

  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

  
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress