

Donors to ballroom are raking in contracts

Critics say Trump's refusal to release full list seeds potential corruption

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

More than half of the publicly identified donors to President Donald Trump's White House ballroom project have won new or expanded federal contracts worth more than \$50 billion during the past six months, according to a report released Thursday by a government watchdog group.

Fourteen of the 27 known corporate donors to the \$400 million project, which would replace the East Wing that Trump demolished in October, have seen their government business grow in that window, according to the report from Public Citizen, a nonprofit. Most of those same companies are also facing federal enforcement actions over alleged wrongdoing or have had such actions suspended by the Trump administration since the start of Trump's second term, the nonprofit found.

The donors have sprawling interests that touch nearly every aspect of American life, including defense contracting, technology and energy. Trump has repeatedly touted the gifts as a boon to taxpayers, but critics of the project say the administration's refusal to release a full list of donors creates the potential for corruption.

"These giant corporations aren't funding the Trump ballroom fiasco out of the goodness of their hearts," said Jon Golinger, a public policy advocate at Public Citizen and an author of the report. **SEE DONORS ON A6**

A place to reflect



ALLISON ROBERT/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Water starts to flow into the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool on Thursday, after it was painted blue at the urging of President Donald Trump. A Washington-area nonprofit had sued over the project.

Payout fund still in the mix

GOP BEATS BACK A PUSH TO BLOCK IT

Effort tied to funding for immigration enforcement

BY THEODORIC MEYER AND JARRELL DILLARD

The Senate rejected an initial effort Thursday to bar the Trump administration from creating a controversial fund to compensate people who claim they were wrongfully prosecuted or investigated.

Republican Sens. Susan Collins (Maine), Jon Husted (Ohio) and Dan Sullivan (Alaska) joined Democrats in voting for the amendment, which failed 50-49. Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colorado) did not vote.

The vote was the first of several expected attempts to amend legislation that Republicans are seeking to pass Thursday to fund federal immigration enforcement agencies — as a way to guarantee that the Trump administration cannot set up such a payout fund. The administration's decision

to create the payout fund last month triggered a rare Republican revolt, derailing the party's effort to pass legislation to fund immigration enforcement agencies by June 1. Some Senate Republicans said they feared the fund could be used to compensate people convicted of attacking the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and they refused to advance the bill until the administration addressed their concerns.

Todd Blanche, the acting attorney general, tried to quell those concerns Tuesday in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, saying the administration had abandoned its plans to set up the fund. But President Donald Trump himself has not said the fund is dead, telling reporters on Wednesday that he was unsure of its fate.

"Republicans are trusting the word of Todd Blanche, who built a career on lying, that the administration will just drop this slush fund," Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-New York) said Thursday on the Senate floor ahead of the planned vote.

The amendment votes are politically uncomfortable for many **SEE FUND ON A4**

Trump says he'll seek full AG term for Blanche

The president's former lawyer could face a tough confirmation battle

BY JEREMY ROEBUCK AND PERRY STEIN

President Donald Trump said he planned to nominate acting attorney general Todd Blanche for a full term as the nation's chief law enforcement officer, signaling confidence in his former personal defense lawyer's leadership of a department over which the president has sought to exert unprecedented control.

Trump announced his intention to move forward with the nomination at a White House dinner Wednesday evening, according to a video of the president's remarks posted to social media by Deputy White House Chief of Staff Dan Scavino.

"We are going to make him

permanent attorney general," Trump said. He added that his staff would take steps to initiate the process by Thursday.

Blanche, a Trump loyalist who has held the job on a temporary basis since Trump fired Attorney General Pam Bondi this year, said during an unrelated news conference Thursday in Ohio that he was "honored and humbled" by the president's comments.

The president's decision to back Blanche for a permanent term will kick off a Senate confirmation process likely to face tough headwinds.

Some Republican senators have already expressed hesitation about supporting him for the job, raising questions about recent comments in which they believed he appeared to excuse violence committed during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

More recently, Blanche faced open revolt from some portions of the Republican caucus in the Senate as he unsuccessfully sought to **SEE BLANCHE ON A18**

Bolton expected to plead guilty in security case

BY KATIE METTLER, PERRY STEIN AND JEREMY ROEBUCK

John Bolton, a former national security adviser turned outspoken critic of President Donald Trump, is expected to plead guilty in a case involving his alleged mishandling of classified materials.

Ex-Trump adviser could face up to five years in prison

Bolton pleaded not guilty in the case in October. A change-of-plea hearing is scheduled for

June 26 before U.S. District Judge Theodore D. Chuang, according to a spokesperson for the U.S. attorney's office in Maryland. The spokesperson declined to comment further.

Bolton plans to plead guilty to one count of retention of national defense information and has agreed to pay a fine of \$2.25 million, according to a person

familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an agreement that has not been made public.

Under the agreement, Bolton could face anywhere from no time behind bars to five years in prison, the person said. Had Bolton taken his case to trial and lost, he could have faced up to 10 years **SEE BOLTON ON A8**

Orchestra season at risk with its budget in limbo

Kennedy Center hasn't approved funds, putting artists months behind

BY JONATHAN EDWARDS

The National Symphony Orchestra's upcoming season is in jeopardy because the Kennedy Center has not approved its budget, according to officials familiar with the situation, depriving the ensemble of the money it needs to book venues and soloists, announce its season and sell subscriptions.

More than three months after the Kennedy Center's board of trustees typically signs off on the NSO's budget, the orchestra's leaders are still waiting — and still don't know whether their home venue will be available next

season, according to six current and former officials, who like others in this article spoke on the condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisal.

The budget impasse is the latest crisis to befall the NSO since President Donald Trump took over the Kennedy Center in February 2025, ousting its longtime president, installing loyalists and eventually announcing he would shutter the building for two years to make about \$250 million in renovations.

The orchestra's budgeting process, which usually begins in late fall, was scrambled on Feb. 1 when Trump announced the venue would close. Kennedy Center leaders at the time told their NSO counterparts the center would continue funding the orchestra **SEE NSO ON A10**

Kennedy Center: Staff orders removal of Trump name. **A10**



FLORION GOGA/REUTERS

'Albania is not for sale'

Thousands of Albanians are protesting a resort planned for the Mediterranean coastline and backed by President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner. **Story, A18**

Sweltering conditions to hit D.C. soon

BY BEN NOLL

A relatively cool start to June is about to warm up as a bubble of locally record-breaking heat expands from New England to the Mid-Atlantic into the weekend. Some places near and south of D.C. can expect 90-degree temperatures for at least three straight days.

That's a sharp change from earlier in the week. On Monday — the first day of meteorological summer — it reached only 58 degrees in Boston and 71 degrees in New York.

On Thursday, high temperatures reached well into the 80s to near 90 across the Northeast and will surge into the 90s on Friday and Saturday — especially in the stretch from the nation's capital to New York. **SEE HEAT ON A14**

IN THE NEWS

WIC benefits The House passed a bill that would cut funding for a program that helps pregnant women and children. **A8**

Parasitic fly A flesh-eating screwworm case was found in Texas, decades after the parasite was mostly eradicated in the U.S., sparking fears about cattle herds. **A9**

THE NATION **ICE** will stop reporting the deaths of newly released detainees, an internal memo says. **A6** **Karen Read** sued Massachusetts State Police, alleging bigotry after she was investigated. **A8**

THE WORLD **Despite government** censorship, young Chinese people are learning about Tiananmen Square. **A11** **Hezbollah** quickly rejected the new Israel-Lebanon ceasefire. **A12**

THE ECONOMY **Tensions** are boiling over at "60 Minutes" after Scott Pelley became the latest high-profile departure. **A13**

SPORTS **Meet the Nationals'** players who are in the mix for the All-Star Game in Philadelphia next month. **B7**

STYLE **From Oscar** darling to "Scary Movie," Regina Hall and her inherent magnetism are keeping us guessing. **B1**

WEEKEND **Events** are ramping up to celebrate the Fourth of July — and America's 250th birthday.

THE REGION **The president's** proposed triumphal arch isn't subject to D.C.'s height restrictions, a planner says. **B13** **The archbishop** of Washington removed a priest as an exorcist. **B13** **Meet the man** who created World Bicycle Day. **B13**

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