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# Drain the swamp? Trump cabinet would be richest ever

Presidential candidate Donald Trump pledged to “drain the swamp of corruption” in Washington, D.C., and proposed a five-year ban on executive branch officials becoming lobbyists. Lobbyists are considered to be a problem because they work behind the scenes to get laws and rules written for the benefit of the wealthy and powerful. But with his cabinet appointments, president-elect Trump would cut out lobbyist middlemen and put the wealthy and powerful directly in charge of federal agencies.

If Trump’s nominees are confirmed by the Senate, they’ll be by far the wealthiest cabinet in U.S. history, with a combined net worth of \$14 billion — 50 times wealthier than George W. Bush’s cabinet. Many of the nominees are a lot like Trump: They were born wealthy, attended elite schools, and went on to amass even larger fortunes as adults. And a number of them were big donors to the Trump campaign.

It’s not like President Barack Obama’s cabinet was filled with working stiffs either. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker is from a Chicago family worth \$29 billion. Secretary of State



**EDUCATION:** Billionaire Betsy DeVos thinks taxpayers should pay for private school. **LABOR:** Fast food CEO Andrew Puzder opposes minimum wage increases. **COMMERCE:** Billionaire investor Wilbur Ross once rescued Trump casinos. **TREASURY:** Former Goldman Sachs partner Steve Mnuchin profited from foreclosures.

John Kerry is worth over \$200 million and is married to the widow of a billionaire.

But Trump’s cabinet tops them by far:

His pick for Secretary of Commerce, worth an estimated \$2.5 billion, is investor Wilbur Ross, a specialist in leveraged buyouts. Ross once helped Trump when his Atlantic City casinos were in financial trouble, and he gave \$200,000 to Trump’s election campaign.

His pick for Secretary of Education is Betsy DeVos, who was born rich and married richer. Her husband is CEO of Amway and is son and heir to the Amway founder’s \$5.1 billion fortune. Betsy DeVos —

who never attended public schools herself — is a longtime advocate of taxpayer funding to charter and private schools.

Trump’s nominee for Secretary of State is Rex Tillerson, chairman and CEO of Exxon-Mobil. America’s 29th highest paid CEO, Tillerson has a net worth estimated at \$150 million.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, whose signature could soon be on U.S. currency, was the chief fundraiser for the Trump campaign. A former Goldman Sachs partner, hedge fund owner, and Hollywood film investor, he made millions on films like American Sniper and Mad Max: Fury Road, and as part owner of a bank that foreclosed on 36,000 homeown-

ers. His net worth is estimated at \$40 million.

Trump’s nominee for Secretary of Labor is Andrew Puzder, CEO of the company that owns the Carl’s Jr. and Hardee’s fast food chains. Puzder has a net worth estimated at \$25 million, and he and his wife gave \$300,000 to Trump and the Republican National Committee. Puzder would oversee enforcement of wage and hour and occupational safety laws and the administration of unemployment insurance, workers compensation, and work visa programs.

In a Dec. 1 statement reacting to Trump’s cabinet picks, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called the appointments inconsistent with the pledges Trump made in the campaign: “After the election, we made clear that we would hold Donald Trump accountable to the promises he made to working people. His initial nominations fundamentally threaten these promises. Taken together, the appointments push President-elect Trump away from the values and issues that working class voters said were most important to them.”

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