

CONGRESSMAN PETER DEFAZIO PRESENTS BILL TO 'DRAIN THE SWAMP'

Democratic Congressman Peter DeFazio wants to hold President-elect Donald Trump responsible for his “drain the swamp,” campaign promise, in which Trump said he would impose tougher lobbying restrictions as well as lifetime lobbying bans.

On Dec. 8, Rep. DeFazio presented the DRAIN the SWAMP Act, “which would require a five-year ban, barring anyone who serves as a political appointee from lobbying for the five years after they leave the executive branch. The bill would also permanently bar any individual appointed to the Trump Administration from lobbying on behalf of a foreign government.”

DeFazio tells *EW* that he hopes he will find enough Republican sponsors for the bill when he reintroduces it after the 114th Congress convenes. He says, “Now what President-elect Trump has proposed is just hortatory — it’s a nice thing to say — but there’s no force of law behind it.”

DeFazio plans to send the bill to the Trump transition team toward the end of December and then circulate it to every incoming member of Congress.

“I think everybody was in shock right after the election — I was,” DeFazio says when he got back to Washington, “I started thinking about, well there are certain things we might actually be able to work with the Trump administration.” He introduced the legislation during the second week after returning to Washington.

So far, the bill hasn’t garnered any Republican support, but DeFazio says it hasn’t been sent around to everyone yet. Ideally, he says he’d like more support before referring the legislation to Trump.

“Part of the problem with our trade policy is there’s been this very quickly spinning revolving door between very highly paid industry consultants or actual employees of multinationals and the special trade representative’s office,” DeFazio says. “So having these sorts of prohibitions in statute would help in places like that.”

In November, Rep. DeFazio won reelection in Oregon’s 4th District with 55.5 percent of votes compared to his opponent Republican candidate Art Robinson who received 39.8 percent of votes. Rep. DeFazio has served in the House of Representatives since his election in 1986.

On Monday, Dec. 12, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, along with Speaker Paul Ryan and Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, announced his support for congressional investigations of cybersecurity interference by Russia during the U.S. elections.

DeFazio says, “The CIA has come out with a report that says there was very significant Russian involvement and it was all in favor of Trump or against Clinton.” He adds, that if Republicans “don’t want to be hypocrites,” given this is a real national security issue, it should be investigated.

“I mean, what is a higher level of national security than the sanctity, the security and the integrity of our electoral process.” ■

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