

After 10-Day Delay, President Trump's Commerce Secretary Nominee Finally Gets a Vote

The king of the turnaround, billionaire Wilbur Ross, is now going by a new title: secretary of commerce.

In a 72-27 vote, his nomination to join President Donald Trump's Cabinet—and perhaps more importantly, his economic policy team—was confirmed by the Senate, but not without more drama from Democrats. His cloture vote was held on Feb. 17, meaning the vote on his confirmation was delayed by 10 days—mainly because of the President's Day break—as a small group of Democrats whined about interactions Ross may have had with Russian investors years before he was ever nominated to work in the White House.

The vote on Ross' final confirmation suggests, however, that a number of moderates are beginning to feel the heat from constituents about Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and the Democratic leadership's plan to “stall out” Cabinet confirmations. The Senate also voted to approve cloture for the nomination of Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.) to be secretary of the interior on a 67-31 vote.

The delay in getting a Cabinet confirmed has now reached historic proportions. More than one month into his administration, only 10 of 15 members of the Cabinet that require Senate confirmation have been approved.

Here's the breakdown:

- Confirmed: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Secretary of the Treasury Steve Mnuchin, Secretary of Defense James Mattis, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Health & Human

Services Dr. Tom Price, Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David Shulkin and Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly.

- Awaiting Confirmation Votes: Secretary of the Interior-designate Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont.), Secretary of Housing & Urban Development-designate Dr. Ben Carson and Secretary of Energy-designate former Texas Gov. Rick Perry.
- Still in Committees: Secretary of Agriculture-designate former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue and Secretary of Labor-designate Alexander Acosta.

Two other Cabinet-level nominations—those of U.S. Trade Representative-designate Amb. Robert Lighthizer and Director of National Intelligence-designate former Sen. Dan Coats (R-Ind.)—are still stuck in their respective committees. {eo}