

Betsy DeVos' Nomination Is in Peril

The nomination of Secretary of Education-Designate Betsy DeVos is now officially in peril.

Following Wednesday's announcement by Sens. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) that they will not vote in favor of her confirmation, the Trump administration will need every remaining GOP vote to be in her favor. No Democrats are expected—nor have any announced that they will—to break ranks to support the President Donald Trump's nominee.

"I have heard from thousands, truly, thousands of Alaskans who have shared their concerns about Mrs. DeVos," Murkowski said. "I do not intend to vote on final passage to support Mrs. DeVos."

"This is not a decision I make lightly," Collins said in a floor speech Wednesday. "I have a great deal of respect for Mrs. DeVos. I will not, cannot vote to confirm her."

Both senators said they would vote to allow her confirmation to come to a full vote but will then break ranks with Republicans on the final confirmation. It had been expected since her nomination was announced that DeVos' nomination would be targeted for rejection by Democrats and liberal Republicans.

Sources on Capitol Hill suggest Collins and Murkowski waited to announce their opposition until the 50 votes needed for confirmation were assured. Those votes are locked in, one source said.

Democrats oppose DeVos because of her "lack of exposure to public education." Her own children have received private education, and she has long advocated for and donated millions

to school choice programs around the country.

The secretary-designate has also been an ardent supporter of the president's \$20 billion school choice initiative.

Collins and Murkowski have long been liberal thorns in the side of Republicans who have sought to advance a conservative agenda in the Senate. They often sided with Democrats to help advance legislation on behalf of President Barack Obama.

Although a simple majority is needed to be confirmed, Vice President Mike Pence can break any tie created with just 50 GOP votes in support of a nominee. {eo}