

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

December 22, 2021

The Honorable Mark Gordon
Wyoming Office of the Governor
State Capitol
200 West 24th Street
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

Dear Governor Gordon,

The Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight held a hearing entitled “The Pandora Papers and Hidden Wealth” on December 8, 2021. The witnesses at that hearing raised serious questions about the impact that various state laws are having on the creation of tax havens in the United States. Recently, the *Washington Post* reported that wealth has moved from traditional tax havens in Europe and the Caribbean into Wyoming.

To help clarify how and why this is the case, I ask that you respond to these questions as we follow up on issues raised during the Subcommittee’s hearing:

1. Is Wyoming a tax haven? What are the state and federal tax advantages and disadvantages of Wyoming’s designation as a tax haven?
2. The *Washington Post* reports that, [i]n Wyoming, trust industry representatives have promoted a secretive financial arrangement dubbed the ‘Cowboy Cocktail’.¹ According to the report, this arrangement involves “a trust and layers of private companies with concealed ownership” whereby families can own assets through a limited liability company which is owned by the trust with a second company reportedly formed to oversee the trust. Describe state oversight of these trusts.
3. How many of these secretive trusts or arrangements have been formed in Wyoming and what is the total value of assets held by such trusts?
4. Our witnesses have testified during the hearing that this secrecy enables illicit activities like money laundering and tax evasion. At the very least, it appears to provide absolute asset protection for the wealthy against creditors, including for child and spousal support claims. How do you defend the Wyoming trust regime against these assertions?

¹ Debbie Cenziper and Will Fitzgibbon, *The ‘Cowboy Cocktail’: How Wyoming Became One of the World’s Top Tax Havens*, The Washington Post, (Dec. 20, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2021/wyoming-trusts-finance-pandora-papers/?itid=hp-top-table-main>

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Please respond to these questions by January 14, 2022. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Bill Pascrell Jr.

Bill Pascrell, Jr., *Chair*
Subcommittee on Oversight