

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 10, 2026

Isidore Mörsel
President
Antwerp World Diamond Centre
Hoveniersstraat 22
2018 Antwerp, Belgium

David Gotlib
Founder
David Gotlib Luxury Cufflinks
Schupstraat 9-11
2018 Antwerp, Belgium

Dear Mr. Mörsel and Mr. Gotlib:

We write regarding our concerns about the watch-sized, 18-karat gold ring encrusted with 321 diamonds and 75 gemstones (*Attachment 1*) that the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) gifted to President Trump, just weeks before the Administration announced it was exempting European diamonds from its chaotic tariffs.¹ We have previously raised concerns about “the President’s record of doling out special treatment to CEOs who are able to woo him with flattery, payoffs, or both,”² and the circumstances surrounding the European diamond industry’s exemptions raise troubling new questions about foreign corporate interests potentially buying special favors from President Trump with lavish gifts—or in the case of the gold ring, what appears to be a cartoonish bribe.

In February 2026, after the Supreme Court struck down President Trump’s International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) tariffs, the Administration quickly replaced them with a temporary blanket 10 percent tariff under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974.³ This shift abruptly erased a September 2025 zero-percent tariff exemption AWDC had actively pushed for—a carve-out AWDC had hailed as a “tremendous boost” for Antwerp’s \$2.1 billion annual diamond export trade to the United States.⁴ Overnight, Antwerp lost its status as “the only major diamond hub in the world with tariff-free access to the American market.”⁵

1 New York Times, “How Diamonds, Paprika and Fertilizer Won Relief From Trump’s Tariffs,” Ana Swanson and Jeanna Smialek, July 30, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/30/business/economy/trump-tariffs-exemptions.html>; AWDC, “Antwerp diamond sector presents exclusive ring featuring 321 natural diamonds to the United States in honour of 250 years of independence,” press release, June 29, 2026, <https://www.awdc.be/news/press/antwerp-diamond-sector-presents-exclusive-ring-featuring-321-natural-diamonds-united>.

2 Letter to Rolex CEO Jean-Frederic Dufour, Senator Elizabeth Warren, September 24, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/doc/warren_letter_to_rolex_on_us_open_trump_invite.pdf.

3 Financial Times, “Belgian diamonds lose US tariffs exemption,” Andy Bounds et al., February 25, 2026, <https://www.ft.com/content/fca1de46-8f91-4d4b-94aa-1fe69c2cb6f9?syn-25a6b1a6=1>.

4 *Id.*; Rapaport News, “AWDC Reaches Deal with US for Tariff-Free Polished-Diamond Imports,” Leah Meirovich, September 25, 2025, <https://rapaport.com/news/awdc-reaches-deal-with-us-for-tariff-free-polished-diamond-imports/>.

5 European Business Magazine, “Belgian Diamonds Hit by US Tariffs Again as Trump Scraps Trade Exemptions,” Nick Staunton, February 25, 2026, <https://europeanbusinessmagazine.com/belgian-diamonds-hit-by-us-tariffs-again-as-trump-scraps-trade-exemptions/>.

The Administration immediately scrambled to identify new authorities they could use to replace President Trump’s illegal tariffs on a permanent basis, eventually invoking Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974.⁶ Facing what AWDC acknowledged was a “significant decline in Belgian diamond exports to the US” following the Supreme Court decision, AWDC set to work to secure another exemption, submitting formal feedback to the Office of the United States Trade Representative during the Section 301 public comment period.⁷

However, your gift of the gold ring suggests that AWDC did not limit its efforts to formal regulatory channels. On June 28, 2026, at an America 250 celebration in Brussels, Mr. Mörsel presented US Ambassador to Belgium Bill White with the aforementioned ring for delivery to President Trump.⁸ Custom-crafted by Mr. Gotlib, the watch-sized, 18-karat gold ring features 321 diamonds, 56 sapphires, 13 emeralds, six rubies, two diamond “T” emblems, Superman-style “45” and “47” logos, the Presidential Seal, and an interior engraving reading: “Crafted in Antwerp for Donald John Trump.”⁹ Mr. Mörsel explicitly linked the gift to trade issues, stating that AWDC commissioned the ring to “celebrate that enduring relationship” with the Antwerp diamond sector’s “most important trading partner for generations.”¹⁰ Even if AWDC’s status as a public-private partnership with the Belgian government requires President Trump to give up the ring under the Foreign Emoluments Clause,¹¹ presenting a gift of this magnitude could still play directly into President Trump’s well-established affinity for shiny gifts.¹²

The return on your “ostentatious” gift appears to have been swift and substantial.¹³ On July 24, 2026—just weeks after the ring was presented to Ambassador White—the Administration officially exempted European natural diamonds from the new Section 301 tariffs, restoring the Belgian diamond industry’s zero-percent tariff access to the US market.¹⁴ Following the announcement, AWDC published a press release hailing the new exemption as a “significant boost” for Antwerp’s diamond industry and “its international competitive position.”¹⁵

6 CNBC, “Trump administration launches Section 301 trade probes into Mexico, China, EU, others,” Dan Mangan, March 11, 2026, <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/11/trump-trade-investigations-ieee-tariffs.html>.

7 United States Trade Representative Comment Portal, Comment from Antwerp World Diamond Center, <https://comments.ustr.gov/s/commentdetails?rid=MM9796XCK7>.

8 PBS News, “A Belgian diamond group is gifting Trump a lavish ring after that industry won tariff relief,” Sam McNeil, July 3, 2026, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/a-belgian-diamond-group-is-gifting-trump-a-lavish-ring-after-that-industry-won-tariff-relief>.

9 *Id.*; Yahoo Sports, “Donald Trump’s Luxury \$1 Million Ring Gift is Latest Twist in Belgium World Cup Drama,” Vanshika Vasundhara Singh, July 8, 2026, <https://sports.yahoo.com/articles/donald-trump-luxury-1-million-175802420.html>.

10 AWDC, “Antwerp diamond sector presents exclusive ring featuring 321 natural diamonds to the United States in honour of 250 years of independence,” press release, June 29, 2026, <https://www.awdc.be/news/press/antwerp-diamond-sector-presents-exclusive-ring-featuring-321-natural-diamonds-united>.

11 AWDC, “About us,” <https://www.awdc.be/organization>; U.S. Const. art. 1, § 9, cl. 8; 5 U.S.C. § 7342.

12 The Times, “A crown, an ingot and a jet: the gifts Trump has received this year,” David Charter, December 31, 2025, <https://www.thetimes.com/us/american-politics/article/what-gifts-has-trump-received-gold-cjspr09r5>.

13 CBS News, “Trump gifted a lavishly encrusted ring from Belgian diamond group that won tariff relief,” July 3, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/belgian-diamond-group-gifts-trump-ring/>.

14 New York Times, “How Diamonds, Paprika and Fertilizer Won Relief From Trump’s Tariffs,” Ana Swanson and Jeanna Smialek, July 30, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/30/business/economy/trump-tariffs-exemptions.html>.

This sequence of events fits a deeply troubling pattern of corporate executives using flattery and gifts to obtain lucrative exemptions to the Administration's tariff rules. Apple CEO Tim Cook, who donated \$1 million to the President's inauguration committee, appeared to leverage his "very good relationship" with the President and a well-timed "24-karat" gold gift to secure exemptions from tariffs for various Apple products imported from China.¹⁶ After Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang purchased a seat at President Trump's Mar-a-Lago table for \$1 million, the Administration reversed course on implementing rules that would have prevented Nvidia from selling its most advanced chips to China.¹⁷ And the Administration slashed tariffs on Swiss imports from 39 percent to 15 percent just days after Swiss executives—including Rolex CEO Jean-Frédéric Dufour—presented President Trump with a personalized gold bar worth more than \$130,000 and a luxury Rolex desk clock.¹⁸

AWDC's gift to President Trump appears to fit seamlessly into this pattern. At best, your decision to present a 321-diamond, 18-karat gold ring to President Trump amidst high-stakes tariff decisions creates the glaring appearance of impropriety. At worst, it reinforces that foreign corporate special interests can bypass standard trade policy and buy lucrative tariff exemptions simply by showering President Trump with shiny gifts.

Your actions could also raise serious legal questions under federal criminal law. Federal law defines bribery as a "corruptly given ... offer or promise of anything of value to any public official ... to influence any official act."¹⁹ If your gift implicates federal bribery law, you or the officials responsible for it could be subject to criminal penalties.²⁰

In light of these reports, and to inform our ongoing oversight and legislative work on government ethics, we write to request more information about your attempts to influence Trump Administration officials. We ask that you provide answers to the following questions by no later than August 24, 2026:

1. Please provide information regarding the creation, funding, and presentation of the 321-diamond, 18-karat gold ring to President Trump:

15 AWDC, "European natural diamonds exempt from US import tariffs once again after six months," press release, July 24, 2026, <https://www.awdc.be/news/press/european-natural-diamonds-exempt-us-import-tariffs-once-again-after-six-months>.

16 Washington Post, "How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump's tariff storm — for now," Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>; Yahoo Finance, "If You Want To Bribe Trump, Bring Gold—Not Bitcoin". An Economist Claims Apple Got Tariff Relief On Semiconductors For Cheap," Adrian Volenik, August 8, 2025, <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/want-bribe-trump-bring-gold-222918518.html>; USA Today, "Tim Cook appeals to Trump's love of gold with a 24-karat base for Apple plaque," Kinsey Crowley, August 7, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/08/07/tim-cook-trump-gift/85555805007/>.

17 NPR, "Trump administration backs off Nvidia H20 chip crackdown after Mar-a-Lago dinner," Emily Feng and Bobby Allyn, April 9, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/04/09/nx-sl-5356480/nvidia-china-ai-h20-chips-trump>.

18 Axios, "How to lobby Trump with Swiss precision: gifts, gold and gab," Marc Caputo, November 14, 2025, <https://www.axios.com/2025/11/14/trump-swiss-gifts-gold-rolex>.

19 18 U.S.C. § 201(b)(1) (cleaned up).

20 18 U.S.C. § 201(b).

- a. Who at AWDC originally conceived of the idea to present a gift to President Trump, who approved the idea, and when was this decision made?
 - b. What is the value of the ring? What was the total cost to design and produce it? Was it paid for directly by AWDC, by specific member companies, or by third-party donors?
 - c. What was the nature and extent of your discussions with Ambassador White, his staff, or other Administration officials in the lead up to, during, or after the June 28 ring presentation ceremony?
 - d. Have you or anyone representing AWDC discussed the gift—or matters relating to it—with President Trump? If so, what was the nature of these conversations?
2. Did you or anyone acting as an agent of you or AWDC have any conversations (including via telephone, text message, or email) with Trump Administration officials about tariffs prior to the July 24 announcement?
 - a. Please provide the dates as well as names and titles of all participants for any such conversations.
 - b. Did you or anyone acting as an agent of you or AWDC make any commitments with regard to business or campaign matters related to Trump Administration actions on tariffs?
 - c. Did you make any commitments with regard to financial matters that could affect President Trump or his family?
3. When did AWDC find out about the tariff exemption for European natural diamonds announced on July 24?
 - a. Who in the Administration provided this information to AWDC?
 - b. Who at AWDC received this information?
4. What is the value of the additional profits that AWDC's member companies will obtain as a result of President Trump's tariff exemption? Please explain your process for determining this estimate.
 - a. What was the total dollar value of diamonds imported into the United States by AWDC's member companies from September 2025 to January 2026, when European natural diamonds enjoyed a zero-percent tariff exemption?
 - b. What was the total dollar value of diamonds imported into the United States by AWDC's member companies from February 2026 to July 2026, while the 10 percent Section 122 tariffs were in effect?
 - c. From February 2026 to July 2026, how much did AWDC's member companies pay in US tariffs?

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Attachment 1



Source: Antwerp World Diamond Centre