

With Help from Dems, Torture Supporter Pompeo Confirmed for CIA Chief

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Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-Kan.) has been confirmed as CIA director, after 14 Democrats fell in line with almost all Senate Republicans Monday night.

Pompeo, who has hinted that he is open to [reauthorizing torture and mass surveillance](#), will lead the intelligence agency under President Donald Trump.

The Democrats who voted to confirm Pompeo were John Donnelly of Indiana, Dianne Feinstein of California, Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Tim Kaine of Virginia, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Jack Reed of Rhode Island, Brian Schatz of Hawaii, Chuck Schumer of New York, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, Mark Warner of Virginia, and Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island.

The lone dissenting Republican was Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky.

[View the complete roll call here.](#)

Pompeo is a Tea Party Republican who has previously referred to CIA agents who engaged in torture as “patriots.” In a series of written responses to the Senate Intelligence Committee, he indicated that he would consider reinstating waterboarding, among other torture techniques, as well as the bulk metadata collection that effectively ended in 2015 with the passage of the USA Freedom Act.

“I would expect to consult with the full Congressional Intelligence Committees on any differences that are appropriate, including any changes to law that would be required,” he wrote.

His nomination was opposed by groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which noted that his written responses contradicted testimony he gave during his [Senate hearing](#) earlier this month.

“Mike Pompeo’s confirmation is a clear sign that Congress has not done enough ‘extreme vetting’ of President Trump’s nominees’ views on human rights,” said Amnesty USA’s executive director Margaret Huang. “While Pompeo sailed through his confirmation hearing, his written answers to the Senate contradict his earlier testimony and could lay the groundwork for the agency to return to torture and secret detention. Torture is a war crime and a grave human rights violation. Moving forward, Congress needs to aggressively scrutinize Pompeo’s CIA to ensure there is no backsliding into torture in the name of

security.”

On the Senate floor Monday, Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) called Pompeo “the wrong man for the job.” Wyden has been outspoken in his opposition to Pompeo, along with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

“On issue after issue, the Congressman has taken two, three, or four positions, depending on when he says it and who he is talking to. He has done this with surveillance, with torture, with Russia, and a number of other subjects,” Wyden said.

But Warner, the ranking Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, argued that although he does “not agree with some of the views that Congressman Pompeo” holds, he “convinced me that he will follow the law banning torture.”

As *The Intercept*'s Alex Emmons [put it](#), Pompeo's bipartisan confirmation means the Democrats failed “a crucial first test of whether [they] would present a united front to defend human rights and civil liberties in the Trump era.”

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