

Regardless of your political affiliation or opinion of the proposed tax plan, you should be mortified by what took place over the past two weeks in the Senate. First, Senate Finance Committee Leader Orin Hatch neglected to publish legislative text of his proposal until November 21st. At 515 pages, this was no light read, but yet the Finance Committee was somehow familiar enough with its contents to vote to move the bill forward a mere seven days later.

On the Senate floor, things went from shady to sham rather quickly. First, a list of possible amendments was handed out around Capitol Hill, but only to lobbyists, rather than journalists. Then, after a flurry of 11th-hour bargains were made to nail down the final few wavering Republican Senators, the final version of the bill -- now reduced to a lithe 479 pages -- was made available in the dead of night, and was voted on before you awoke. Even more embarrassing was the state the text of a bill that will shape our economy for the next decade was in, as it was complete with -- and I'm not making this up -- key amendments and alterations hand-written into the margins of the page, with large swaths of text simply crossed out. One enterprising twitter personality offered a \$25 gift card to anyone who could decipher a critical piece of chicken scratch located on page 187. --Tony Nitti, Forbes Magazine