

Paramount Forked Out Nearly \$12,000 For Brendan Carr To Attend The Kennedy Center Honors As Paramount's Merger With Skydance Was Pending Before The FCC

SUMMARY: In early December 2024, incoming FCC commissioner and Project 2025 contributor Brendan Carr [accepted two tickets](#)—worth \$11,724—to attend the Kennedy Center Honors Gala & Reception. The donor of the pricey tickets was Paramount, whose pending merger with the entertainment company Skydance was awaiting Carr's approval. In July 2025, Carr [voted](#) to approve the merger.

Carr had also [attended](#) the Kennedy Center Honors on Paramount's dime in December 2023, around the time that *The New York Times* [broke news](#) that Shari Redstone was looking to sell her controlling stake in National Amusements, Paramount's parent company, to Skydance.

Paramount's generous gift to Carr came amid President-elect Trump's [\\$10 billion lawsuit](#) against CBS, a division of Paramount, over allegations that the news program "60 Minutes" had edited an interview with Kamala Harris to tip the scales in her favor in the 2024 presidential election.

At the 2024 Kennedy Center Honors, Carr [reportedly told](#) Paramount executives that they would have to make concessions to appease Trump, who was still roiled by the Harris interview, for Skydance acquisition to be approved. In early July, Paramount settled with President Trump and agreed to pay him \$16 million. By the end of the month, the FCC, under Carr's leadership, had approved Skydance's acquisition of Paramount and its subsidiaries.

Carr [defended](#) the timing of the payout and merger, claiming the process "ran normal course."

Amid President Trump's Multibillion-Dollar Lawsuit Against CBS And Skydance's Pending Merger With CBS's Parent Company Paramount, Incoming FCC Chairman Brendan Carr—Who Would Have To Approve The Merger—Accepted Two Tickets, Worth \$11,724, From Paramount To Attend The Kennedy Center Honors

Skydance Agreed To Merge With Paramount For \$8 Billion In July 2024, Pending FCC Approval

July 2024: Skydance Agreed To Merge With Paramount For \$8 Billion. "Paramount Global has agreed to merge with Skydance, capping off a monthslong negotiation, in a deal that would see the Redstone family step away from control of the storied movie studio and media company. Paramount's special committee signed off on the merger Sunday, days after Shari Redstone's National Amusements, the controlling shareholder of Paramount, once again reached a preliminary agreement with Skydance, the production company known for "Top Gun: Maverick." A similar deal had weeks earlier been stopped in its tracks. The latest iteration of the deal will see the buying consortium, which includes private equity firms RedBird Capital Partners and KKR, invest more than \$8 billion into Paramount and to acquire National Amusements. The deal gives National Amusements an enterprise value of \$2.4 billion, which includes \$1.75 billion in equity." [CNBC, [7/8/24](#)]

The Skydance-Paramount Merger Faced An Uncertain Future After Then-Candidate Donald Trump Sued CBS, A Division Of Paramount

October 31, 2024: Then-Candidate Trump Sued CBS For \$10 Billion, Alleging That “60 Minutes” Had Edited An Earlier Interview With Kamala Harris In Order To “Tip The Scales” Of The Upcoming Presidential Election In Her Favor. “Former President Donald Trump filed a lawsuit Thursday against CBS, demanding \$10 billion in damages over the network’s ‘60 Minutes’ interview with Vice President Kamala Harris. The suit was immediately ridiculed by First Amendment attorneys, who called it ‘frivolous and dangerous.’ In the complaint filed in US District Court in the Northern District of Texas, Trump’s legal counsel claimed CBS’ ‘60 Minutes’ interview with Harris and the associated programming were “partisan and unlawful acts of election and voter interference” intended to ‘mislead the public and attempt to tip the scales’ of the presidential election in her favor. [...] Trump has repeatedly claimed that the show’s interview with Harris was grossly mis-edited by CBS at the direction of the campaign, and he has called for the network to ‘lose its license.’” [CNN, [10/31/24](#)]

- **CBS Was A Division Of Paramount.** “Paramount, owner of Paramount Pictures movie and television studios, the CBS television network and CBS News, announced in a news release late Sunday that it is combining with Skydance, an entertainment business founded by David Ellison, son of Oracle founder Larry Ellison.” [CBS News, [7/8/24](#)]

Trump Won The 2024 President Election In November And Quickly Announced That He Would Elevate Brendan Carr To Chairman Of The Federal Communications Commission

November 6, 2024: President Trump Won The 2024 Presidential Election. “Former President Donald Trump will return to the White House, according to a race call by the Associated Press. Trump won the key states of Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, with a combined 29 electoral votes to clinch the 270 necessary to win the presidency. As of 5:34am ET Wednesday, Trump had 277 electoral votes total.” [NPR, [11/6/24](#)]

November 17, 2024: President Trump Tapped Brendan Carr To Be Chairman Of The Federal Communications Commission (FCC). “President-elect Donald Trump on Sunday named Brendan Carr, the senior Republican on the Federal Communications Commission, as the new chairman of the agency tasked with regulating broadcasting, telecommunications and broadband.” [AP, [11/17/24](#)]

- **Before Becoming Chairman Of The FCC, Carr Served As The Senior Republican Commissioner And As FCC’s General Counsel.** “Brendan Carr is the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission. He previously served as the senior Republican Commissioner and as the FCC’s General Counsel. Nominated by both President Trump and President Biden, Carr has been confirmed unanimously by the Senate three times.” [FCC, accessed [9/24/25](#)]
- **Carr Joined The FCC As A Staffer In 2012, Then Served As A Legal Adviser To Then-Commissioner Ajit Pai From 2014 To 2017, And Was Appointed As An FCC Chair By Trump In 2017 And Biden In 2023.** “Carr’s appointment to lead the FCC marked the culmination of what is a 13-year tenure at the agency. The 46-year-old began at the commission as a staffer in 2012, then served as a legal adviser to then-FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai from 2014 to 2017. When Trump appointed Pai to serve as FCC chair in January 2017, Carr became the commission’s general counsel. Carr was then nominated to a six-year term as commissioner by Trump in June 2017, with the Senate confirming him in August. He was nominated again by President Biden in 2023 to a term running through 2029.” [The Hill, [9/18/25](#)]

In Early December 2024, Brendan Carr Accepted A Gift Of Two Tickets From Paramount—Worth \$11,724—to Attend The Kennedy Center Honors

December 2024: Brendan Carr Accepted Two Tickets From Paramount To Attend The Kennedy Center’s 47th Annual Honors Gala And Reception, Worth \$11,724.

9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements				
#	SOURCE NAME	CITY, STATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	VALUE
1	Paramount	Washington, District of Columbia	Kennedy Center 47th Annual Honors Gala and Reception with a guest	\$11,724

[Brendan Carr, OGE Form 278e, filed [2025](#)]

- The Kennedy Center’s 47th Annual Honors Gala And Reception Took Place On December 8, 2024.** “The Kennedy Center and CBS today announced that 2023 Kennedy Center Honors recipient, Grammy Award®-winning musician, critically acclaimed Emmy®- and Golden Globe®-winning and Academy Award®-nominated actor and producer Queen Latifah will host for the first time The 47th Annual Kennedy Center Honors, to be broadcast Sunday, December 22, 2024 from 8:30-11:00 p.m., ET/PT on the CBS Television Network and streaming on Paramount+ (live and on-demand for Paramount+ with SHOWTIME subscribers, or on-demand for Paramount+ Essential subscribers the day after the special airs)* [...] Throughout its 46-year history, the annual Honors Gala has become the highlight of the Washington cultural and society calendar. On Sunday, December 8, in a star-studded celebration on the Kennedy Center Opera House stage, the 47th class of Kennedy Center Honorees will be saluted by today’s leading performers from New York, Hollywood, and the arts capitals of the world.” [The Kennedy Center, accessed [9/24/25](#)]
- The Kennedy Center Honors Were Streamed On CBS/Paramount+.** “Watch the Kennedy Center Honors on Sunday, December 22, from 8:30-11:00 PM (ET/PT) on CBS and streaming on Paramount+” [The Kennedy Center, accessed [9/24/25](#)]

Paramount Also Paid For Brendan Carr To Attend The 2023 Kennedy Center Honors, Which Took Place Shortly Before *The New York Times* Broke The News That Shari Redstone Was In Talks To Sell Paramount’s Parent Company To Skydance

December 2023: Brendan Carr Accepted Two Tickets From Paramount To Attend The Kennedy Center’s Honors Reception, Event, And Dinner, Worth \$10,480.

9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements				
#	SOURCE NAME	CITY, STATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	VALUE
1	Paramount		Kennedy Center Honors Reception, Event, and Dinner for two	\$10,480
2	Federalist Society	Washington, District of Columbia	Federalist Society 2023 Scalia Dinner	\$600

[Brendan Carr, OGE Form 278e, filed [2024](#)]

- The 46th Kennedy Center Honors Took Place On December 3, 2023.** “The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is proud to celebrate the 46th Honorees for lifetime artistic achievements: actor and comedian Billy Crystal; acclaimed soprano Renée Fleming; British singer-songwriter producer, and member of the Bee Gees, Barry Gibb; rapper, singer, and actress Queen Latifah; and singer Dionne Warwick. The event took place Sunday, December 3rd, 2023, in the Kennedy Center Opera House, and

premieres Wednesday, December 27 at 8pm ET on CBS and will be available for viewing on Paramount+.” [The Kennedy Center, accessed [9/24/25](#)]

December 2023: The New York Times Reported That Paramount’s Parent Company Was In Talks To Sell A Controlling Stake And Held Talks With Skydance In Recent Weeks. “The media mogul Shari Redstone is in talks to sell a controlling stake in National Amusements, the parent company of the sprawling news and entertainment empire that includes the Paramount movie studio, CBS and MTV, according to three people familiar with the talks. In recent weeks, National Amusements has held talks with Skydance, the media and entertainment company founded by David Ellison, who is the son of the billionaire founder of Oracle, Larry Ellison. It’s unclear whether a deal will be reached, and the value the talks place on Ms. Redstone’s stake couldn’t be determined.” [New York Times, [12/10/23](#)]

Paramount Also Purchased Tickets For Carr To Attend The Event In 2022

Brendan Carr Reported Receiving Free Tickets To The 2022 Kennedy Center Honors, Estimated At \$10,480.

9. Gifts and Travel Reimbursements

#	SOURCE NAME	CITY, STATE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	VALUE
1	Kennedy Center and Paramount	Washington, District of Columbia	Kennedy Center Honors Annual Gala and Dinner with a guest, 12/4/22	\$10,060
2	Paramount	New York, New York	Reception prior to Kennedy Center Honors with a guest, 12/4/22	\$420

[Brendan Carr, OGE Form 278e, filed [2023](#)]

At The 2024 Kennedy Center Honors, Carr Reportedly Warned Paramount That They Would Have To Make Concessions In Order For The Skydance-Paramount Merger To Move Forward

At A Reception Following The Taping Of The Kennedy Center Honors, Carr Gave Paramount Executives A Warning That Trump’s Dissatisfaction With CBS Would Require Paramount To Make Concessions. “It’s become clear to executives at both companies that Trump’s dissatisfaction with CBS News will make the review tougher than they anticipated, and that they’ll likely need to offer concessions to win approval, people familiar with the situation said. Incoming Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr gave Paramount executives a warning to that effect at a reception late last year following the taping of the Kennedy Center honors in Washington, according to people familiar with the exchange, and he has echoed the message in public remarks.” [Wall Street Journal, [1/17/25](#)]

CNN: “Paramount Needed FCC Chair Brendan Carr’s Approval To Complete A Merger With Skydance Media.” “That’s why Paramount, the owner of the CBS network and many local CBS stations, was so vulnerable to Trump’s pressure earlier this year. Paramount needed FCC chair Brendan Carr’s approval to complete a merger with Skydance Media. Paramount executives suspected that Carr delayed his review of the deal while Trump’s lawyers negotiated with Paramount lawyers to settle a lawsuit Trump had filed over the CBS newsmagazine ‘60 Minutes.’” [CNN, [9/19/25](#)]

The FCC Approved Skydance’s Acquisition Of Paramount CBS Just Weeks After Paramount Settled In Trump’s “60 Minutes” Lawsuit, With Carr Voting In Favor

July 2, 2025: Paramount Settled Trump’s Lawsuit Over The “60 Minutes” Interview For \$16 Million. “Paramount will settle President Trump’s lawsuit over a ‘60 Minutes’ interview with Kamala Harris for \$16

million, the company announced late Tuesday. CBS News' parent company worked with a mediator to resolve the lawsuit. Under the agreement, \$16 million will be allocated to Mr. Trump's future presidential library and the plaintiffs' fees and costs. Neither Mr. Trump nor his co-plaintiff, Texas Rep. Ronny Jackson, will be directly paid as part of the settlement." [CBS News, [7/2/25](#)]

July 24, 2025: FCC Approved Skydance's Acquisition Of Paramount CBS. "Today, the FCC approved Skydance's \$8 billion acquisition of Paramount Global and its subsidiaries, including the ultimate parent company of the CBS network of owned and operated broadcast television stations, by granting a series of applications that transfer FCC licenses and authorizations." [FCC Press Release, [7/24/25](#)]

Carr Voted In Favor Of The Merger. "The FCC commissioners voted 2-1 in favor of the deal. Two Republicans, Carr and Olivia Trusty, voted yes, while Anna Gomez, the lone Democrat on the panel, dissented." [LA Times, [7/24/25](#)]

Carr Defended The Timing Of The Paramount Merger Approval, Arguing That The Perception The Merger Was Approved After Paramount Settled Trump's Lawsuit Was "Misinformation"

Carr Defended The Timing Of The Paramount And Skydance Merger Approval, Claiming The Process "Ran Normal Course." "Brendan Carr defended the timing of federal approval for the merger of Paramount Global and Skydance Media, with the Federal Communications Commission chair saying the process 'ran normal course' – while also celebrating the Trump Administration's influence on the national media landscape and suggesting that 'consequences' would be felt far into the future." [The Wrap, [8/3/25](#)]

Carr Claimed The Perception That The Merger Approval Came Quickly After Paramount Settled The President's Lawsuit Was "Misinformation." "Carr appeared Sunday on Fox News' 'Media Buzz' with host Howard Kurtz, who grilled the Trump appointee on how 'quickly' the merger was approved after Paramount settled the president's "60 Minutes" lawsuit for \$16 million – and CBS effectively canceled 'The Late Show With Stephen Colbert.' [...] Carr chalked that perception up to 'a lot of misinformation out there,' and pushed back on the notion that the timing was rushed. 'Our review here followed our very standard practice at the FCC,' Carr said. 'In fact, the timing was right in the wheelhouse of when we ordinarily approve these types of transactions or at least reach a final decision both at this administration and the last administration as well. So, we ran normal course. We had a full commission vote, and really excited about the outcome.'" [The Wrap, [8/3/25](#)]

Brendan Carr Wrote The Chapter On The FCC For Project 2025, The Right's Playbook For The Incoming Trump Administration

Brendan Carr Faced Controversy For His Role In Project 2025, Writing The FCC Chapter While Working As A Commissioner

Project 2025 Was An Extensive Outline Of Policy Proposals To Expand Presidential Power And Impose Conservative Policies In A Future Presidential Administration, Which Trump's Second Term Has Begun To Implement. "It is a 900-page policy 'wish list', a set of proposals that would expand presidential power and impose an ultra-conservative social vision. During his campaign, Donald Trump repeatedly disavowed Project 2025, after a backlash over some of its more radical ideas. But he has nominated several of its authors to fill key government positions, and many of his initial executive orders closely follow proposals outlined in the document." [BBC, [2/13/25](#)]

Brendan Carr Wrote The FCC Chapter Of Project 2025, In Which He Called For The Promotion Of Free Speech, An End To A Legal Shield Protecting Social Media Companies' Content Moderation, And For Tech Subsidies To Broadband Internet Access In Rural Areas. “In 2022, a right-leaning think tank asked Mr. Carr to write the chapter on the F.C.C. for Project 2025, a conservative policy blueprint for reshaping the federal government. In the chapter, Mr. Carr called for the promotion of free speech, as well as the end of a legal shield that protects social media companies for their decisions on content moderation, known as Section 230. He also argued that tech companies should contribute to a federal subsidy for broadband internet in rural areas.” [New York Times, [9/24/25](#)]

Summer 2024: More Than A Dozen Democratic Lawmakers Sent A Letter To Federal Watchdogs Calling For An Investigation Into Carr For Possible Ethics Violations Over His Role In Project 2025. “Over the summer, more than a dozen Democratic lawmakers sent a letter to federal watchdogs calling for an investigation into Carr for possible ethics violations. They said Carr may have misused his official position ‘to craft and advance a political playbook to influence the presidential election in favor of Donald Trump.’” [Bloomberg, [2/28/25](#)]

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