



THE REPUBLICAN CULTURE OF CORRUPTION



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DEMOCRACY REFORM TASK FORCE

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OVERVIEW

President Donald J. Trump campaigned on a promise to “drain the swamp” in Washington. He vowed that as President he would take steps to break the “cycle of corruption” and end “decades of special interest dealing,”¹ and he pledged to aggressively pursue meaningful reforms to improve transparency and accountability in government.²

But President Trump has broken this promise to the American people.

Specifically, the Trump Administration has:

- [Made a Mockery of Ethics Law and Regulation](#)
- [Promoted a Culture of Secrecy in the Executive Branch](#)
- [Stacked His Cabinet with Big Money Campaign Donors](#)
- [Installed a Special-Interest Revolving Door into the Trump White House](#)
- [Put Big Money Ahead of the Public Interest](#)
- [Turned the Presidency into a Profit-Making Enterprise](#)
- [Pursued Public Policy for Trump’s Personal Benefit](#)
- [Raided the Treasury to Pay for Vacation & Private Business Promotion](#)

As President Trump marks his 600th day in office, this report – the sixth edition in the Democracy Reform Task Force’s series of “100 Ways” oversight reports – lists 600 ways that the Trump Administration has broken its campaign promises.

Here are all of the examples.

¹ Donald J. Trump Campaign. “[Trump Pledged to Drain the Swamp and Impose Congressional Term Limits.](#)” October 18, 2016.

² *Ibid*

Made a Mockery of Ethics Law and Regulation

President Trump's "Ethics" Executive Order was supposed to "drain the swamp." As this exhaustive list shows, the Executive Order was just another example of President Trump's tendency to overpromise and underdeliver. We have continued to witness the Administration openly flouting ethics regulations and conflict-of-interest law to an unprecedented degree.

Examples include:

1. [The 'Revolving Door' is Leading into the Trump White House](#): President Trump – despite public promises to “drain the swamp” – has hired a staff of former lobbyists and corporate representatives. The available financial disclosures of senior Trump political employees – of whom only half have filed – shows the White House staff includes more than 300 recent corporate clients.
2. [Trump's Ethics Pledge Eviscerated Lobbyist Limits](#): President Trump has eliminated entirely an ethics provision enacted by the Obama Administration that prohibited lobbyists from working for federal agencies they lobbied in the prior two years.
3. [Trump's Ethics Pledge Contains Enormous Lobbying Loophole](#): Trump Ethics Executive Order includes an enormous exemption to its purported two-year post-White House lobbying ban, permitting former Trump White House employees to lobby the Trump Administration on government rulemakings, adjudications and licensing activities. This is in direct contradiction to the Ethics Executive Order's promise former Trump officials will be “banned” from lobbying for two years.
4. [Trump's Ethics Pledge Promotes Shadow Lobbying](#): Trump's Ethics Executive Order does nothing to address the massive shadow-lobbying industry that has sprung up in recent years to avoid lobbyist registration requirements; given the strict definition used by Trump Executive Order, White House officials would still be very much able to work as “strategic advisors” or “policy historians,” doing a complete end-around of the purported intent of the Executive Order.
5. [Trump White House is Filing Numerous Secret Ethics Waivers](#): For those White House staff hires who are not exempted from the already Swiss-cheese like Ethics Executive Order, the Trump Administration has utilized a bevy of secret waivers that make “it easier for former lobbyists in the government to get waivers that would let them take up matters that could benefit former clients.”
6. [Trump Canceled Ethics Training for White House Staff](#): The White House canceled an ethics training program for White House staff, bucking the precedent set by both the Obama and Bush White Houses.
7. [White House Advisor Kellyanne Conway Violates Federal Ethics Rules](#): Conway blatantly violated ethics law encouraging the American public to “go buy Ivanka's stuff.”

8. [Net Sales for Ivanka Merchandise Line Soar After Conway Endorsement](#): Buoyed by strong February sales, the Ivanka Trump Brand reported a 21% increase in sales. Company president Abigail Klem was clear about the connection, declaring that the surge in sales during February represented “some of the best performing weeks in the history of the brand.”
9. [Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin Violates Federal Ethics Rules](#): Mnuchin blatantly violated ethics law by encouraging the Americans to “send your kids to Lego Batman” (a movie which he produced).
10. [Former White House Employee, Robert Wasinger, Evades Ethics Pledge All Together](#): Senior Trump State Department Liaison never signed the Trump Ethics Pledge before leaving his job to become a corporate lobbyist.
11. [Trump Violates Pledge to Extricate Himself from the Trump Organization](#): Investigative reporting shows that President Trump has failed to carry-out his pledge to resign from his many businesses, remaining as the CEO for at least four entities of which he had previously claimed he left management.
12. [Trump Senior Adviser and Son-in-Law, Jared Kushner, Retains Business Ties with Alleged Criminal Enterprise, While Hiding It on Ethics Disclosures](#): The Kushner family business under Jared Kushner’s leadership entered in business dealings with the Steinmetz family, which is currently being investigated by U.S. federal prosecutors for bribery allegations. Kushner White House ethics disclosures show a continued business relationship with the Steinmetz family, though it seems attempts were made to cloak the business relationship.
13. [Trump Senior Adviser and Son-in-Law, Jared Kushner, Failed to Disclose on Ethics Filings Loan of \\$285 million from Deutsche Bank](#): In the run-up to Election Day, Jared Kushner’s real estate firm received a \$285 million loan from Deutsche Bank. In required ethics filings for his subsequent White House job, Mr. Kushner did not disclose the loan.
14. [Trump’s Reelection Campaign Suspected of Illegally Using Official Resources to Support His Candidacy](#): Questions surround President Trump’s atypical decision to launch his reelection bid the day he took the oath of office.
15. [After Intense Bipartisan Pressure, White House Finally Releases Partial Ethics Waivers for Senior Staff](#): The White House finally released 14 ethics waivers for senior officials in the West Wing, after initially refusing the Office of Government Ethics’ requested disclosure.
16. [White House Ethics Waivers Are Riddled with Errors and May Violate Law](#): The ethics waivers disclosed by the White House included numerous undated waivers and a blanket exemption for Chief Strategist Steve Bannon to communicate with his former employer, Breitbart News – both apparent violations of federal ethics law and regulation.
17. [White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon Allegedly Violated Federal Law by His Continued Professional Relationship with Republican Media Strategist](#): The Campaign Legal Center alleges Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, in an apparent breach of several federal laws, has illegally received uncompensated professional services from a Republican media strategist affiliated with Bannon’s former employer, Breitbart News.

18. [Senior White House Aide Broke Federal Law by Using Official White House Resources for Campaign Purposes](#): Social Media Director Dan Scavino violated the Hatch Act when he used his official Twitter account to call for the electoral defeat of a Republican Member of Congress.
19. [Health & Human Services Secretary Tom Price Allegedly Violated Federal Election Law by Using Campaign Funds to Support His Nomination](#): In a complaint filed by watchdog organizations, Tom Price is accused of illegally using his campaign funds to aid in his nomination process for Secretary of HHS.
20. [Neil Gorsuch Speech at Trump Hotel Raises Ethical Questions](#): President Trump's Supreme Court appointee rankled his colleagues and broke with longstanding ethical norms by giving a speech to a conservative organization at the President's hotel in Washington, D.C.
21. [Trump's Electoral Threat Against Sen. McCaskill Raises Legal Questions](#): President Trump took aim at Senator McCaskill during an official speech on tax reform, urging her electoral defeat, which raises questions of whether White House staff violated the Hatch Act in preparing for the speech.
22. [Ethics Group: Trump Is Wrong to Wear Campaign Hat on Trip to Texas](#): In an apparent breach of ethical norms, President Trump wore a campaign hat on an official trip to Texas following Hurricane Harvey. Simultaneously, the Trump Campaign promoted the sale of said hat to campaign supporters.
23. [Trump Bucks Ethics Norm with Book Recommendation](#): In an apparent breach of ethical norms, President Trump promoted the purchase of a book using his official twitter account.
24. [Trump Using Campaign, RNC Funds to Pay Legal Bills from Russia Probe](#): After launching his reelection bid *on his inauguration day*, President Trump is now using his 2020 reelection funds to finance his legal defense in the Russia investigation, straining past precedent of when and how such funds are used.
25. [Billionaire Robert Mercer Is Helping Pay Donald Trump's Legal Bills](#): Billionaire benefactor and major Republican backer, Robert Mercer, donated \$200,000 to Republican legal defense fund on the same day President Trump fired FBI Director James Comey. Mercer has ties to Cambridge Analytica, which is being investigated as part of the Russia probe, leading some to question the motivation and timing of the donation.
26. [Investigations Opened Into Zinke's Meeting with Golden Knights Hockey Team](#): Interior Secretary Zinke is under government investigation for potential violation of the Hatch Act, after using official resources to attend campaign-related event.
27. [Hedge Fund Billionaire Flew Top Mnuchin Aide on Private Jet](#): A senior aide to Secretary Mnuchin flew on a private plane with hedge fund manager Nelson Peltz, raising ethical concerns.
28. [Jared Kushner Fined Again for Late Ethics Form, Ivanka Trump Fined Too](#): In another rebuke of ethics law and norms, White House Senior Advisers Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump failed to file the required ethics documents, resulting in a modest fine.

29. [Watchdog Agency Urges Senior Officials to Focus on Ethical Behavior](#): After months of flagrant violations of ethics law and norms by the Trump Administration, the Office of Government Ethics issued a simple request to agency heads asking that they work to improve the culture of ethical compliance.
30. [Has Trump Drained the Swamp in Washington?](#): A status check on the Trump Administration's self-imposed "Ethics Pledge" and broad commitment to "drain the swamp" showed that the Administration has largely failed to follow through on Trump's campaign promises.
31. [Republican Lawmakers' Posh Hideaway Bankrolled by Secret Corporate Cash](#): New reporting on the 2016 Republican Convention showed that candidate Trump's rhetoric on corporate special interests did not match his actions during his party's convention, where numerous corporations financed lavish accommodations for Republican officials and relied on a shady LLC front organization to hide the true source of the funds.
32. [Republican Lawmakers' Posh Hideaway Bankrolled by Secret Corporate Cash](#): New reporting on the 2016 Republican Convention showed that candidate Trump's rhetoric on corporate special interests did not match his actions during his party's convention, where numerous corporations financed lavish accommodations for Republican officials and relied on a shady LLC front organization to hide the true source of the funds.
33. [Trump Is Going Through an 'Extremely Unusual' Process of Picking U.S. Attorneys — and it Has Ethics Experts Bewildered](#): In a break from past precedent and ethical norms, President Trump personally interviewed individuals for open US attorney positions. These individuals, if given the job, may be in the position of investigating – or *not* investigating – the Trump Organization or Administration.
34. [Trump Flies to Texas for His Re-Election Fundraiser and Writes It Off As Taxpayer Expense](#): President Trump flew on Air Force One to attend a fundraiser in Texas for his reelection bid, and briefly attended an official briefing on hurricane relief efforts to justify the use of taxpayer-funded travel.
35. [Zinke Funneled Millions to Questionable PACs](#): Interior Secretary Zinke directed millions of dollars in campaign contributions to a network of questionable political organizations that have been accused of misleading donors with regards to how their contributions would be used.
36. [Lara Trump Taking on White House Duties in Troubling and Unprecedented Move, Officials Say](#): Lara Trump –a senior aide to President Trump's reelection campaign –reportedly held meetings at the White House on variety of domestic issues, a potential violation of the strict campaign-official division.
37. [Pro-Trump Group Courts Donors with Cabinet Access](#): An outside campaign organization that supports President Trump solicited donations from big donors with the promise of access to senior Trump cabinet officials.
38. [Make Nepotism Great Again: 20 Families Got Jobs in Trump Administration](#): A review of public records shows that at least 20 families related to the Trump family and/or senior cabinet officials – by either blood or marriage – have extended family members who have received jobs in the Trump Administration.

39. [European Parliament Report Accuses Wilbur Ross of Insider Trading](#): Evidence has emerged that Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross may have engaged in insider trading, says a new report from the European Parliament.
40. [Kushner's Financial Ties to Israel Deepen Even with Mideast Diplomacy Role](#): White House Senior Advisor Jared Kushner has seen a recent influx of Israeli investment in his family's real-estate business, while he is serving as the point person in Middle East peace relations.
41. [Lawsuit: Trump Super PAC Took Illegal Donation from Private Prison](#): The Campaign Legal Center is suing a private prison company – and major backer of Trump – for violating a ban on campaign contributions from federal contractors.
42. [Trump Towers Buyers in India Offered Chance to Meet Donald Trump Jr., Raising Ethics Concerns](#): Buyers for new Trump condos in India are being offered a chance to meet with Donald Trump Jr., leading some ethics watchdogs to argue that the Trump Organization is selling access to the Trump White House via the President's son.
43. [Title of Don Jr.'s Remarks in India Changes Amid Backlash Over Conflicts](#): After being roundly criticized for the way in which the Trump Organization was billing Donald Jr.'s "foreign policy speech" in India – as part of their sales roadshow for new Indian condos – the organizers modified the description of the speech to scrub any suggestion the President's son was somehow speaking for the Trump Administration.
44. [U.S. Warned Jared Kushner About Wendi Deng Murdoch](#): Friend and business colleague of Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, Wendi Deng Murdoch, is thought to be an agent of China, according to US intelligence. This raises further questions about Kushner's failure to separate himself from his business assets before taking a position in the White House.
45. [Trump's Inaugural Committee Paid \\$26 Million to Firm of First Lady's Adviser](#): Recently-disclosed tax information shows the Trump Inaugural Committee paid Melania Trump's adviser's personal firm over \$26 million, raising questions of sweetheart deals and financial improprieties.
46. [Interior Secretary Zinke Held Onto Undisclosed Shares in Gun Company](#): Interior Secretary Zinke failed to disclose a financial stake in a gun manufacturer during his confirmation process. The firm is said to have benefited directly from decisions impacting the hunting industry made by the Interior Secretary.
47. [Top Dem Presses Trump Health Official on Potential Ethics Violation](#): Senator Ron Wyden has alleged that Seema Verma of CMS violated her ethics agreement when she reviewed waiver applications for three states her former consulting firm counts as clients.
48. [Zinke's Agency Held Up Indians' Casino After MGM Lobbying](#): Indian tribes in Connecticut are alleging the Trump Interior Department illegally delayed their plans to build new casino operations in the state. The tribes allege Secretary Zinke was pressured to do so by the MGM Casino company.

49. [HUD Lawyers Warned Ben Carson Risked Running Afoul of Ethics Rules](#): Ethics officials told HUD Secretary Ben Carson that his son's involvement in the business of the agency could possibly implicate federal ethics law. Ignoring the warning, the Secretary relied on his son – a businessman – to organize a listening tour of Baltimore area businesses.
50. [Trump Org. Revives Project in Dominican Republic, Roiling Local Politics](#): Despite a pledge from the President that his businesses would press pause on any new foreign deals while he is in office, the Trump Organization is proceeding with new plans for developments in the Dominican Republic.
51. [Husband of Former Trump Household Aide Scores Government Job](#): The husband of a Trump family household staffer, Dagmara Kopec, has secured a job at the New York regional EPA office, continuing the Trump Administration's practice of hiring individuals closely linked to the Trump business or family.
52. [Over 40% of Trump's Cabinet Picks Faced Ethical or Other Controversies](#): A review of the Trump Administration appointees found that 9 out of 22 Cabinet-level posts have faced ethical scrutiny or scandal since their respective appointments.
53. [Trump's Biggest Potential Conflict of Interest is Hiding in Plain Sight](#): A Chinese bank – largely considered an apparatus of the Chinese government – is a tenant in the Trump Tower in New York City, paying the Trump Organization an estimated \$2 million a year in rent, leading critics to question the potential conflict of interest.
54. [Trump's Tenants Pose Hundreds of Possible Conflicts of Interest](#): New reporting has identified over 150 tenants to the Trump Organization, representing over \$75 million in annual income and raising the potential of numerous conflicts of interest for the Trump Administration.
55. [Top Official Departs 'Rudderless' Railroad Safety Agency](#): Head of the Federal Railroad Administration resigned amid questions concerning his continued employment at a private company in Mississippi.
56. [Trump Appointee 'Conflict' Throws Key Labor Ruling Into Doubt](#): The Inspector General of the National Labor Relations Board says William Emanuel – a Trump Appointee – should have recused himself from the so-called "joint-employer" decision, citing conflict of interest law and his prior work for a company challenging the initial ruling of the Board.
57. [Trump's Former Bodyguard Makes \\$15,000 a Month from a GOP 'Slush Fund'](#): Keith Schiller – Trump's former bodyguard – is reportedly receiving \$15,000 a month from the Republican National Committee for "security services." The funds are being paid from the 2020 Republican National Convention fund, leading campaign finance watchdogs to cry foul.
58. [Trump Campaign Website Offers to Flash Donors' Names During Speech](#): Blurring the line between official business of the White House and campaign activity, the Trump reelection campaign offered to display names of donors during the State of the Union Address, causing some to question the legality of the action.

59. [Trump's Legal Team: No #MAGA at the White House](#): After a series of ethical violations from White House staff, the Office of Special Counsel was forced to issue a new set of guidelines to remind White House staff of their ethical obligations, including abidance to the Hatch Act – which restricts official government employees from using official resources for campaign purposes.
60. [Ethics Office Finds Kellyanne Conway Broke Law in Alabama Race](#): The Office of Special Counsel confirmed the obvious in a recent report, finding that White House adviser Kellyanne Conway broke the law when she used official resources to get involved in the Alabama special election. Given that disciplinary discretion falls to President Trump, no action has been taken by the White House, which maintains Conway's actions were not illegal.
61. [Zinke Names Several Officials 'Acting Directors,' Avoiding Senate and Ethics Scrutiny](#): In an apparent violation of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act, U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Zinke named several officials "Acting Directors," thereby evading the Senate's advice and consent power and ethics scrutiny.
62. [Jeff Sessions Has a Huge Conflict of Interest in a Federal Bribery Case—and It Keeps Getting Worse](#): Recent reporting has indicated that AG Sessions was intimately involved in delaying federal environmental clean-up of a North Birmingham neighborhood. The incident is central to a federal bribery case, which already led to the guilty pleas of former elected officials. AG Sessions has not recused himself from the matter.
63. [Secret Contributions to Trump's Inauguration Become a Bonanza for Event Planners](#): Investigate reporting has shown the secret ways in which the Trump Inauguration funneled funds from dark money organizations into the inaugural coffers and then back out to shady businesses, with little proof that said businesses offered services of comparable value.
64. [White House Aides Blur the Legal Lines Between Partisans and Public Servants](#): Eight White House officials – including Dan Scavino Jr., Kellyanne Conway and Jared Kushner – have received formal complaints, alleging that they violated the Hatch Act, a law that prevents government officials from using their positions to engage in political activity.
65. [Emails Show Ben, Candy Carson Selected \\$31,000 Dining Set](#): U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson and his wife used \$31,000 in taxpayer dollars to purchase an ornate dining room set for Carson's HUD office.
66. [Longtime Trump Aide Fired Over Financial Crime Investigation](#): White House aide John McEntee was fired by the White House after it was revealed he was under investigation for serious financial crimes. Minutes later, it was announced he would receive a new position working as part of the Trump campaign.
67. [The Trump Campaign and An Outside Group Are Becoming "Soft Landings" For Controversial Loyalists](#): Following his dismissal from the Trump Administration due to sexist and racists remarks, Carl Higbie was hired by the Trump-linked America First Policies political group.
68. [Scott Pruitt, Trump's Rule-Cutting EPA Chief, Plots Political Future](#): Leveraging his position as U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, Scott Pruitt has used taxpayer-funds to return home frequently to Oklahoma, as well as to Iowa, raising questions about whether he is improperly using his public office for future political ambitions.

69. [U.S. Companies Are Pressuring Their Workers on How to Lobby and Vote](#): Reports suggest that Vice President Pence encouraged some of the nation's CEOs to approach their employees and encourage them to lobby for the recent "tax reform" legislation, raising concerns of compelled political speech.
70. [Office that Vets Trump Appointees Plagued by Inexperience](#): The White House office in charge of vetting Administration political appointees – including ethics matters – has been consumed by staff shortages and inexperience, highlighting the low priority the Administration places on ethics compliance.
71. [EPA Chief's \\$50-a-Night Rental Raises White House Angst](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Pruitt was revealed to have been living in a lobbyist-owned condo at a reduced rental rate, raising serious questions of whether the Administrator violated federal gift laws.
72. [Pruitt Bypassed the White House to Give Big Raises to Favorite Aides](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Pruitt used a little-known provision of the Safe Drinking Water Act to grant significant raises to senior aides, raising questions of impropriety and the ire of the White House.
73. [House Dems Seek Information About Trump Aides' Legal-Defense Fund](#): Significant ethical questions surround a new Trump legal-defense fund established for White House aides with legal exposure. The fund is currently able to accept secret donations, raising concerns it may become yet another avenue for special interest influence over the Trump Administration.
74. [Trump's Reelection Committee Spends \\$1 Out of \\$5 on Legal Fees](#): President Trump's reelection campaign has spent \$1.1 million in legal fees – more than \$1 out of every \$5 raised for the campaign – in connection with the special counsel's investigation, raising questions about whether campaign donors appreciate how their support is being utilized.
75. [A Lobbyist Planned Pruitt's Morocco Trip. Morocco Hired the Lobbyist.](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Pruitt's recent trip to Morocco was planned to a surprising degree by a lobbyist working on behalf of the Moroccan government, raising questions of impropriety.
76. [Chao's Interviews with Father Raise Ethical Flags](#): U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has participated in joint interviews with her father James Chao, owner and founder of a Chinese shipping company. In the interviews, the Department of Transportation's logo was displayed – a potential violation of U.S. law, which bars public officials from using their office for private gain.
77. [Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump Made at Least \\$82 Million in Outside Income Last Year While Serving in the White House, Filings Show](#): Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, family members and official advisors of President Trump's, made at least \$82 million from business and real estate holdings while serving in official government positions in 2017. The receipts include a \$2 million severance payment from the Trump Organization that Trump received upon leaving the company to work in the White House, as well as income from Kushner's real estate company and Trump's now-defunct clothing company, both of which conduct significant business in countries seeking to influence official U.S. policy.

78. [EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Tapped Aide, Donors to Help Wife Land Job at Conservative Group](#): EPA Administrator tasked an associate director of the EPA's office of policy – a government employee paid by taxpayers – with finding a job for his wife. Marlyn Pruitt was eventually employed by Judicial Crisis Network, a conservative dark-money group with deep ties to the Trump Administration.
79. [Pruitt Frequently Asked Aides to Help in Personal Matters for Family: Report](#): EPA Administrator Pruitt had government employees arrange hotels for his family and pay out of pocket, help his daughter land a highly-competitive internship at the White House and spend work hours searching D.C. for a house for Pruitt.
80. [Commerce Secretary Shorted Stock as Negative Coverage Loomed](#): After learning that journalists were preparing to report on his dealings with Navigator Holdings, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross shorted his stock in the company, profiting before the share price fell. Ross has reportedly shorted additional stocks while serving as Commerce Secretary, which, if not illegal, at least underscores why filling a cabinet with billionaire investors is so problematic.
81. [Lawsuit Accuses Private Prison Company of Illegally Funding a Trump Super-PAC](#): After the Obama Administration announced it would no longer contract with private prisons, GEO Corrections Holdings, the largest private prison company in the country, donated \$225,000 to a super-PAC supporting the Trump campaign. The Trump Administration then reversed course on private prisons and awarded GEO a \$110 million contract. The donations to the Trump super-PAC may have violated prohibitions on contractors making political donations.
82. [Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's MAGA Socks Might Have Violated Federal Law](#): Interior Secretary Zinke posted a photo to Twitter of him wearing "Make America Great Again" socks, earning a rebuke from watchdogs and eventually replacing the picture with another in which the socks were blurred out. The Office of Special Counsel issued guidelines making clear that government officials wearing apparel with President Trump's campaign slogan on it would likely violate the Hatch Act, which separates political and government actions.
83. [Trump's IRS Nominee Didn't Disclose Properties Were at Trump-Branded Hotel](#): Chuck Rettig, President Trump's nominee for IRS Commissioner, did not disclose that the rental properties he owns are part of a Trump-branded hotel in Hawaii, from which the President earns income. As commissioner, Rettig has authority over the audits of President Trump's businesses' taxes – which the President claims prevent him from releasing his tax returns – while also having a financial stake in the Trump brand.
84. [These Trump Staffers — Including an Ex-NRA Lobbyist — Left Their Financial Disclosure Forms Blank](#): Numerous employees at the Interior Department submitted incomplete or blank financial disclosure forms, which are used by ethics officials to ensure guidelines around conflicts of interest are respected.
85. [First Lady's Spokeswoman May Have Misused Official Position in Tweet about Trump's 2016 Campaign, Complaint Alleges](#): The communications director for First Lady Melania Trump may have violated the Hatch Act by using her official Twitter account to post the President's "MAGA" campaign slogan and share an image from a campaign rally, once again demonstrating the Administration's disdain for the separation between official and political activities.

86. [Wilbur Ross Says He Will Sell Stock After Watchdog Warns of Potential for Criminal Violation](#): Commerce Secretary Ross was chastised by the Office of Government Ethics for failing to sell certain assets as required by his ethics agreement. OGE also cited him for omitting and submitting inaccurate information in documents.
87. [Trump Leaves His Mark on a Presidential Keepsake](#): President Trump has issued challenge coins – collectibles usually awarded to service members and law enforcement officers – bearing his campaign slogan and depicting his private Mar-a-Lago club, once more blurring the lines between the presidency and this president’s businesses and campaign.
88. [Trump Uses Taxpayer-Funded Trip to Campaign for GOP Candidates](#): At an official, taxpayer-funded event in Illinois, President Trump urged attendees to vote for Republicans in the mid-term elections. While the Hatch Act does not apply to presidents, President Trump has used his official position for political purposes more brazenly than did his predecessors.
89. [White House Uses Foreign Aid Agency to Give Jobs to Trump Loyalists](#): The White House has been replacing career technical staff at the Millennium Challenge Corporation, a foreign aid office, with Trump campaign workers, loyalists and other political appointees, raising concerns that the patronage will undermine the MCC’s mission.
90. [Trump Legal Fund Remains Mum on Donors, Payments](#): The Patriot Legal Expense Fund Trust, an entity created to defray the costs of legal defense for Trump allies questioned as part of the investigation into Russia’s election interference, missed two straight quarterly reporting deadlines, leaving the IRS in the dark as to the group’s donors and spending.
91. [Some Big Names in Republican Fundraising Are Financing Trump’s Legal Defense Fund](#): Wealthy individuals from the real estate and fossil fuel industries, among others, have provided President Trump’s legal defense fund for officials caught up in the Russia investigation with \$200,000 in donations – and the fund hasn’t spent any of that sum on legal services. While the Office of Government Ethics permitted the fund under certain conditions, ethics experts warn it could serve as another way for the well-connected to influence the President.
92. [Treasury Retweets Trump, Possibly Violating Campaign Law](#): The Treasury Department retweeted President Trump’s congratulatory message to Republican congressional election winners before deleting it, a potential violation of the Hatch Act.
93. [Trump’s FEMA Chief Under Investigation Over Use of Official Cars](#): FEMA Administrator Long is under an IG investigation for his use of official government cars, resources and personnel on weekend trips to his home in North Carolina. Long’s use of the cars was noticed by the IG after one was involved in an accident.
94. [Trump’s Pitches for GOP Candidates at Official Events Draw a Hatch Act Complaint](#): Despite efforts by staff to scrub any partisanship from President Trump’s speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Missouri, Trump adlibbed a plea for voters to support the Republican candidate for Senate in Missouri, pulling him on stage to speak to the assembled veterans.
95. [White House: It’s in ‘Public Interest’ for Staff to Skirt Ethics Rules to Meet with Fox News](#): Bill Shine, Roger Ailes’ longtime lieutenant at Fox News, was granted an ethics waiver to allow him to meet and work with Fox employees while serving as White House Communications Director.

96. [Rep. Chris Collins, Trump's first congressional endorser, arrested by FBI](#): Rep. Chris Collins was indicted by the FBI for insider trading, after he passed on secret information about a company in which he and his family were heavily invested. Collins, the first member of Congress to endorse President Trump, made the incriminating phone calls from the White House lawn during a picnic.
97. [The First 2 Congressmen to Endorse Trump Have Been Indicted](#): Rep. Duncan Hunter, the second member of Congress to endorse President Trump, was indicted along with his wife for widespread campaign finance violations, including spending campaign funds on personal vacations and filing fraudulent reports.
98. [Rep. Ron DeSantis' Resignation Ends Ethics Complaint That Raised Questions about Donors' Ties](#): Former Rep. Ron DeSantis' sudden resignation from Congress ended an ethics inquiry that could have become a full investigation. DeSantis – one of President Trump's most ardent supporters in Congress and the author of legislation to shut down the Russia investigation – potentially received an improper gift from defense contractors in the form of below-market rent at his Florida condo.
99. [Trump Blasts Sessions Over Indictments of Two of His Earliest Congressional Supporters](#): President Trump publicly attacked Attorney General Sessions over the indictments of his first two Congressional endorsers, Reps. Chris Collins and Duncan Hunter. The President faulted the country's top law enforcement officer for indicting two Republicans just months before elections, putting the seats at risk for his party.

Promoted a Culture of Secrecy in the Executive Branch

Prior to his election, Donald Trump often criticized the Obama White House for its supposed lack of transparency – going so far as to label President Obama the “least transparent President ever.”³ But it's President Trump who has cemented a culture of secrecy in the Executive Branch and in the White House.

Examples include:

100. [President Trump Is the First President in Modern History to Refuse to Release His Tax Returns](#): Candidate Trump promised on multiple occasions during his campaign bid that he would eventually release his tax returns. Following his inauguration, President Trump and his Administration changed their message, declaring the President would not release his tax returns.
101. [Trump Limits Press Access](#): The Trump Administration has repeatedly broken with long standing protocol regarding press access to White House officials and press briefings.

³ Chris Cillizza. CNN. [“Donald Trump Isn't Big on the Whole Transparency Thing.”](#) April 17, 2017.

102. [Trump Changes Policy to Keep Secret Who Visits the White House](#): The Trump Administration has reversed the policy of the Obama Administration to publicly disclose the visitor logs of the White House and other properties where the President conducts official business, casting a dark shadow on who is meeting with the White House in an effort to try and influence federal policy.
103. [Trump Restricts Communications to Congress](#): Internal Congressional audits and statements from one agency indicate that the Trump Administration's new policy is to only respond to requests from Committee Chairs. Agencies are prohibited by law from restricting employee communications with Congress.
104. [President Trump Threatens to Cancel Press Briefings, While Greatly Reducing Press Access](#): In the wake of firing FBI Director James Comey, President Trump threatened to end daily White House press briefings, citing the inability of his staff to provide "perfectly accurate" information.
105. [After Initial Refusal, Trump Administration Forced to Disclose Mar-a-Lago Visitor Logs](#): Following a lawsuit from the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), the Trump Administration is being compelled to disclose Mar-a-Lago visitor logs.
106. [Trump Administration Orders Federal Agencies to Ignore Basic Oversight Requests from Congressional Democrats](#): Uttam Dhillon, a White House attorney, reportedly told federal agencies to not respond to Congressional inquiries from Democrats, breaking with longstanding practices of past Administrations – Democratic and Republican alike.
107. [Trump's Department of Justice Issues Guidance Saying that Federal Agencies Need Not Respond to Most Congressional Inquiries](#): The Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel issued guidance that said federal agencies do not need to respond to Congressional inquiries unless they are from a Committee's Chairman.
108. [Trump White House Is Still Holding Back Visitor Information, Watchdog Group Says](#): The Trump Administration refused to disclose information about visitors to the White House complex, violating its own self-imposed disclosure standards outlined earlier this year.
109. [The General Services Administration Removed Trump Hotel Data from Its Website](#): Previously publically-available documents detailing the financial information of the Trump International Hotel in Washington, DC were removed from the GSA website.
110. [Scott Pruitt Is Carrying Out His E.P.A. Agenda in Secret, Critics Say](#): EPA Administrator Pruitt has established an unprecedented level of secrecy at the agency by installing round the clock security, shutting down responses to routine oversight requests from Congress and shuttering transparency protocols designed to promote public awareness of the EPA's work.
111. [Trump Voting Panel Apologizes After Failure to Disclose Information](#): A federal judge forced the farcical Trump voting commission to apologize for its failure to disclose documents and commission reports to the public.
112. [Trump Administration Withholds Almost All Mar-a-Lago Visitor Logs](#): In a potential breach of the Freedom of Information Act, the Trump Administration withheld visitor logs at Trump-owned properties where the Administration regularly conducts official business.

113. [Still No Charity Money from Leftover Trump Inaugural Funds](#): After promising to donate reserve funds from his inauguration fund to charity, neither the Trump campaign nor the Trump Administration disclosed or demonstrated if the donations were made.
114. [Ivanka Trump's Business Ties Shrouded in Secrecy in China](#): Ivanka Trump's business slowed the release of its financial and business information, leading to some question what business deals it might be pursuing while its namesake is serving as a Senior Aide to the President.
115. [The Mystery of Wilbur Ross' Missing Billions](#): Secretary of Commerce Wilber Ross may have violated federal ethics law in failing to disclose certain assets as part of the recusal and divestiture process conducted with the Office of Government Ethics. Newly disclosed assets also raised the specter of conflicts of interest with Russian business interests with ties to the Kremlin.
116. [Pruitt Bars Some Scientists from Advising EPA](#): In an unprecedented turn, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt blocked certain scientists from serving on advisory panels on scientific decisions, further shrouding the agency's decision from expert review.
117. [House Democrats Sue Trump Administration Over D.C. Hotel Records](#): After routine attempts to secure documentation relating to the Government Services Administration's contract with the Trump Organization were stymied, Congressional Democrats filed suit to compel the generation of said documents.
118. [Trump Judicial Nominee Failed to Disclose Potential Conflict: He's Married to White House Lawyer](#): President Trump's pick for a federal judgeship in Alabama, Brett Talley, failed to disclose that he is married to the Chief of Staff of the White House Counsel.
119. [E.P.A. Contractor Has Scoured the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials](#): In a move ripped from the pages of Orwell, Scott Pruitt's EPA hired a contractor to review EPA career officials for potential "anti-Trump" bias.
120. [After A Year In Office, Questions About Trump's Foreign Deals Go On. And On](#): Despite pledges from President Trump to offer full transparency of the Trump Organization's business with foreign governments, the Trump Organization has largely failed to comply with their self-imposed limitations on new deals and transmissions of foreign profits.
121. [No One Will Say Where Trump's \\$107 Million in Inauguration Money Went](#): Trump's Inaugural Committee has failed to disclose where the excess funds from the Committee have gone.
122. [Watchdog: Payment to Porn Star Was Illegal Donation to Trump Campaign](#): An apparent payment of 'hush-money' by Trump's personal attorney to a woman who had a relationship with Donald Trump may be a violation of campaign finance law, says ethics watchdog.
123. [Trump Allies Profit from Outside Groups, Testing Campaign Finance Laws](#): A cadre of Trump advisers are earning millions running Trump-aligned political organizations. While campaign finance law is clear that these organizations must remain independent of Trump and his reelection campaign committee, many wonder if the rules are being followed.

124. [Jared Kushner Is China's Trump Card](#): White House Adviser, Jared Kushner, has rankled career officials in the U.S. diplomatic service by regularly meeting with the top Chinese diplomat in 'confidential' settings, without the presence U.S. officials.
125. [Trump Admin. Agrees to Post Visitor Logs for Some White House Offices](#): The White House has refused to fully release visitor logs for the White House offices. Recently, the White House was compelled by a court settlement to release partial logs.
126. [Dozens of Trump Officials Still Lack Full Security Clearance](#): The Trump Administration has come under scrutiny for the number of White House staffers without permanent security clearances.
127. [Trump Hotel Paid Millions in Fines for Unpaid Work](#): In an apparent effort to resolve business disputes before taking the White House, the Trump Organization quietly settled outstanding liens on the Trump Old Post Office Hotel. Reporting suggests that the Trump Organization gave more favorable terms to those contractors who publicly stated they supported Trump, raising ethical concerns.
128. [Legal Defense Fund for Trump Aides Launches Amid Questions About Donor Transparency](#): A recently established legal defense fund for Trump aides – the Patriot Legal Expense Fund – is refusing answer questions about how it plans to vet and disclose its funders, raising concerns that the Fund could act as yet another channel of influence for wealthy and well-connected interests seeking to gain access to and exert influence over the Trump Administration.
129. [Hope Hicks's Evasiveness Highlights How Far Trump Is Pushing the Envelope on Executive Privilege](#): Following in the footsteps of her boss and fellow colleagues, Hope Hicks refused to answer even basic Congressional inquiries into her interactions with President Trump, including her role in drafting President Trump's statement denying his son's meeting with Russian foreign agents who offered information to advantage the Trump campaign.
130. [Anti-Secrecy Lawsuits Soaring Against Pruitt's EPA](#): In the face of historic U.S. Environmental Protection Agency secrecy, outside organizations and watchdog groups have filed a record number of open records lawsuits to compel disclosure of public information.
131. [White House Disregarded Republican Investigators' Requests. The GOP Has Been Reluctant to Fight Back.](#): The White House refused to comply with three Republican-led Congressional investigations, rejecting document requests and other Congressional inquiries.
132. [New Evidence the Daniels Payment May Have Violated Election Law](#): New evidence suggests that the \$130,000 alleged hush-payment to porn star Stormy Daniels in the waning days of the 2016 election was an illegal campaign contribution to candidate Trump.
133. [Trump Had Senior Staff Sign Nondisclosure Agreements](#): In an affront to the First Amendment and the public's right to know, reports indicate that President Trump forced his senior White House staff to sign nondisclosure agreements, seeking to shield the Administration's business from the public's view.
134. [Mulvaney Does Not Want You to See Complaints Against Banks](#): Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Mulvaney has taken steps to end the public's access to the CFPB consumer complaint database, shuttering a valuable tool for consumers.

135. [EPA Hired a Major Republican Opposition Research Firm to Track Press](#): As if it were ripped from the pages of Orwell, it was recently reported that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency hired an opposition research firm to track journalists who were covering the agency's work.
136. [Dem: Pruitt's EPA Has Stalled Production of Public Records](#): Former aides to EPA Administrator Pruitt told members of Congress that they were instructed to slow-roll document production for FOIA requests and instead focus on responding to leftover requests from the Obama Administration.
137. [New Pruitt Question: Where Are His Emails?](#): According to documents released pursuant to a FOIA request, EPA Administrator Pruitt only sent one email from his government email address during his first ten months in office, leading watchdogs to believe that Pruitt was conducting government business on his private email address and not sharing the records with the EPA, as required by law.
138. [Whistleblower: EPA's Pruitt Kept Secret Calendar to Hide Meetings](#): EPA Administrator Pruitt maintained secret calendars in order to keep controversial meetings off his official calendar. Pruitt regularly met with donors and industry representatives and had staff remove those meetings from his calendar.
139. [U.S. Treasury Restricts Donor Disclosure Requirement for Some Nonprofit Groups](#): In a major gift to the types of dark money groups working to advance President Trump's agenda and campaign, the Treasury Department announced that certain nonprofit groups will no longer have to provide lists of top donors to the IRS. While these donor lists were kept private by the IRS, they helped the agency flag and investigate inappropriate operations.
140. [New EPA Chief Andrew Wheeler Faces First Call For Ethics Probe After Less Than A Month](#): As deputy EPA administrator, Andrew Wheeler repeatedly met with former clients for whom he lobbied, in contravention of the Trump Administration's porous ethics pledge. Wheeler's defense was that he pledged not to meet with only a certain group of former clients; however, Wheeler attended an event with one of those prohibited clients as well.
141. [Trump Officials Prepared for Supreme Court Fight Over Census Question](#): Emails released as a result of a lawsuit against the Commerce Department reveal that officials warned each other that they had to be "very careful" in their communications about the inclusion of a citizenship question in the 2020 census, as the issue was likely to end up before the Supreme Court. The inclusion of the question would likely depress response rates in immigrant-heavy areas, stripping them of representation.
142. ['Everyone Signed One': Trump Is Aggressive in His Use of Nondisclosure Agreements, Even in Government](#): Former Trump Administration official Omarosa Manigault Newman revealed in her book that after she was fired from the White House, the Trump campaign offered her a job paying \$15,000 per month if she signed a nondisclosure agreement regarding her time in the White House.
143. ['We Owe These People': Trump Loyalists Find Soft Landings After Getting Ousted](#): Many of President Trump's former aides, a sizable number of whom have left the Administration in disgrace, have wound up working for the constellation of Trump-supporting outside and dark money organizations, raising fears that the President is buying the loyalty of former staffers with plum jobs.

144. [EPA Watchdog to Probe Scott Pruitt's Pet Superfund Project](#): The EPA IG has opened an investigation into former Administrator Pruitt's Super Fund Task Force, headed by an Oklahoma banker who had been banned from the banking industry. FOIA requests revealed the Task Force, considered by many observers to be a fig leaf to mask Pruitt's hostility to environmental protection, had not made records of any of its meetings.
145. [Latest Zinke Calendars Stripped of Most Details About his Meetings](#): In recent months, important information has stopped appearing on Interior Secretary Zinke's public schedules. Events are now referred to by generic titles like "external meeting," with no details about the subject or other participants.
146. [Feds Lose Seal on Records Leading Up to Census Change](#): A federal judge denied the Commerce Department's attempts to conceal documents related to its effort to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census.

Stacked His Cabinet with Big Money Campaign Donors

Candidate Trump regularly decried the influence of big campaign donors and well-connected insiders. He promised to dismantle the "rigged" political system that rewards campaign donors with plum cabinet posts. He even pledged to change the system of the "powerful protecting the powerful."⁴ However, during his term, President Trump has done the opposite, stacking his cabinet with many of his largest campaign donors while relying on numerous well-connected Washington insiders for top Administration positions.

Examples include:

147. [Trump 'Overwhelmed' by Patronage Requests from the Wealthy and Well-Connected](#): President Trump is reportedly "overwhelmed" by the number of requests from donors and friends to whom he promised various posts and ambassadorships.
148. [Trump Appoints Billionaire Wilbur Ross for Secretary of Commerce](#): Secretary Ross gave more than \$200,000 in personal donations to the Trump campaign and was an early supporter and bundler for the President's campaign. He has an estimated net worth of \$2.9 billion.
149. [Trump Appoints Billionaire Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education](#): Secretary DeVos and her family gave more than \$1.8 million in personal donations to the Trump campaign and the Republican Party. She has an estimated net worth of \$1.25 billion.
150. [Trump Appoints Millionaire Steve Mnuchin for Secretary of the Treasury](#): Secretary Mnuchin gave more than \$425,000 in personal donations to the Trump campaign and was the campaign's finance chair. He has an estimated net worth of \$500 million.

⁴ Tim Hains. Real Clear Politics. [Full Replay/Transcript: Donald Trump Gives First Campaign Speech Since Hiring Bannon & Conway](#). August 18, 2016.

151. [Trump Appoints Billionaire Linda McMahon for Small Business Administrator](#): Administrator McMahon gave more than \$7.5 million to affiliated Trump Super PACs, the Republican Party and the Trump campaign. She and her husband have an estimated net worth of \$1.16 billion.
152. [Trump Appoints Millionaire Rex Tillerson for Secretary of the State Department](#): Secretary of State Tillerson has an estimated net worth of \$325 million – a fortune built working for Exxon Mobil.
153. [Trump Appoints Millionaire Jay Clayton for Chair of the Securities & Exchange Commission](#): Nominee Jay Clayton has an estimated net worth of \$50 million – a fortune built working for the same companies he now stands to oversee in his post at the SEC.
154. [Trump Nominee for Secretary of Labor, Millionaire Andy Puzder, Removes Himself After Trouble Complying with Ethics Requirements](#): Andy Puzder – President Trump’s failed pick for the Secretary of Labor – gave more than \$332,000 to the Trump campaign and the Republican Party. He has estimated net worth of \$45 million.
155. [Trump Nominee for Secretary of the Army, Billionaire Vincent Viola, Removes Himself for Consideration Citing Reluctance to Abide Ethics Requirements](#): Vincent Viola – President Trump’s failed pick for the Secretary of the Army – has an estimated net worth of \$1.8 billion. Viola removed himself for consideration for the post, citing a reluctance to comply with ethics requirements.
156. [Trump Nominee for Secretary of the Navy, Millionaire Philip Bilden, Removes Himself for Consideration Citing Reluctance to Abide Ethics Requirements](#): Philip Bilden – President Trump’s failed pick for the Secretary of the Navy – removed himself for consideration for the post, citing a reluctance to comply with ethics requirements.
157. [Trump Nominee for Deputy Commerce Secretary, Millionaire Todd Ricketts, Removes Himself for Consideration Citing Reluctance to Abide Ethics Requirements](#): Todd Ricketts – failed pick for Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricketts – removed himself for consideration for the post, citing a reluctance to comply with ethics requirements.
158. [Members of Trump’s “Swamp Cabinet” Forced to Hire Conservative PR Firm to Manage ‘Toxic’ Public Perception During Their Nomination Process](#): Using a loophole in campaign finance law created by *Citizen United*, several prominent Trump cabinet nominees hired America Rising Advanced Research to generate talking points, rapid response public relations and political advertisements to support their nominations.
159. [Analysis Shows Trump’s “Swamp Cabinet” Stands to Earn \\$313,000 Tax Break from Trump’s Health Care Tax Repeal](#): Members of the Trump Cabinet stand to earn an average tax break of \$313,000 in the event the Trump health care tax repeal goes into law.
160. [Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin Appears to Have Lied Under Oath About Past Firm’s Fraudulent Business Practices](#): Secretary Mnuchin denied under oath before the Financial Services Committee that OneWest engaged in “robo-signing,” while he was the company’s CEO. A good-government group has filed suit against Mnuchin, saying his statement is contradicted by “significant evidence to the contrary.”

161. [Trump Nominated Big-Money Donor, Kelly Knight Craft, as U.S. Ambassador to Canada](#): Kelly Knight Craft, a billionaire Republican campaign donor, was nominated by the President to be the Ambassador to Canada, in an apparent display of political patronage.
162. [Trump Nominated Big-Money Donor, Jamie McCourt, as U.S. Ambassador to France](#): Jamie McCourt, owner of the LA Dodgers and wealthy campaign donor, was nominated by the President as U.S. Ambassador to France, in an apparent display of political patronage.
163. [Trump Nominated Personal Bankruptcy Attorney, David Friedman, as U.S. Ambassador to Israel](#): David Friedman – the longtime personal bankruptcy attorney for Donald Trump – was nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Israel, in an apparent display of political patronage.
164. [Trump Nominated His Campaign's Tennessee State Finance Chair, William Francis Hagerty IV, as U.S. Ambassador to Japan](#): William Francis Hagerty IV – big donor and campaign finance chair for the Trump campaign in Tennessee – was nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Japan, in an apparent display of political patronage.
165. [Trump Nominated Big-Money Donor, Doug Manchester, as U.S. Ambassador to the Bahamas](#): Doug Manchester – billionaire donor and real estate magnate – was nominated as U.S. Ambassador to the Bahamas, in an apparent display of political patronage.
166. [Trump Nominated Big-Money Donor, Duke Buchan III, as U.S. Ambassador to Spain](#): Duke Buchan III – a big donor to the Donald Trump campaign – was nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Spain, in an apparent display of political patronage.
167. [Seeking Reset, Trump Dines with Some of His Biggest Donors](#): In advance of the Administration's push for tax cuts, President Trump dined with a collection of big name conservative donors to seek support and counsel on the Administration's legislative plan.
168. [Icahn Quits White House Role After Conflict-of-Interest Questions](#): Special regulatory adviser and prominent investor Carl Icahn resigned his role in the Trump Administration after questions were raised concerning his improper role regarding changes to the renewable fuel standard that would have benefited his private investments.
169. [Trump Nominates Some Club Members to Plum Government Jobs](#): President Trump installed dues-paying members of his private clubs to senior positions across the government.
170. [Trump Carries on Tradition of Putting Campaign Donors in Embassies](#): Trump has tapped numerous big money campaign contributors for ambassadorships across the globe.
171. [Two Weeks After Trump Chose Him for Ambassador, Nominee Pledged Money for a Gala at Trump's Club](#): Leandro Rizzuoto Jr. was tapped recently by President Trump to be ambassador to Barbados. Two weeks later, Rizzuoto committed to underwrite a gala at Mar-a-Lago at the "presidential" level.
172. [Adelson Offers to Help Pay for Jerusalem Embassy](#): Mega GOP donor and Trump backer, Sheldon Adelson, is offering to privately finance the moving of the United States' Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, further blurring the ethical line between the functions of the U.S. government and big money campaign donors in the Trump Administration.

173. [Trump Pick for Chile Ambassador Entwined in Kushner Family Deals](#): Trump tapped Andrew Gellert for the Ambassadorship to Chile. Gellert is a close personal friend and business partner of the Kushner family and a financier of the struggling Kushner investment, 666 Fifth Avenue, raising ethical questions about the appointment.
174. [44 Trump Officials Have Close Ties to Right-Wing Billionaire Brothers](#): Over forty Trump political appointees across the federal government have direct ties to the Republican mega donors, Charles and David Koch.
175. [At Adelson's Request, Pruitt Met with Israeli Company That EPA Will Study](#): Shadow White House adviser and mega donor Sheldon Adelson requested that U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt meet privately with a company that later received a contract with the EPA.
176. [Trump Rewards Big Donors with Jobs and Access](#): Recent reporting found that more than 38 percent of Trump political appointees were donors to the Trump campaign, an unprecedented level of political patronage in the modern era.
177. [The Shadow Rules of the VA](#): Three members of President Trump's Mar-a-Lago club – which has a \$200,000 initiation fee – have been directing the Department of Veterans Affairs behind the scenes, influencing decisions on policy and personnel appointments without ever being subject to Congressional scrutiny. Without a public record of whom President Trump meets with at his private clubs, the American people have no idea who else is paying President Trump for the privilege of running the federal government.
178. [Major Trump Donor Helped Pruitt Pick EPA Science Advisors](#): Doug Deason, who donated nearly \$1 million to elect President Trump, passed on from a corporate-backed conservative organization a list of candidates for the EPA Science Advisory Board, a crucial body that helps evaluate regulations and from which Pruitt purged professional scientists, replacing them with representatives from energy companies and other industries with business in front of the EPA.

Installed a Special Interest Revolving Door into the Trump White House

Donald Trump made criticism of Washington lobbyists and special interests a hallmark of his campaign, regularly pledging to exclude special-interest lobbyists from his Administration.⁵ In June 2016, he declared he would have “no problem” banning lobbyists from working in his Administration.⁶ But since taking office, the President has broken that pledge time and time again, flooding the White House – and the broader Executive Branch – with long-time Washington lobbyists and influence peddlers to a stunning degree.

⁵ Mark Hensch. The Hill. [“Trump: I Don’t Want Lobbyists, Special Interests.”](#) August 23, 2016.

⁶ Tim Perry. CBS. [“Donald Trump Would Have “No Problem” Banning Lobbyists and Big Donors from Working in His Administration.”](#) June 6, 2016.

Examples include:

179. [Trump Taps Health Care Industry Insider for Top FDA Post](#): Scott Gottlieb has spent his career working for and advising biomedical firms seeking to bring their pharmaceuticals to market. Gottlieb will now be the chief regulator in charge of clearing new drugs for those same companies.
180. [Trump Selects Construction Industry Lobbyist for Top Labor Department Position](#): President Trump has appointed Geoff Burr, the chief lobbyist for a powerful construction industry trade group, to a top position in the Labor Department. Burr will be overseeing many of the same issues he lobbied for in his time at the firm.
181. [Trump Chooses For-Profit College Lobbyist for Department of Education Position](#): Taylor Hansen, who spent much of her time lobbying to weaken the regulations on for-profit colleges, will now have a role in deciding on the future of such regulations.
182. [Trump Embraces Lobbyist for Health Insurance Giant for Position with the Department of Health and Human Services](#): Alexandra Campau has been brought on as a part of the “beachhead” team at HHS. Prior to this she was a lobbyist for the health insurance industry.
183. [Trump Taps Former Pharmaceutical Industry Consultant for Advisor Position with Department of Health and Human Services](#): Timothy Clark has gone from running his consulting firm that had PhRMA, a large trade group for the pharmaceutical industry, as a client, to a senior advisor to HHS Secretary Price.
184. [Trump Selects Government Relations Director for a Firm Specializing in Supporting Independent Health Providers for Role with HHS Secretary](#): Industry insider Keagan Lenihan left her role as Director of Government Operations at McKesson Specialty Health for a position as a senior advisor to HHS Secretary Price.
185. [Trump Chooses Former Energy Lobbyist as White House Energy Advisor](#): Mike Catanzaro, a former lobbyist working for numerous prominent energy companies to fight Obama-era regulations, is now a top White House energy advisor working for the same cause.
186. [Trump Embraces Former Healthcare Lobbyist for Chief of Staff for the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services](#): HHS Secretary Price’s new chief of staff Lance Leggit was lobbying for numerous healthcare clients as recently as last year, and now has a strong voice in the administration.
187. [Trump Selects Defense Contracting Lobbyist for Position at the Department of Defense](#): Justin Mikolay went from lobbying on behalf of a defense company founded by his good friend and transition aide Peter Thiel to being one of the first set of boots on the ground at the Trump Administration DOD.
188. [Trump Taps Defense and Homeland Security Lobbyist for Transportation Security Administration](#): In another case of top lobbyists getting top roles in the Trump Administration, Chad Wolf went from his position at the head of a firm lobbying for defense and homeland security contractors to his current role as Chief of Staff for the TSA.

189. [Trump Selects Aerospace Industry Lobbyist for Department of Homeland Security](#): John Barsa, the owner of a government relations firm specializing in homeland security, has been chosen by the Trump Administration for a key role in the DHS.
190. [Trump Hires Big Oil Lobbyist for Liaison Between Congress and the Treasury Department](#): Government affairs executive at big oil companies Drew Maloney has been brought on as the Treasury Department's Capitol Hill liaison.
191. [Trump Taps Top Energy Industry Lobbyist as Beachhead Team Member in the Department of Energy](#): Mark Maddox, a lobbyist for a number of energy companies, was brought onto the beachhead team at the Dept. of Energy.
192. [Trump Nominates Friend of Big Business and Opponent of Regulation to Position of Regulatory Czar](#): President Trump selected a well-known opponent of government regulation to head up the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA).
193. [Trump Continues to Appoint Horde of Lobbyists and Special Interests to Jobs Across the Federal Government](#): In a continued blatant rebuke of his pledge to "drain the swamp," President Trump has relied heavily on corporate lobbyists and attorneys to staff his Administration.
194. [Trump Taps Anti-Consumer Lawyer to Head Bank Regulatory Agency, Skirting Ethics Regulations](#): Keith Noreika – a long-time bank attorney and advocate of deregulation – was appointed to lead the Office of Comptroller of the Currency. President Trump named Noreika a "special government employee," before tapping him to be the Acting Director of the OCC, thereby skirting many ethics laws that would have prevented Noreika from working on certain matters related to his past clients.
195. [Trump Nominates Coal Lobbyist for Deputy Job at EPA](#): Andrew Wheeler – a prominent lobbyist for the coal industry – has been nominated to be the Environmental Protection Agency's Deputy Administrator.
196. [Health Care Lobbyist Granted Ethics Waiver to Work in Trump Administration](#): Department of Health & Human Services Chief of Staff Lance Leggett was granted an ethics waiver to serve in the Trump Administration despite an extensive lobbying career, which included him lobbying his new employer regularly on reform of Medicare.
197. [Financial Services Lawyer Granted Ethics Waiver to Work in Trump Administration](#): Treasury Department Deputy General Counsel, Brian Callanan, was granted an ethics waiver to serve in the Trump Administration despite an extensive legal career working on housing finance matters – policy he will now oversee.
198. [Trade Lobbyist to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): United States Trade Representative General Counsel, Stephen Vaughn, was not granted an ethics waiver to serve in the Trump Administration despite an extensive lobbying career working on trade related matters – policy he will now oversee.

199. [Building Trade Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Labor Adviser, Geoffrey Burr, was not granted an ethics waiver to serve in the Trump Administration despite an extensive lobbying career working on Department of Labor policy – policy he will now oversee.
200. [Trump Appoints Coal Lobbyist to Help Run the Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations](#): In an apparent violation of the Administration’s own “Ethics Pledge,” Trump tapped lobbyist Elizabeth “Tate” Bennett to work at the EPA.
201. [Lobbyist-Turned-Staffer to Education Secretary DeVos Preserves Federal Funding for Beleaguered For-Profit Law School](#): Lauren Maddox – a lobbyist tapped to shepherd Betsy DeVos through her confirmation process – recently was hired by the for-profit law school Charlotte School of Law, which has lost access to federal student loans after it was found to have violated federal law by misleading students. Maddox lobbied her new employer, the Department of Education, to restore federal funding.
202. [Lobbyist David Urban Expands Influence-Business, Leveraging Close Ties to Trump Administration](#): Lobbyist David Urban – who is said to have been considered for a senior job in the Administration – hauled in more than \$2.4 million for his lobbying firm, American Continental Group, in the first three months of 2017, leveraging his close ties to the Administration.
203. [Lobbyist Brian Ballard Expands Influence Business, Leveraging Close Ties to Trump Administration](#): Lobbyist Brian Ballard – with clients including the government of Turkey, Prudential Financial, and the American Health Care Association – has hauled in more than \$4 million for his lobbying firm, Ballard Partners, in the first few months of 2017, leveraging his close ties to the Administration.
204. [Lobbyist Stuart Jolly Leaves Firm to Start Super PAC After Bragging About Access to White House](#): Trump campaign aide Stuart Jolly was hired as president of the lobbying firm SPG, but ultimately departed after he was criticized for inappropriately bragging about his access to the White House. He has since launched a pro-Trump super PAC.
205. [Insurance and Medical Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Health and Human Services Adviser Alexandra Campau was not granted an ethics waiver to serve in the Trump Administration despite past lobbying on behalf of the industries she will help oversee.
206. [Pharmaceutical Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Health and Human Services White House Liaison Timothy Clark, founder of Clark Strategy Group, did not receive an ethics waiver to work in the Administration on health care policy, despite past work on behalf of PhRMA.
207. [Pharmaceutical Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Health and Human Services Senior Adviser Keagan Lenihan, was not granted an ethics waiver to serve in the Administration despite previous direct lobbying of HHS on behalf of pharmaceutical companies.

208. [Palantir Lobbyist to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Defense Special Assistant Justin Mikolay did not receive an ethics waiver to work in the Department of Defense, despite previously working as a lobbyist for Peter Thiel's defense company Palantir.
209. [Chemical Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Assistant Administrator Nancy Beck did not receive an ethics waiver to work at EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, even though she previously worked as the American Chemistry Council's senior director of regulatory science policy.
210. [Energy Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Energy Special Assistant Mark Maddox was not granted an ethics waiver to work at DOE despite previously working as a lobbyist for a number of oil, gas and energy companies.
211. [Longtime Lobbyist to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of the Treasury Deputy Secretary for Legislative Affairs Drew Maloney did not receive an ethics waiver to work in the Treasury Department despite spending years at the Hess Corporation and K Street powerhouse Ogilvy Government Relations.
212. [Saudi Arabia Spends Big on Washington Lobbyist Firm with Ties to Trump Administration](#): The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed a \$5.4 million one-year lobbying contract with SPG, a lobbying firm with ties to the Trump Administration.
213. [EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Works to Unwind Environmental Regulations, Relying on Network of Outside Special Interests, Not EPA Staff](#): Scott Pruitt has "outsourced crucial work to a network of lawyers, lobbyists and other allies" in his unprecedented effort to undo, block and delay more than 30 EPA rules and regulations.
214. [Aerospace and Defense Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Homeland Security Senior Adviser John Barsa was not granted an ethics waiver to work at DHS despite a history of lobbying for defense and security companies.
215. [Fracking and Nuclear Energy Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Special Assistant to the President for International Energy and Environment George David Banks was not given an ethics waiver to work on energy issues in the White House even though he lobbied on behalf of Constellation, FirstEnergy and the Nuclear Energy Institute.
216. [Transportation Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Transportation Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs Anthony Bedell did not receive an ethics waiver to work at DOT despite shutting down his lobbying shop just before joining the Administration and having lobbied on behalf of transportation companies.
217. [Amazon Lobbyist to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Department of Justice antitrust official Makan Delrahim was not granted an ethics waiver to work on antitrust issues despite having worked as a lobbyist for Amazon, which may have antitrust business in front of DOJ.

218. [Steel Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Under Secretary for International Trade Gilbert Kaplan did not receive an ethics waiver to work on trade issues for the Department of Commerce even though he had lobbied for the steel industry on trade-related issues.
219. [Agricultural Industry-Insider to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): Senior Adviser to the Secretary Kristi Boswell did not receive an ethics waiver to work on agriculture issues despite moving directly from the American Farm Bureau Federation to the Department of Agriculture.
220. [Nativist Immigration Organization Director to Work in Trump Administration – No Ethics Waiver](#): U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ombudsman Julie Kirchner was not granted an ethics waiver to work for USCIS despite previously working as director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, an extreme anti-immigrant organization labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.
221. [Trump Loyalist Mixes Businesses and Access at 'Advisory' Firm](#): Former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski built a mini-empire of consulting and lobbying businesses capitalizing on his unique access to the Trump White House.
222. [Secrecy and Suspicion Surround Trump's Deregulation Teams](#): The Trump Administration's "deregulation teams" at various federal agencies are laden with former lobbyists and industry insiders.
223. [Trump's Army secretary pick made over \\$1.5M at Raytheon](#): President Trump's pick to be Secretary of the Army was previously a high-paid lobbyist for defense contractors, earning somewhere between \$1.5 million and \$6 million over the last 12 months.
224. [In Trump's Government, The 'Regulated Have Become The Regulators'](#): Across the Executive Branch, the Trump Administration has installed former industry lobbyists and insiders in senior roles overseeing their former industries.
225. [Gary Cohn's NEC Has Been Lobbied By Goldman Sachs-Backed Industry Groups](#): Former Goldman Sachs Executive turned National Economic Council head Gary Cohn has been lobbied by a group closely tied to his former employer, demonstrating the limits of Cohn's ethics recusals.
226. [Lewandowski Pressed Trump on Aid to Coal Industry](#): Leveraging his relationship with the President, former campaign manager Corey Lewandowski lobbied the Administration to give aid to the coal industry.
227. [Lifting the Veil on Another Batch of Shadowy Trump Appointees](#): Numerous lobbyists entered the Trump Administration, regulating the industries they once represented, leading one lobbyists-turned-Administration-official to say, "The Swamp continues."
228. [Trump Administration Picks Former Official at For-Profit DeVry University to Head Student Aid Enforcement Unit](#): The Trump Department of Education hired a former for-profit college lobbyist to head its student aid division. The lobbyist previously worked for DeVry University, which has been fined over \$100 million for student fraud settlements.

229. [Trump Names Former Coal Executive to Top Mining Safety Post](#): President Trump tapped David Zatezalo, the former chairman of Rhino Resources, to be an assistant secretary of Labor overseeing the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). During Zatezalo's tenure with Rhino Resources, the firm was hit with two letters from MSHA citing a pattern of mine safety violations.
230. [Chemical Industry Ally Faces Critics in Bid for Top EPA Post](#): President Trump tapped a former chemical industry lobbyist to head EPA's division in charge of testing toxic chemicals in the stream of commerce.
231. [Trump Nominates a Coal Lobbyist to Be No. 2 at EPA](#): President Trump tapped Andrew Wheeler, a former coal lobbyist, to fill a top level position at the EPA.
232. [Trump Taps AccuWeather CEO to Head NOAA](#): President Trump tapped Barry Myers, owner and CEO AccuWeather, to head the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – an agency Myer has argued should be partially privatized, raising obvious questions of conflicts of interest.
233. [Top Republican Donors Press EPA to Move Regional Office to Phoenix](#): EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt invited in several Republican mega donors to solicit input on plans to restructure the agency.
234. [There Is a Feeding Frenzy Going Down in Trump's Swamp](#): New reporting has found that more than 40 individuals with close ties to the White House lobbied the Administration in 2017, with over \$40,000,000 in reported affiliated lobbying expenditures.
235. [Former Eli Lilly Executive Is Trump's Choice for Health Secretary](#): President Trump tapped former pharmaceutical executive Alex Azar to be his next head of the Department for Health and Human Services.
236. [Swamp Things: More Than 50% of President Trump's Nominees Have Ties to the Industries They're Supposed to Regulate](#): An analysis of Trump Administration nominees to senior positions throughout the Administration showed that over 50% of Trump nominees have direct ties to the industries they are charged with overseeing in their official role.
237. [Health Nominee Grilled on Commitment to Lower Drug Prices](#): Alex Azar II, Trump's pick for HHS Secretary, has come under fire for his career as a senior pharmaceutical executive, leading critics to doubt his commitment to lowering prescription drug prices – a purported priority of the Trump Administration
238. [15 Energy Lobbyists Hired Using Trump's Weakened Rule](#): Exploiting the Trump Administration's loophole-ridden "ethics pledge," fifteen energy industry lobbyists entered the Administration – individuals who would have otherwise been prohibited from serving under the Obama era ethics rules.
239. [WH Memo Justifying CFPB Takeover Written by Payday Lender Attorney](#): A former senior attorney for the payday lending industry authored the legal opinion permitting Mick Mulvaney to serve as the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director, while simultaneously serving as the head of the OMB. Following Mulvaney's appointment, the Bureau terminated CFPB rules and proceedings designed to bring greater oversight to the payday lending industry.

240. [Trump Pick to Head Consumer Safety Board Is Too Close to Industries](#): President Trump tapped a fierce opponent of consumer protection measures to head the Consumer Product Safety Commission, drawing fire from consumer advocates and ethics watchdogs.
241. [A Former Panama Agent Is Guiding Trump's Homeland Security Pick](#): A prominent lobbyist was tapped to help Kirstjen Nielsen navigate the Senate confirmation process to lead the Department of Homeland Security. The lobbyist had previously lobbied DHS, raising concerns of conflicts of interest.
242. [CDC Director Resigns Over Financial Conflicts](#): Following reports CDC Director Fitzgerald was trading tobacco stocks while serving in her official capacity, Director Fitzgerald resigned her post.
243. [Former Airline Lobbyist to Take Over for Outgoing FAA Chief](#): Daniel Elwell – a former senior lobbyist for the Airlines for America airline trade association – was tapped by the Trump Administration to take over the Federal Aviation Administration.
244. [How Trump's HHS Nominee's Drug Company 'Gamed' a Patent](#): Former pharmaceutical executive Alex Azar was tapped to lead HHS, leading some to question his past efforts to game the drug patent regime he now will in part oversee.
245. [Corn Syrup Lobbyist Is Helping Set USDA Dietary Guidelines](#): Kailee Tkacz – a USDA political appointee and former lobbyist for the corn syrup industry – is now helping to draft the USDA's dietary guidelines, requiring the White House counsel to grant a broad ethics waiver given her past employment and conflicts.
246. [Trump Mine Safety Nominee Is Lawyer Who Defended Coal Companies](#): Marco Rajkovich – a former lawyer for the coal industry and opponent of stronger mine safety rules – has been tapped by the Trump Administration to chair the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.
247. [Revolving Door Between Trump Pentagon, Contractors Spins Faster](#): New reporting shows that more than 80 percent of the top Defense Department officials under the Trump Administration have defense contractor work experience, sparking concerns about conflicts of interest within the DoD.
248. [Gun Lobbyist Helped Write ATF Official's Proposal to Deregulate](#): New documents show that Mark Barnes – a lawyer and lobbyist for the National Rifle Association – helped draft and edit a white paper for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, raising concern about the gun industry's influence on the Bureau's actions.
249. [What We Found in Trump's Drained Swamp: Hundreds of Ex-Lobbyists and D.C. Insiders](#): New investigative reporting found that there are at least 187 Trump political appointees who have been federal lobbyists and that many of those same individuals are now in government roles overseeing the same industries they once lobbied for.
250. [What Swamp? Lobbyists Get Ethics Waivers to Work for Trump](#): Former lobbyists had no problem finding employment within the Trump Administration, with the Administration regularly and routinely issuing ethics waivers for those appointees who clearly conflict with the Administration's Potemkin ethics executive order.

251. [Former Coal Lobbyist on Tap for No. 2 Spot At EPA](#): President Trump nominated a former fossil fuel lobbyist, Andrew Wheeler, as deputy administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Wheeler had previously lobbied on behalf of some of the largest oil and gas companies in the United States.
252. [Trump Picks Dow Chemical Lawyer for Key Role at EPA](#): President Trump tapped a chemical industry insider to run the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency department in charge of overseeing responses to hazardous spills and the clean-up of toxic sites.
253. [Azar Taps Former CVS Executive to Help Lower Drug Prices](#): The Trump-led U.S. Department of Health and Human Services appointed a former CVS Caremark executive, Daniel Best, to lead the agency's efforts to lower prescription drug costs.
254. [Trump Wildlife Protection Board Stuffed with Trophy Hunters](#): President Trump appointed several trophy hunters to oversee an advisory board charged with helping write federal rules to protect endangered species from trophy hunters.
255. [A Lawyer for Payday Lenders Is Confirmed for F.T.C. Job](#): Andrew M. Smith – a former lawyer for payday lenders, internet giants and financial services companies – was confirmed as director of the Federal Trade Commission's consumer protection unit. Many of Smith's former employers have business before the commission.
256. [State Energy Leader Named Deputy Assistant Secretary in U.S. Department of Energy](#): The Trump Administration appointed Shawn Bennett, an Ohio oil and gas lobbyist, as the U.S. Department of Energy's deputy assistant secretary for oil and natural gas. He will oversee the Office of Fossil Energy, which runs the agency's oil and gas programs, research and analysis.
257. [Former For-Profit College Executive Shaped Education Department Policy That Could Benefit Former Employers](#): Robert Eitel, a former vice president at two for-profit colleges, joined the Trump Administration in February 2018 and helped roll back U.S. Department of Education regulations that protect student borrowers from being deceived and preyed upon by for-profit colleges.
258. [Monsanto-Linked Former Lobbyist Likely to Become Key Commodities Regulator](#): President Trump appointed Dawn DeBerry Stump, a former lobbyist for Wall Street and the financial services industry, to lead the Commodity Futures Trading Commission – a key financial regulator.
259. [Top Interior Official Facing Ethics Questions After Meetings with Casino Lobbyists](#): The Trump Administration's deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, David Bernhard, met on several occasions with MGM casino representatives who are lobbying the agency's Bureau of Indian Affairs. Before coming to the Interior Department, Bernhard lobbied for MGM. He is barred – by an ethics agreement he signed – from participating in any business that involves his former employer.
260. [Top Energy Aide Dumps Trump to Lobby for K Street](#): Mike Catanzaro recently completed his trip through the revolving door at the Trump White House, leaving his post as special assistant to the president for domestic energy and environmental policy to return to same lobbying firm he came from – CGCN Group.

261. [Zinke's Former Energy Counselor at Interior Takes Job with Offshore Oil Company](#): Just weeks after announcing his departure from the Department of the Interior, Vincent DeVito joined fossil fuel company Cox Oil Offshore LLC. DeVito's work at Interior focused on permitting and royalty rates for energy exploration, issues of central importance to Cox.
262. [Pence Turns VP's Office Into Gateway for Lobbyists to Influence the Trump Administration](#): During the first year of the Trump Administration, Vice President Pence's office was lobbied by twice as many companies as Vice Presidents Cheney or Biden's offices during any single year. Many of these lobbyists, like Bob Grand, whose firm has earned \$3.3 million lobbying Pence's office, have longstanding relationships with Pence and his staff and are funders of his and his brother's political campaigns and associated outside groups.
263. [Prosecutors Investigating Michael Cohen for Possible Illegal Lobbying](#): President Trump's longtime lawyer and admitted felon Michael Cohen is under investigation for failing to register as a lobbyist for his activities following President Trump's election. Major companies like AT&T and Novartis paid Cohen, who touted his close ties to Trump, millions of dollars for "insights" into the Trump Administration.
264. [New Emails Suggest Scott Pruitt Discussed Hiring a Friend of Lobbyist Landlord](#): Emails released as part of a lawsuit show that the lobbyist from whom EPA Administrator Pruitt rented a Capitol Hill apartment for \$50 per night did in fact lobby the EPA during that time, despite previous denials. Pruitt also sought to hire a friend of the lobbyist.
265. [EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Encouraged Oil Executives to Apply for Top Agency Jobs](#): Upon taking office, EPA Administrator Pruitt met with the leaders of the American Petroleum Institute, which represents the oil and gas industry, and requested that employees of that industry apply to serve as regional EPA directors, who would have oversight over their former employers.
266. [Countries Hosting Trump Businesses Have Added Lobbyists at Rapid Pace Since Inauguration](#): More than 400 lobbyists have registered to lobby on behalf of foreign nations since the beginning of President Trump's term, with more than one-third of those representing 20 countries in which President Trump has personal business interests. The number of new foreign lobbyists is nearly double those recorded in the same period of President Obama and President Bush's first terms.
267. [Andrew Wheeler's Long History with the Energy Sector](#): Pruitt's replacement as EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler, served as a lobbyist for major energy companies before joining the Trump Administration. Wheeler joined K Street after working for Senator Jim Inhofe, making him a perfect example of the revolving door between government service and private industry.
268. [Under Trump, Energy Influence Groups Ramp Up](#): Washington has seen a surge in informal coalitions of industry interests being formed to lobby the Trump Administration. These coalition groups appear and dissolve as the Administration turns its attention to a given issue, and help shield corporate backers from disclosure and transparency.
269. [From Dow's 'Dioxin Lawyer' to Trump's Choice to Run Superfund](#): President Trump's choice to run EPA's Superfund for toxic cleanup, Peter Wright, is a former lawyer for Dow Chemical, a major polluter which was accused of falsifying information during Wright's time running its legal strategy.
270. [Faced with Crippling Sanctions, ZTE Loaded Up on Lobbyists](#): Under pressure for violating sanctions, Chinese telecommunications company ZTE hired a slew of lobbyists, including a former Trump campaign official, to blunt the U.S. government response.

271. [At Prayer Breakfast, Guests Seek Access to a Different Higher Power](#): Lobbyists charged foreign leaders and political figures hundreds of thousands of dollars to attend the event, where they could rub elbows with President Trump and administration officials.
272. [Scott Pruitt, Former E.P.A. Chief, in Talks for Next Job: Coal Consultant](#): Former EPA Administrator Pruitt, whose brazen corruption became too much for even the Trump Administration to tolerate, is in talks to become a “consultant” – ethics rules prohibit him from becoming a “lobbyist” for five years – to coal magnate Joseph W. Craft III, with whom Pruitt met at least seven times while EPA Administrator.
273. [As Trump Dismantles Clean Air Rules, an Industry Lawyer Delivers for Ex-Clients](#): Because William Wehrum, appointed by President Trump to run EPA’s clean air office, spent years as a corporate lawyer for polluters and not as a registered lobbyist, he is exempt from the Trump Administration’s ethics pledge and has been able to work on the issues over which he previously sued the federal government. Wehrum has led the charge to dismantle the Clean Air Act from within the EPA.
274. [Top Interior Staffer Who Backed Shrinking National Monuments to Join BP](#): Downey Magallanes, Interior Secretary Zinke’s deputy chief of staff, has left the Department to join fossil fuel giant BP after spending her tenure working to shrink national monuments and open them up to fossil fuel exploration. Magallanes met with officials from BP at least five times while working for the Interior Department.
275. [Former White House Ethics Lawyer Joins Priebus Law Firm](#): White House ethics lawyer Stefan Passantino has left the Administration to join the government relations practice at former Trump chief of staff Reince Priebus’ law firm.
276. [Former VA Secretary David Shulkin, Fired by President Trump, to Join Sanford Health](#): VA Secretary Shulkin, who either resigned or was fired from the Trump Administration, has joined Sanford Health as a strategic advisor. Shulkin and Sanford Health became acquainted over work on rural health care Sanford did with the VA.

Put Big Money Ahead of the Public Interest

Throughout the 2016 election, candidate Donald Trump was quite candid about how big money operates in the American political system. He would often brag during stump speeches about his own campaign contributions to politicians and the influence they bought, declaring, “As a businessman and a very substantial donor to very important people, when you give, they do whatever the hell you want them to do.”⁷

Trump pledged that he would do things a different way. “I turned down \$5 million last week from a very important lobbyist because there are total strings attached to a thing like that. He’s going to come to me in a year or two years and he’s going to want something for a country that he represents or a company that he represents. That’s the kind of money I won’t take,” he promised.

⁷ David Graham. The Atlantic. [“Was Trump Fibbing About Buying Politicians Then or Now?”](#) September 6, 2016.

⁸ Despite this promise and many more like it, President Trump continues to give big campaign donors a big hug.

Examples include:

277. [Trump Solicited Record Breaking Amount of Big Money Contributions from the Wealthy and Well-Connected to Fund Inauguration](#): Breaking with his campaign rhetoric, President-elect Trump raised twice as much for his inauguration than the previous record – with 48 individuals and corporations giving more than \$1 million.
278. [Trump Receives Big Money from Private Prison Industry](#): The private prison industry donated – potentially illegally – hundreds of thousands of dollars to support President Trump’s campaign and inauguration.
279. [Trump DOJ Reverses Private Prison Directive](#): Trump Attorney General Sessions rescinded an Obama-era directive prohibiting new contracts for private prisons.
280. [Trump Administration Awards Private Prison Contract to GEO Group](#): The GEO Group – which donated \$225,000 to the Trump campaign and supported a Trump-affiliated super PAC – won the federal contract bid to build a \$110 million private detention center in Texas.
281. [The Oil & Gas Industry Is Enjoying a Resurgence of Influence with Trump Administration after Giving Big to Inauguration](#): Industry insiders are giddy at the newfound political power, with former industry executives and corporate lobbyists littered throughout the Trump Administration.
282. [The Oil & Gas Industry Is Using their Influence in Trump Administration to Systematically Remake the Nation’s Environmental Policy](#): The Trump Administration is remaking U.S. environmental policy at every level.
283. [Dow Chemical Co. Donated \\$1 Million to Trump Inauguration, Dow CEO Named Trump Advisor](#): The chemical company’s business is heavily impacted by EPA and USDA regulations.
284. [Trump EPA Administrator Pruitt Reverses Course on Banning Pesticide Made by Dow](#): The EPA chief rejected his own agency’s science showing that chlorpyrifos is linked to brain and nervous system damage and undid steps by the Obama Administration to ban the pesticide.
285. [Dow Urges Trump Administration to Scrap Study Showing Harms of Pesticides](#): The corporation wrote to the heads of the EPA and Interior and Commerce Departments asking them to ignore the study.
286. [Big Pharma Spent Big for Trump Inauguration](#): The country’s largest pharmaceutical companies gave over \$7 million to the Trump Inaugural Committee.

⁸ *Ibid* 5

287. [Trump Reneges on Promise to Require Big Pharma to Negotiate for Lower Prices](#): Following the President's inauguration, Trump met with Big Pharma and promptly reneged on his campaign promise to require pharmaceutical companies to negotiate with Medicare for bulk discounts and instead adopted a new policy of lowering taxes and regulations on one of the nation's most profitable industries.
288. [Exxon Mobil Spent Big to Fund Trump Inauguration](#): The Exxon Mobil Corporation gave \$500,000 to the Trump Inauguration, a mere week after the announced nomination of its CEO Rex Tillerson.
289. [GOP-Kingmaker, Sheldon Adelson, Gives \\$35 Million to Elect Trump](#): Sheldon Adelson gave a total of \$35,000,000 to a super PAC dedicated to the election of Donald Trump.
290. [Trump Hosts GOP Mega-Donor Sheldon Adelson at White House](#): After criticizing his primary opponents' cozy relationship with Adelson, President Trump hosted him for dinner at the White House shortly after being inaugurated.
291. [Adelson Gets Personal Apology from Trump Press Secretary Sean Spicer](#): Following Press Secretary Spicer's bungled press conference, in which he falsely claimed Adolf Hitler did not gas his own people, Spicer personally called the GOP-kingmaker Adelson to apologize. An apology to the American people has not been issued.
292. [AT&T Donates \\$1 Million to Trump Inauguration, Verizon Gives \\$100,000](#): The telecommunications giants gave large to the Trump Inauguration.
293. [Trump Signs Bill Allowing Internet Service Providers to Sell Personal Data](#): The bill, which passed with only GOP support, allows ISPs to sell personal browsing information to advertisers.
294. [Trump-appointed FCC Chair and Former Verizon Lawyer Allows ISPs to Jack Up Prices for Small Businesses, Schools and Hospitals](#): The FCC removed caps on the prices charged for internet access to small businesses, schools, hospitals and other protected entities.
295. [Trump Populates Senior Administration Posts with Host of Big Money, Former Wall Street Executives](#): President Trump has populated his Administration with a host of former Wall Street executives, breaking with campaign rhetoric promising as President he would hold Wall Street accountable.
296. [Trump Signs Order to Stifle Critical Consumer Protection for Americans' Retirement Savings](#): The Trump Administration delayed the implementation of the Department of Labor's conflict-of-interest rule, which ensures financial advisors act in the best interest of their clients. The 60-day delay – favored by Wall Street – will cost Americans an estimated \$3.6 billion in lost retirement savings.
297. [Trump Signs Order to Unwind Regulation of Wall Street](#): President Trump signed an executive order requiring a wholesale review of the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory bill enacted following the economic collapse of 2008.
298. [Billionaire Steve Schwarzman and Wife Gave \\$5.5 Million to Republican Party in 2016](#): Blackstone CEO and billionaire Steve Schwarzman gave over \$5 million to the Republican Party in 2016, aiding the presidential campaign of Donald Trump.

299. [Trump Taps Billionaire GOP Donor Steve Schwarzman as Senior Advisor](#): President Trump appointed Blackstone CEO Steve Schwarzman to lead a business leader panel of advisors.
300. [Steve Schwarzman, Blackstone Financially Benefits from Policy Counsel Provided to Trump White House](#): Schwarzman was reported to have encouraged the Trump Administration to not label China a currency manipulator – a policy that benefits Blackstone’s bottom line.
301. [Senior Members of Trump Cabinet Attend Schwarzman’s Elaborate Birthday Party](#): Secretary Ross, Secretary Chao, and Secretary Mnuchin – along with Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner – all attended billionaire Steve Schwarzman’s elaborate birthday party.
302. [Trump, After Shaming Lobbyists on the Campaign Trail, Accepts Their Donations to His Transition Committee](#): President Trump’s transition team accepted donations from at least a dozen lobbyists, raising questions about his commitment to “draining the swamp.”
303. [GOP Mega-Donors Kochs Get Private Meeting with Trump at Mar-a-Lago](#): After bragging the Koch brothers would “not have influence over a Trump Administration” during the campaign, President Trump hosted the Koch brothers for a private meeting at Mar-a-Lago.
304. [Trump Encourages Supporters to Shop at His Super PAC Donors’ Company, L.L. Bean](#): President Trump implored his supporters to shop at Linda Bean’s company. Ms. Bean supported Trump’s Make American Great Again super PAC.
305. [Trump Supports Repeal of Obama-Era Financial Sector Regulation](#): The White House applauded the House’s passage of the CHOICE Act, a deregulatory measure that tears down the Dodd-Frank Wall Street regulatory reforms of 2010.
306. [Trump Expected to Sign Repeal of Consumer Protection Measure Barring the Use of Forced Arbitration Agreements](#): The White House announced it “strongly supports” Congressional efforts to repeal a rule from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which bars the use of anti-consumer forced arbitration agreements – contractual prohibitions against consumers join class-action lawsuits against banks.
307. [Former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn Blocked Action that Would Imperil His \(Undisclosed\) Employer, Turkey](#): After receiving \$500,000 from the Turkish Government as a foreign-agent, then-National Security Adviser Michael Flynn worked to block a military plan against the Islamic State that Turkey opposed.
308. [Trump Treasury Department Calls for a Significant Reduction of Powers for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#): The Treasury Department embraced Wall Street’s goal of significantly handicapping the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
309. [Trump Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, Taps Former For-Profit Lender to Run Federal Student Loan Program](#): A. Wayne Johnson – the former CEO of a private student loan company – was tapped by Secretary DeVos to lead the Federal Student Aid program.

310. [Big Money Special-Interests Prop-Up White House Tax Reform Effort](#): The Business Roundtable, the Koch-Brothers' Americans for Prosperity and the American Action Network have all pledged millions of advertising dollars to support the Trump Administration's push for tax reform – a plan that is said to dramatically lower taxes on the largest corporations.
311. [Big Money Special-Interests Prop-Up White House Effort to Remake Federal Judicial System](#): The Judicial Crisis Network – after spending \$7 million to support President Trump's nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court – has pledged to spend “whatever we need” to support the Trump Administration's more than one hundred judicial nominees.
312. [Trump Exploring New Afghanistan Strategy that Relies More Heavily on Private Contractors](#): Stephen Feinberg, a billionaire investor and informal Trump adviser, is reportedly encouraging the Administration to stay in Afghanistan by relying more heavily on private contractors – including his own firm, DynCorp International.
313. [Trump Exploring New Afghanistan Strategy with an Eye Towards Mineral Deposits](#): Stephen Feinberg, a billionaire investor and informal Trump adviser, is reportedly encouraging the Administration to stay in Afghanistan given the business opportunity presented by the nation's large mineral deposits.
314. [Trump is Attempting to Tear Down Wall Between Church and Politics, Making Tax-Free Church Donations Eligible for Use in Politics](#): In a boon to many Christian-right supporters, the Trump Administration is seeking a repeal of the so-called “Johnson Amendment.” The change would allow tax-free donations to religious institutions to be used in politics.
315. [Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke's Calendar Shows Significant Access of Big Money Interests to Trump Administration](#): Public records secured through a Freedom of Information Act request show the new Interior Secretary has granted significant access to oil and gas industry executives, who support reversing Obama-era restrictions on energy exploration on federal land.
316. [Trump Infrastructure “Plan” Would Allow NEC Director, Gary Cohn, To Sell Public Assets to His Former Employer, Goldman Sachs and Others](#): The Trump Administration announced a proposal to incentivize the sale of public assets to private investors, including large investment banks and private equity companies.
317. [Top GOP Donors Are Threatening to Withhold Campaign Funds Until Health Care Repeal and Tax Giveaways Are Finalized](#): Several GOP kingmakers are reportedly refusing to contribute any more campaign money to the Trump Campaign or Republican Congressional campaigns until the Administration and Congressional Republicans pass major tax giveaways.
318. [Vice President Pence Launches Effort to Hold Regular Private Meetings with Top GOP Donors and Corporations](#): Vice President Pence has launched an effort to hold a series of “private gatherings and one-on-one conversations” with top GOP donors and corporate executives to solicit input on the Trump Administration's agenda.
319. [Secret Donations Are Boosting Trump's Agenda, Fights with Investigators](#): A network of big money political organizations – including several super PACs and dark-money 501(c)(4) organizations – have spent millions supporting the special interest agenda of the Trump Administration.

320. [In Trump Era, Lobbyists Boldly Take Credit for Writing a Bill to Protect Their Industry](#): Lobbyists for doctors and insurance companies drafted legislation to upend our nation's malpractice laws, dramatically weakening certain consumer protections.
321. [Trump Administration Halts Mountaintop Coal Mining Health Study](#): Bowing to pressure from the coal industry, the Trump Administration ended a safety study of coal mining – a study supported by the impacted communities in Appalachia.
322. [For-Profit Colleges Find Few Reasons to Lobby Friendly Education Dept.](#): Citing a favorable regulatory environment, for-profit colleges pulled back on lobbying the Department of Education.
323. [Republicans Want to Sideline This Regulator. But It May Be Too Popular](#): The Trump Administration and the Republican-controlled Congress attempted to undermine – if not completely unravel – the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
324. [‘Too Big to Fail’ Label May Shrink for Some Firms Under Trump](#): The Trump Administration is considering measures to remove the “systemically important financial institution” label from certain non-bank institutions and/or limit its applications to currently non-designated institutions – a long standing policy goal of the financial services lobby since the passage of Dodd-Frank.
325. [Trump's FEC Nominee Questioned Value of Disclosing Political Donors](#): Defying his own campaign pledge to champion campaign finance disclosure laws, President Trump tapped a lawyer hostile to stronger campaign finance law to serve as a commissioner of the Federal Election Commission.
326. [Lobbying Money Spikes Under President Trump](#): With big business looking to capitalize on the Trump Administration's deregulatory disposition, lobbying expenditures surged in 2017.
327. [Right After Trump Linked High Drug Prices to Campaign Cash, Drugmakers Gave More](#): Mere hours after the President argued that pharmaceuticals should negotiate lower drug prices, the pharmaceutical industry gave out hundreds of thousands of dollars to seemingly stymie the plan – a tactic that seemed to have worked, as the President later backed away from the proposal.
328. [Behind New Obamacare Repeal Vote: ‘Furious’ GOP Donors](#): The Trump Administration and the Republican-controlled Congress advanced an ACA repeal plan favored by their big dollar donors, even in the face of exceedingly low national approval ratings for the plan.
329. [Some Conservatives See PAC's Tax Reform Ads As Warning Shot](#): Big money conservative political organizations are spending serious dollars to pressure Congress to advance major tax cuts. What's more, Speaker Paul Ryan invited these same groups to address Congressional Republicans, in an apparent scare tactic to quell dissension ahead of the Trump Administration's tax reform push.
330. [E.P.A. Chief's Calendar: A Stream of Industry Meetings and Trips Home](#): A release of EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's calendar revealed his regular interaction with industry associations and executives advocating for greater environmental deregulation.
331. [Mnuchin Says Estate Tax Repeal Will Help ‘Rich People’ Most](#): In a surprising level of candor, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin admitted a core provision of the Administration's tax plan – the repeal of the estate tax – would benefit exclusively the wealthiest households in America.

332. [Private-Prison Giant, Resurgent in Trump Era, Gathers at President's Resort](#): The GEO Group – a private prison contractor recently rejuvenated by Trump Administration changes to detention policies – held its annual conference at a Trump-owned Miami area golf resort.
333. [GOP Tax Bill Would Allow Politics from the Pulpit](#): The weakening of the so-called “Johnson Amendment” in the Trump/Republican tax plan would enable tax-deductible contributions for political activity, further empowering the wealthy and well-connected donor class.
334. [Trump Coal Backer Wins Big Under Perry's Power Plan](#): Bob Murray, energy-magnate and big money donor to candidate Trump, would win big under a proposed Department of Energy plan to reshape the nation’s electricity markets.
335. [An Open Door for Pesticide Lobbyists at the USDA](#): Trump-appointed officials at the USDA have relied heavily on industry input as they considered new rules and regulations governing the pesticide industry. In some instances, the contact may have violated the Administration’s own self-imposed ethics pledge.
336. [Tax Lobbyists Sprint to Win Changes to House Bill](#): Well-heeled, well-connected lobbyists are fighting hard to influence the final Trump-Republican tax plan.
337. [Trump's Chinese Gas Deal Raises Ethics Issues for Wilbur Ross](#): New reporting indicates that Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross may benefit from a recent trade initiative with China that the Commerce Department led, raising questions regarding the Secretary’s recusal policies and ethics agreement.
338. [Republican Donors Are Mad as Hell and Closing Their Checkbooks](#): Frustrated by Trump and the Republican Party’s failure to pass tax cuts, major campaign donors threatened to cease contributing to the Republican Party.
339. [GE's Successful Effort to Change GOP Tax Bill Shows Lobbying Clout](#): General Electric successfully lobbied the Trump Administration and the Republican Congress to remove a tax provision detrimental to their bottom line.
340. [Trump Gives Donors Tax Cuts, Then Asks Them for Campaign Donations](#): President Trump wasted no time in asking major Republican donors – significant beneficiaries of the Republican tax giveaway – for campaign contributions following the Senate’s passage of the legislation.
341. [Bob Murray Had Early Access to Rick Perry to Share Coal Plan](#): Energy executive and major Republican donor Bob Murray was granted special access to the Department of Energy to advance a policy plan favorable to his businesses and the coal industry.
342. [With Billions at Stake in Tax Debate, Lobbyists Played Hardball](#): The “swamp” was in full effect throughout the writing of the Republican tax bill, in many instances successfully bending the resulting legislation to their industries’ benefit.
343. [E.P.A. Delays Bans on Uses of Hazardous Chemicals](#): The Environmental Protection Agency moved to indefinitely postpone bans on certain uses of three toxic chemicals found in consumer products, inciting the ire of consumer advocates and ethics watchdogs.

344. [Drug Industry Spent Big to Temper Talk About High Drug Prices](#): Following President Trump's public proclamation he would work to lower the cost of prescription drugs, big pharma collected over \$270 million in dues from its member businesses in an effort to push back with heightened lobbying, campaign contributions and other forms of influence-peddling.
345. [Trump Promised to Kill Carried Interest, Lobbyists Kept It Alive](#): After the President campaigned on the promise of ending the so-called carried interest loophole, the Republican-passed tax giveaway preserved the provision in full – a victory for the “swamp.”
346. [Trump's True Priorities Revealed in Holiday News Dumps](#): On the final business day of 2017, the Department of the Interior rescinded Obama-era rules governing hydraulic fracturing, weakening government oversight and environmental protections on the risky extraction process.
347. [Companies That Funded Trump's Inauguration Came Up Big in 2017](#): A recent survey of the financial performance of business donors to the Trump Inaugural Committee show many earned federal contracts under the Trump Administration.
348. [Trump's True Priorities Revealed in Holiday News Dumps](#): On the final business day of 2017, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement at the Department of the Interior released new regulations that watered down rules put in place following the 2010 BP oil spill.
349. [Trump's True Priorities Revealed in Holiday News Dumps](#): On the final business day of 2017, the Department of the Interior cancelled regulations that imposed fines on companies whose energy production results in the death of certain migratory birds.
350. [Trump's True Priorities Revealed in Holiday News Dumps](#): On the final business day of 2017, the Department of the Interior renewed expired mining leases on a copper and nickel mine that abuts the Boundary Water Canoe Area Wilderness in Northern Minnesota. The move benefits a Chilean mining firm owned by Andronico Luksic – who happens to be Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner's landlord in Washington, D.C.
351. [Trump's True Priorities Revealed in Holiday News Dumps](#): On Christmas Eve, 2017, the Trump Administration reversed Obama-era rules that imposed fines on nursing homes when individuals received improper care or died while at a covered facility.
352. [Trump Got Cash from Payday Lenders, Then Weakened Lending Rules](#): Only two weeks after his appointment to head the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Mick Mulvaney scrapped tighter rules on payday lending companies. The payday lending industry gave big to Republicans, including to President Trump and then Congressman Mulvaney, over the years.
353. [CFPB Drops Investigation Into Payday Lender and Mulvaney Contributor](#): CFPB director Mick Mulvaney suspended an investigation of a payday lending firm. The firm is from Mulvaney's home state and is a long-time political supporter of the Director.
354. [Lobbying During Trump Administration Surges to Highest Level in 7 Years](#): The so-called “swamp” saw a surge in lobbying expenditures during Trump's first year in office, as businesses rushed to capitalize on the new Administration's legislative and regulatory agenda.

355. [U.S. Consumer Protection Official Puts Equifax Probe on Ice](#): The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director, Mick Mulvaney, has slowed an investigation into the Equifax security breach, which compromised the personal information of millions of American households.
356. [FCC Watchdog Looks Into Changes That Benefited Sinclair](#): The Inspector General of the Federal Communications Commission is investigating potential improprieties in the Commission's recent actions, which greatly benefited Sinclair Broadcasting. Specifically, the IG is looking into whether Chairman Pai coordinated the Commission's action with Sinclair officials.
357. [NRA Honors FCC Chair Ajit Pai with Rifle for Repealing 'Net Neutrality'](#): After working to undo the Obama Administration's 2015 net neutrality rules, the National Rifle Association (NRA) awarded Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai with the "Charlton Heston Courage Under Fire Award."
358. [Koch Document Reveals Laundry List of Policy Victories Extracted from the Trump Administration](#): In a stunning display of their undue access to and influence over the Trump Administration and the Republican-controlled Congress, the Koch Brothers political network bragged in a recently disclosed document about their policy accomplishments in the new Congress, taking credit for GOP tax giveaway and Trump Administration's massive deregulation of American industry.
359. [Venturing Into the Swamp, Trump Dines With Major Donors](#): As Trump prepares for his reelection bid, he has grown cozy with the same wealthy and well-connected donors he once decried, offering them undue access and influence over his Administration's policies in exchange for campaign support.
360. [Trump Is Systematically backing Off Consumer Protections, to the Delight of Corporations](#): Across the federal government, the Trump Administration is rolling back consumer protections at the behest of corporate interests and Wall Street.
361. [CFPB Drops Investigation Into Payday Lender, Golden Valley](#): Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Mick Mulvaney suspended investigation into unscrupulous practices of a major payday lender firm that was alleged to have charged a 950% interest rate on small-dollar loans.
362. [Pruitt Huddled with Coal Executive Who Raised Over \\$1M for Trump](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt reportedly met with a major Trump donor who was seeking EPA regulatory relief from a pollution rule, raising concerns of undue access and influence of Trump campaign donors on the Trump Administration.
363. [Trump Has Shown Little Interest in Beefing Up the FEC](#): Despite candidate Trump's promise to clean up the nation's broken campaign finance system, President Trump has done little to empower the nation's only campaign finance agency, the Federal Election Commission. His failure to appoint new Commissioners runs the risk of the Commission lacking a quorum, thereby suspending its ability to police and enforce campaign finance law – a boon to big-money donors and organizations that regularly test the limits of campaign finance law.
364. [FEC Unlikely to Launch NRA-Russia Probe](#): The Federal Election Commission – hobbled by partisan rancor and the Trump Administration's unwillingness to appoint new Commissioners – is unlikely to take meaningful action to investigate allegations of illicit contributions to the NRA from Russia.

365. [How Two Gulf Monarchies Sought to Influence the White House](#): New reporting about the special counsel's investigation has laid bare how Saudi Arabia and the UAE sought to leverage George Nader and Elliot Broidy – both major fundraisers for candidate Trump – to advance policy goals in the Administration favorable to the Middle Eastern countries' national interests.
366. [How the Energy Industry's Wish List Became Interior's To-Do List](#): Documents obtained by the media show that the Trump Administration's Interior Department relied heavily on top energy lobbyists as they crafted their deregulatory agenda. In fact, metadata retrieved from the Department's memo found that the original author was the government affairs department of Western Energy Alliance.
367. [Mulvaney Advises Bankers on Ways to Curtail Agency](#): In a brash speech before the American Bankers Association, Office of Management and Budget head and Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Mick Mulvaney encouraged banking industry representatives to give financial support to federal office holders in order to receive access and potentially favorable policy treatment.
368. [Invitations Offer Wealthy Chinese Access to Trump at Fundraiser](#): Wealthy Chinese businessmen have gained access to President Trump by attending several of his campaign fundraisers, raising serious ethical questions and raising the possibility that foreign businessmen are making indirect payments to Republican campaign committees – which would be illegal.
369. [A Courtside View of Scott Pruitt's Cozy Ties with a Billionaire Coal Baron](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt accepted two courtside tickets from billionaire coal executive Joseph W. Craft III, who's currently lobbying the Trump Administration and the EPA to get rid of Obama-era regulations on the coal industry.
370. [Cost of New E.P.A. Coal Rules: Up to 1,400 More Deaths a Year](#): The Trump Administration's own study of its plan to deregulate the coal industry found that it would cause up to 1,400 deaths per year. The shocking number is the clearest example yet of the Administration putting polluters before the people.
371. [Trump Tax Cut Unlocks Millions for a Republican Election Blitz](#): Wealthy donors followed through on the tacit quid pro quo surrounding the GOP Tax Scam, using secretive groups to funnel millions to super-PACs or donating directly. Sheldon Adelson, whose company received a \$700 million tax cut, gave \$30 million to Speaker Paul Ryan's super PAC, while Valero Services gave \$1.5 million after receiving a \$1.9 billion cut in the first quarter alone.
372. [Mulvaney Looks to Weaken Oversight of Military Lending](#): Unfathomably, Acting Director Mick Mulvaney announced that the CFPB would no longer proactively seek to protect service members from abusive lending practices.
373. [Trump Order May Allow Rich to Pass on More Tax-Deferred Wealth](#): President Trump directed the Treasury Department to consider a change to IRA rules that would allow those wealthy enough to put substantial amounts in IRAs to pass on even more tax-deferred money to children and grandchildren.

374. [Under Trump's EPA, Asbestos Might Be Making A Comeback](#): In the midst of his whirlwind of ethical abuses and scandals, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt changed the rules regarding toxic substances to make it easier for companies to use asbestos in new products. Asbestos has been banned in nearly sixty countries because it causes cancer.
375. [White House Proposal Rolls Back Fuel Economy Standards, No Exception for California](#): The Trump Administration proposed undoing a planned strengthening of vehicle emissions standards. Incredibly, the Administration's stated rationale was that the standards increase the costs of cars, which will lead to people buying fewer new cars and therefore, because new cars have better safety features, more car accidents.
376. [A Top DOI Official Had At Least Six Meetings with the Mining Industry. She Then Helped Cancel a Study on the Public-Health Effects of Mining](#): Katherine MacGregor, a high-ranking official at the Department of the Interior overseeing mining and land management, pressured the head of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement to end a study into the health effects of mountaintop removal mining after spending months meeting with the biggest groups and companies representing the industry.
377. [Rich Alaskan Donor Gave \\$250K to Trump After EPA Reversed Decision on Pebble Mine](#): Just eight months after reversing an Obama Administration decision to block the Pebble Mine in Alaska, EPA Administrator Pruitt reversed course again, blocking the mine project from moving forward. Robert Gillam, who has spent years and millions of dollars to stop the Pebble Mine project, met with President Trump at Mar-a-Lago just weeks after Pruitt blocked the project and donated \$250,000 to his re-election.
378. [Trump Has Embraced the Big-Money Donor World He Once Shunned](#): After decrying the influence of big money throughout his campaign, President Trump has taken to the Washington pastime, regularly headlining fundraisers for America First, an entity composed of a super-PAC and dark money group working to boost the President and Republicans. These fundraisers provide the wealthy and well-connected the opportunity to hobnob with the President and top administration officials.
379. [Trump Asks Business Groups for Help Pushing Kavanaugh Confirmation](#): The White House issued a memo to business groups soliciting support for President Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court, touting his business-friendly record and support for limiting regulatory authority. Corporate-backed dark money groups have poured millions into the confirmation fight, hoping to reap the financial benefits of a rightwing Supreme Court.
380. ['Super Polluting' Trucks Receive Loophole on Pruitt's Last Day](#): Before finally succumbing to the weight of his endless scandals and resigning in disgrace, EPA Ambassador Pruitt managed one final giveaway to industry, ending enforcement of a cap on new glider trucks, which cause as much as 55 times the pollution as trucks with emissions controls. Pruitt's decision was ultimately reversed by his successor.
381. [EPA Eases Rules on How Coal Ash Waste Is Stored Across U.S.](#): New EPA Administrator Wheeler picked up where his predecessor left off, issuing new rules to benefit the fossil fuel industry. The EPA loosened restrictions on the storage of coal ash, which contains mercury and other harmful chemicals and has contaminated water sources when stored improperly. Administrator Wheeler used to lobby on behalf of Murray Energy, which sought this rollback.

382. [Lawmakers, Lobbyists and the Administration Join Forces to Overhaul the Endangered Species Act](#): The Trump Administration has proposed major changes to the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act that have long been sought by the oil, gas and timber industries, among others. The proposed changes would place more of an emphasis on economic impact and less on conservation goals.
383. [Trump Administration Officials Dismissed Benefits of National Monuments](#): Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke tailored surveys and ignored certain data on national monuments in order to diminish their economic benefits and to make a case for shrinking or un-designating them.
384. [Betsy DeVos' New Proposal Aligns Her With For-Profit Colleges Over Debt-Saddled Students](#): Secretary of Education DeVos issued a plan to weaken the Obama Administration's "borrower defense" rule, designed to help student borrowers recover money if their school was shut down for fraud. DeVos' update would provide 85% less debt relief than the original rule.
385. [DeVos to Eliminate Rules Aimed at Abuses by For-Profit Colleges](#): Secretary of Education DeVos sought to repeal a regulation that required for-profit colleges to show that their graduates were able to get jobs after graduating. Repealing the regulation is a gift to the for-profit college industry, many of which lost funding under the Obama Administration rule, as their graduates were not finding jobs.
386. [The Stealth Campaign to Kill Off Obamacare](#): Lobbying groups like PhRMA pumped millions of dollars into dark money groups backing President Trump and Congressional Republicans' efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and pass the massive GOP Tax Scam.
387. [Court Orders E.P.A. to Ban Chlorpyrifos, Pesticide Tied to Children's Health Problems](#): The EPA's decision under Administrator Pruitt not to ban chlorpyrifos despite EPA's own scientists advocating for the ban was so egregious that a federal court ordered EPA to reverse their gift to the chemical industry and institute a ban on the product.
388. [On Appeals Court, Kavanaugh Helped To Loosen Political Money Laws](#): Judge Kavanaugh, President Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court, has regularly decided in favor of loosening campaign finance restrictions and allowing more money to flow into the political system.
389. [Student Loan Watchdog Quits, Says Trump Administration 'Turned Its Back' On Borrowers](#): CFPB Student Loan Ombudsman Seth Frotman resigned his position in a public letter, writing that the Trump Administration and Acting Director Mulvaney had "abandoned the very consumers it is tasked by Congress with protecting" and "used the Bureau to serve the wishes of the most powerful financial companies in America."
390. [The Government's Top Student Loan Watchdog Is Quitting in Protest](#): The CFPB under Acting Director Mick Mulvaney was accused of suppressing a report showing that student loan companies were using predatory accounting fees to bilk students.
391. [Mick Mulvaney Worries about the 'Moral' Consequences of Failing to Pay Back Student Loans](#): Acting CFPB Director Mulvaney said he worries from a "moral standpoint" about efforts to help student borrowers get debt relief. Under Mulvaney, the CFPB has made it harder for consumers to fight predatory behaviors by financial institutions.

392. [Tax Change Helps Executives Afford Pricier Planes](#): A provision tucked into the GOP Tax Scam that allows a deduction for the full cost of private corporate jets has spurred a boost in private plane sales, as millionaires and billionaires reap the benefits of the tax legislation.
393. [Climate vs. Business Is Rarely A Fair Fight. Trump Is Ensuring That it Isn't.](#): President Trump is seeking to roll back methane emissions regulations implemented under the Obama Administration in order to combat climate change, the latest in the long list of anti-climate, pro-big business policies from the Trump Administration.
394. [Officials Worry Trump May Back Erik Prince Plan to Privatize War in Afghanistan](#): Major Republican donor and founder of Blackwater Erik Prince has proposed privatizing the war in Afghanistan, replacing U.S. troops with mercenaries like those who worked for Prince's company, and President Trump is said to have warmed to the idea.
395. [E.P.A. to Reconsider Obama-Era Curbs on Mercury Emissions by Power Plants](#): The EPA is seeking to undo regulations limiting mercury emissions from coal power plants, despite the extremely harmful effects of mercury on human health and development and the fact that coal plants have already made the necessary investments to come into compliance with the rules.
396. [House GOP Is Pushing a New Round of Tax Cuts That Could Cost \\$2 Trillion Over 10 Years](#): Less than a year after slashing taxes for the wealthy as part of the GOP Tax Scam, House Republicans unveiled a new round of tax cuts that would make permanent many of the Tax Scam's giveaways to the wealthy, like changes to the estate tax and the new pass-through deduction, which can be abused by wealthy individuals like President Trump.

Turned the Presidency into a Profit-Making Enterprise

After nearly two years in office, President Trump has still not taken concrete steps to disentangle himself from his business interests, despite calls to do so from ethics experts and watchdog organizations. In fact, the Trump Organization has expanded domestically and, more concerning still, internationally. Predictably, the Trump Organization has profited from the Office of the Presidency, as foreign governments, domestic interests and high-powered individuals seek to curry favor with the Administration by doing business with President's company. And this behavior doesn't stop with President Trump and his family. Throughout the Trump Administration, senior officials have embraced their public service as a means for private gain.

Examples include:

397. [President Trump is Leasing the Government's Old Post Office for Use as a Private Hotel](#): The Trump Organization currently is a lessor of the Old Post Office in Washington, DC and is using the property as a hotel - an apparent breach of the GSA standard lease agreement, which dictates "No... elected official of the Government of the United States ... shall be admitted to any share or part of this Lease, or to any benefit that may arise therefrom." The GSA – following Trump's inauguration – determined the "simplistic 'black and white' conclusions regarding the meaning" was incorrect.

398. [President Trump Reneges on Promise to Donate Profits from Foreign Governments Generated by Trump Hotels](#): As of March 2017, President Trump had failed to deliver on his promise to donate profits from foreign governments generated by his Old Post Office hotel or other properties or even disclose his plan for doing so.
399. [Kuwait Government Selects Trump Old Post Office Hotel for Gala in Potential Breach of Emoluments Clause](#): The Kuwaiti Government held their annual independence celebration at the Trump hotel, canceling their reservation at a competing property. Reports indicate the change was made after pressure from the Trump Organization. Kuwaiti officials deny allegations the change was politically-motivated.
400. [Diplomats Flock to Trump Old Post Office Hotel to Curry Favor with Trump Administration](#): Reports indicate foreign governments may try to use their patronage of the new Trump hotel to curry favor with the Trump Administration, with one diplomat declaring, "Why wouldn't I stay at his hotel blocks from the White House, so I can tell the new president, 'I love your new hotel!' Isn't it rude to come to his city and say, 'I am staying at your competitor?'"
401. [Industries Book Trump Properties for Conventions](#): The National Confectioners Association is holding two events at Trump's D.C. hotel as it brings members to the capital to lobby for policy changes to benefit their businesses.
402. [Mar-a-Lago – the President's Privately-owned Club – is Being Promoted as “the winter White House” on U.S. Government-Run Website](#): The U.S. Embassy & Consulates webpage for the United Kingdom is promoting the Mar-a-Lago in an apparent violation of U.S. ethics law.
403. [Trump Org Profiteering from 2020 Trump Reelection Effort](#): Already Trump is using his 2020 reelection bid to personally profit, paying Trump owned-companies nearly \$500,000 in rental income in the first quarter of 2017.
404. [Trump Wins Chinese Trademarks](#): China granted the Trump Organization preliminary approval to 38 previously-stalled trademarks.
405. [Ivanka Trump Wins Chinese Trademarks for Her Brand After Meeting with President Xi Jinping](#): Ivanka Trump's business was granted provisional approval to 3 trademarks the same evening she dined with the President of China at Mar-a-Lago.
406. [Ivanka Trump to Launch Fund that Will Solicit Contributions from Foreign Governments and Private Interests](#): Daughter and senior aide to President Trump, Ivanka Trump, has announced plans to launch a 'entrepreneurial fund' for women, which will solicit contributions from foreign governments and private interests. Ethics experts say the plan is likely illegal and, if instituted, will quickly become another avenue for those seeking undue influence with the Administration.
407. [Trump Campaign Chairman Manafort Retroactively Registers as Foreign Agent](#): Paul Manafort is expected to register as a foreign agent after allegations he improperly avoided registration while working for sovereign governments seeking to influence U.S. policy.

408. [Manafort Lobbying for Chinese Company Eager to Earn Trump Administration Infrastructure Contracts](#): Former campaign chairman Paul Manafort is reportedly advising a Chinese company – the Pacific Construction Group – on how to navigate potential U.S. government contracts for infrastructure construction.
409. [Trump's Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, Retains Interest in Shipping Company While Conducting U.S. Trade Policy](#): Wilbur Ross will retain his ownership stake in Diamond S Shipping Group, potentially leading to a bevy of conflicts of interest as Ross fulfills his responsibilities of designing, implementing and executing U.S. trade policy.
410. [Trump's Mar-a-Lago Resort Doubles Initiation Fees from \\$100,000 to \\$200,000](#): In the wake of President Trump's inauguration, Mar-a-Lago – the so-called “Winter White House” – doubled its initiation fee for club members to \$200,000.
411. [Mar-a-Lago Member Secured Private Oval Office Meeting](#): Christopher Ruddy had a private meeting with President Trump – lasting over an hour – allowing his friend to lobby the White House on a policy matter.
412. [Trump's Secretary of Health and Human Services, Tom Price, is Embroiled in Allegations of Insider Trading](#): Secretary Tom Price is alleged to have engaged insider trading of health care stocks using non-public while a member of Congress, raising concerns how he may behave in new Administration post as top health care official.
413. [Fired U.S. Attorney General, Preet Bharara, Was Reported to Have Been Investigating Price's Stock Trades Before Termination](#): Following the surprise firing of U.S. Attorney General, Preet Bharara – who had previously been asked by President Trump to remain in his post – reports surfaced that Bharara was investigating allegations that Secretary Price had engaged in insider trading.
414. [Former Trump Aide, Brian Ballard, Cashes-in as Lobbyist](#): Following his stint as senior campaign and transition aide to President Trump, Ballard has founded a new lobbying organization, earning more than \$1.1 million dollars in the first quarter of 2017. His client list includes several foreign governments and the GEO Group private prison firm.
415. [Former Pence Aide, Bill Smith, Rakes-in Corporate Lobbying Cash](#): Former Chief of Staff to Mike Pence, Bill Smith, has earned over 6 figures in the first three months of 2017 lobbying for several large corporate clients, including AT&T and Microsoft.
416. [Former Trump Aide, Corey Lewandowski, Positions Himself as Lobbyist with Access to Trump](#): Corey Lewandowski, former campaign official for Trump, has launched a new for-profit business to lobby the new Administration. The firm's co-founder Barry Bennett affirmed the organization's ties to the White House are a selling-point for potential clients, saying “Of course, it helps.”
417. [Trump Budget Proposes Cuts to Housing Programs, While Largely Preserving Housing Programs that Benefit Trump Residential Properties](#): The Trump Budget makes massive cuts to federal funding for the poor, but largely preserves the federal housing subsidy that provides private landlords rental payments for low-income households – a policy that the Trump Organization relies on for millions of dollars in revenue every year.

418. [Trump Earns Nine Additional Chinese Trademarks](#): Nine previously rejected trademarks were granted to the Trump Organization by Chinese authorities.
419. [Trump Earns Additional Chinese Trademark](#): The Trump Organization was granted yet another trademark for catering by the Chinese trademark authority. This comes on the heels of a separate batch of Chinese trademarks being approved after Trump's election.
420. [Trump Organization Casino Chinese Trademarks for Macau](#): The Trump Organization was granted a trademark for a Trump-branded casino in the Chinese gambling center, Macau.
421. [Trump Has Russian Trademarks Renewed](#): The Russian trademark authority renewed six Trump trademarks.
422. [Ivanka Trump Seeks Several More Chinese Trademarks](#): After winning approval for a series of Chinese trademarks earlier in 2017, the Ivanka Trump company submitted 14 applications for additional trademarks in China.
423. [Kushner Family Business Stands to Profit from Trump's First Major Law](#): A provision in the first major law signed by President Trump renewed the EB-5 Visa program, which grants visas to wealthy foreign nationals who invest \$500,000 or more in the United States. Mere hours after the provision was signed into law, Jared Kushner's sister was promoting the program's renewal and her brother's White House position to a group of Chinese investors considering purchase of Kushner-owned luxury apartments in the United States.
424. [Trump Loyalist, Corey Lewandowski, Sells Access to the White House](#): Former Campaign Manager and Senior Aide, Corey Lewandowski, launched a new lobbying firm that leverages his access to the White House and unofficial role as an adviser to President to help corporate clients, including predatory pay-day lenders.
425. [Carl Icahn, Billionaire Investor and Friend of the President, Seeks to Shape Policy for Personal Gain](#): Notorious activist investor, Carl Icahn, has been accused of advocating for changes to the EPA renewable fuel policy – changes which would benefit his investments in an energy firm.
426. [Government-Run 'Voice of America' Peddles Ivanka's New Book](#): Government-funded Voice of America ran a report about Ivanka Trump's new book that reads like a promotion.
427. [Senior Adviser Kellyanne Conway Admits the Trump Hotel is a 'Piece of the President'](#): Conway admitted the Trump Old Post Office Hotel is an appendage of the President, making it a "very popular place to have dinner."
428. [Trump Organization Moves to Profit Off Trump Voters with New Line of 'Working-Class' Catered Hotels](#): Citing experience and perspective gained on the campaign trail, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump announced plans to open a new line of hotels catering to "working-class voters."
429. [Trump Hosts Campaign Fundraiser at Trump Old Post Office Hotel](#): President Trump hosted a campaign fundraiser for himself at his Trump Hotel in Washington, personally profiting from his campaign funds while simultaneously using the event to promote the property and brand.

430. [Trump Reelection Campaign Committee Spends More Than \\$600,000 at Trump Properties](#): Only seven months into the Presidency and years out from the 2020 election, the Trump Campaign has already spent \$600,000 at Trump Organization properties.
431. [Leveraging Trump's Presidency, Son Promotes Trump Golf Course](#): Eric Trump once again mixed the Trump business and his father's Presidency at the Trump Turnberry Golf Course opening ceremony, declaring "we made Turnberry great again!"
432. [Trump-Owned Estate Lists for \\$10 Million Above Market Rate](#): A Trump-owned estate in the U.S. Virgin Islands recently listed for \$28 million – well above what some claim is the market rate for such properties – causing observers to question the timing of the sale and to wonder if the Trump Organization is seeking a premium, given the current owner sits in the White House. After the property failed to sell, the price was eventually reduced in August 2017 with no comment or explanation provided by the realty company or the Trump Organization.
433. [Trump Promotes the Trump Organization in Bill Signing Statement](#): In a highly unusual use of a bill signing statement, President Trump promoted his business interests and prowess, declaring, "I built a truly great company worth many billions of dollars. That is a big part of the reason I was elected. As President, I can make far better deals with foreign countries than Congress."
434. [Kushner's Brother's Company Invited to Exclusive White House Tech Roundtable](#): A tech firm partially owned by Senior Adviser Jared Kushner's brother – was invited to attend a White House tech summit with industry leaders, including Microsoft and Apple.
435. [Trump Organization Plans Significant Expansion of U.S. Hotel Chain with Big-Money Campaign Donors](#): The Trump Organization is reportedly planning 33 new hotels with the Chawla family – long-time business partners and big-money campaign donors to the Trump campaign.
436. [Trump Organization Receives Millions to Remove Trump Brand from Toronto Hotel](#): The JCF Capital Group will reportedly pay the Trump Organization \$6 million to exit a naming contract of a Toronto hotel.
437. [Trump Organizations Sells Numerous to Secretive Shell Companies for Millions of Dollars Since Election Day](#): Investigative reporting found that the Trump Organization has sold multiple real estate properties since Election Day for millions of dollars – with more than 70% of the sales occurring between the Trump Organization and opaque shell companies.
438. [Republican Candidates are Clamoring to Spend Campaign Cash at Trump Properties](#): In an apparent attempt to ingratiate themselves with the new President, several Republican candidates are spending big money at Trump Properties for campaign fundraisers.
439. [Republican Governors Association Event at Trump Property Earns Trump Organization More Than \\$400,000](#): The Republican Governor Association hosted a "corporate policy summit" with Republican governors and special-interest lobbyists at the Trump Doral Miami golf club, earning the Trump Organization over \$400,000.
440. [Trump Hotel Pressures Republican Groups to Do Business, Markets Access to Trump Administration](#): Management at the Trump Old Post Office Hotel admits that it uses the President's name to market to conservative and Republican organizations.

441. [Trump-Supported Legislation was Drafted Almost Entirely by Health Industry Lobbyists](#): A measure – supported by the Trump Administration – to greatly reduce patient legal protections from malpractice was drafted almost entirely by health industry lobbyists.
442. [U.S. Attorney Subpoenas Kushner Cos. Over Investment-For-Visa Program](#): The U.S. attorney's office is looking into the Kushner Companies' promotion of EB-5 visas, which allow foreign investors to earn U.S. visas provided they invest in the U.S. This comes after reports of the Kushner Companies using Jared Kushner's role in the White House to spur investment in their properties.
443. [Trump D.C. Hotel Turns \\$2 Million Profit in Four Months](#): Dramatically outpacing initial profit estimates, the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C. earned \$1.97 million in profit in its first four months of operation.
444. [Trump Boasts He Owns One of the Largest Wineries in the U.S. — but Here Are the Facts](#): In a press conference on the events in Charlottesville, President Trump promoted his winery in the nearby area.
445. [Trump: No New Deals. Trump Organization: No, New Deals](#): Despite pledging the Trump Organization would engage in no new foreign deals while Trump was in office, the Trump Organization stated in their own promotional materials that Trump Hotels is “actively expanding its portfolio of award-winning luxury hotels and resorts and seeking global opportunities.”
446. [Trump Hotel at Night: Lobbyists, Cabinet Members, \\$60 Steaks](#): The Trump International Hotel in Washington, DC has become a go-to meeting spot for well-connected conservatives, top industry lobbyists and political fans of the new Administration, juicing hotel profits.
447. [Team Trump and GOP Pals Pass Go, Spend \\$1.7 Million at Trump Properties](#): In little over half a year, Republicans and Republican-affiliated campaign committees have spent more than \$1.7 million at Trump-owned entities.
448. [Value of Trump's Brand Up in Middle East, His Gulf Partner Says](#): The brand value of the Trump Organization has increased in the Middle East since the President's visit to the Middle East in early 2017, helping to fuel sales in Trump-affiliated investments.
449. [Trump Gets Millions from CEOs and Lobbyists Who Join His Golf Club](#): Several lobbyists and corporate executives are using their memberships at Trump-owned properties to increase their access to the Administration and the President directly.
450. [Sale of Brooklyn Housing Complex Would Benefit Trump](#): The potential sale of Starrett City housing complex would net the Trump Organization significant profit. Prior attempts to sell the affordable housing complex were blocked by HUD due to concerns about how the sale might impact low-income households.
451. [Donald Trump Jr. Receiving \\$100,000 for University Speech](#): In July 2017, the President's son, Donald Jr., received payment for a speech that doubled his previous typical speech fees. The speech was organized by a top GOP donor.

452. [Malaysian Prime Minister Gets VIP Treatment at White House — and at Trump Hotel](#): The Malaysian Prime Minister lodged at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, DC during his recent visit to the White House, leading some watchdogs to question if the decision to stay at the property was designed to ingratiate himself to President Trump.
453. [Trump Profits Off of Irish & Northern Irish Government Spending](#): For the first time ever, the Ireland Golf Tour Operator Association – a pseudo government tourism arm of the Ireland Department of the Economy – held its annual gala at the Trump-owned Trump International Golf Links & Hotel Doonbeg in Ireland, leading ethics watchdogs to question whether the decision was meant to ingratiate Ireland in the eyes of the U.S. President.
454. [Trumps Set to Launch Two Real Estate Projects in India, Despite Conflict-of-Interest Concerns](#): Despite promises to engage in “no new foreign deals” while President Trump is in office, the Trump Organization is proceeding with foreign deals previously mothballed, raising concerns of conflicts of interest.
455. [Mar-A-Lago’s New Winter Season: The Trumpettes Are In](#): Trump-owned properties are experiencing a surge in new business from Republican-aligned organizations eager to host their functions at Trump properties.
456. [Ticket Prices Go Up for Trump’s New Year’s Eve Bash At Mar-A-Lago](#): The Trump-owned Mar-a-Lago resort increased ticket prices for their annual New Year’s bash.
457. [Foreign Governments Find Ways to Do Favors for Trump’s Business](#): In an apparent effort to curry favor with the Trump Administration, foreign governments have been engaging in preferential treatment of Trump-owned business ventures in their countries – a breach, ethics watchdogs contend, of the Constitution’s Emoluments Clause.
458. [Trump Sold \\$35M in Real Estate in 2017, Mostly to Secretive Buyers](#): The Trump Organization sold more than \$35 million in real estate in 2017 using LLC shell-companies to conceal purchasers’ identities. Prior to Trump’s bid for the White House, this purchase method was rarely used for sales of Trump-owned properties.
459. [SEC Looks Into Kushner Cos. Over Use of EB-5 Program for Investors](#): The Kushner Company – a real estate firm owned by the family of Senior White House Advisor Jared Kushner – is being investigated for its use of the EB-5 visa program, which grants visas to foreign investors.
460. [How Much Money Has Trump Made from His Hotels and Golf Clubs?](#): The Trump Organization saw an influx of business from political organizations in 2017, according to a recent report by Public Citizen, fueling concerns these political interests are using their patronage of Trump-owned properties to curry favor with the Trump Administration.
461. [Fracking Lobbyists Plan to Spend Big at Trump Hotel](#): The Independent Petroleum Association of American is planning on holding its 2018 annual Washington, DC lobbying event at the Trump International Hotel.
462. [Trump Business Ethics Pledges Left Plenty Room for Profiting](#): The President’s promised “red line” between his business interests and his responsibilities as President of the United States was never drawn, shows reporting over his first year in office.

463. [Trump's D.C. Hotel Was Pricier and Emptier Than Peers in 2017](#): The Trump Old Post Office Hotel in DC charged more than 40% more than its competitors in 2017, new data shows.
464. [More Than \\$1M in Campaign Donors' Money Went to Trump in 2017](#): Trump's campaign and other Republican candidates for office have spent more than \$1 million at Trump properties – revenue that flows directly to the President.
465. [Mar-a-Lago Make-Up: Trump to Headline March 3 Fundraiser](#): Trump is set to host a \$100,000 per plate fundraiser at Mar-a-Lago on March 3, juicing his campaign account and his business' bottom line.
466. [NRCC Offers Donors Chance for All-Inclusive Trump Winery Trip](#): A political arm of Congressional Republicans is sponsoring a raffle for campaign donors. The prize: an all-expenses-paid trip to a Trump-owned winery.
467. [Did Trump Profit from His Own Presidential Transition?](#): New reporting indicates that the Trump Organization may have received significant compensation from American taxpayers during Trump's transition, raising concerns about improper payments.
468. [Document Shows GSA Employees Spending at the Trump Hotel](#): New documents show a Government Service Administration employee spent \$900 to stay at the Trump Old Post Office Hotel in 2017 – the first known instance of federal taxpayer funds flowing to the Trump-owned hotel. The GSA has primary jurisdiction over the government's lease to the Trump Organization.
469. [The Ethics of Donald Trump Jr.'s India Adventure](#): Donald Trump Jr. recently traveled to India to pitch condo sales for a new development project. As part of his itinerary, he will be giving a speech on foreign policy, raising questions if the Trump Organization is exploiting President Trump's status as Commander-in-Chief for personal gain.
470. [This Group Helps Lobbyists Influence Public Officials. The Trump Hotel Is Hosting Its 2018 Gala](#): ALEC – the controversial corporate advocacy outfit – has announced plans to hold its annual gala at the Trump Old Post Office Hotel, fueling concerns the hotel enables political organizations to curry favor with the Trump Administration through private business.
471. [The Trump Administration Won't Stop Promoting Ivanka's Brand, Might Be Running Afoul of Federal Law](#): Ivanka Trump is once again coming under scrutiny for the unlawful use of public office for personal gain, after her private label fashion line continued to leverage her White House position and actions to promote her brand.
472. [Hotel Carrying New Trump Brand Secures \\$6 Million Tax Break](#): A Trump hotel development project in Mississippi recently received a significant tax break from the state, raising questions about the timing and purpose of the preferential development funding.
473. [Pro-Israel Charity Schedules New Gala at Mar-a-Lago in Hopes President Trump Will Drop By](#): The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews plans to hold their annual fundraising event at Trump's Mar-a-Lago, in hopes the President “would be able to stop by” – eliciting concerns about the President profiting directly from his role as President.

474. [Kuwaiti Embassy Returns to Trump Hotel in D.C. for Its National Celebration](#): For the second year in a row, the Kuwaiti Embassy will hold a large National Day celebration at President Trump's hotel in downtown Washington. An invitation obtained by The Washington Post said the event is scheduled to be held in the hotel ballroom the evening of Feb. 26.
475. [RNC Started Paying Trump Campaign's Rent at Trump Tower After It Stopped Covering Trump's Legal Bills for Russia Probe](#): The Republican National Committee was revealed to be paying well over \$35,000 a month to the Trump Organization for rent in the Trump Tower as part of their broader effort to cover the legal costs of President Trump's private defense relating to the Mueller probe.
476. [Melania Trump Parts Ways with Adviser Amid Backlash Over Inaugural Contract](#): Melania Trump was forced to sever ties with Trump's Inaugural adviser after it was revealed that her firm earned more than \$26 million for event planning services associated with the Inaugural proceedings.
477. [Kushner's Family Business Received Loans After White House Meetings](#): Private equity giant Apollo Global Management supplied significant loan support to the Kushner Companies after the Apollo Group's executive team met with White House adviser Jared Kushner, raising suspicion that Mr. Kushner was leveraging his public office for private gain.
478. [Kushner's Overseas Contacts Raise Concerns as Foreign Officials Seek Leverage](#): Government officials from the UAE, China, Israel and Mexico have all discussed ways to influence White House adviser Jared Kushner, seeking ways to leverage his financial difficulties into more favorable policy from the U.S. government.
479. [Jared Kushner's Business \(Unsuccessfully\) Sought Investment from Qatar Government Weeks Before U.S. Government Blockade Against Qatar](#): The Kushner Company – a real estate firm owned by the family of Senior White House Advisor Jared Kushner – sought direct investment from the government of Qatar. After investment talks stalled, the U.S. Government imposed a blockade on Qatar, with Jared Kushner playing a key role in implementing the action and then resisting State Department efforts to end the blockade.
480. [Trump Ally Was in Talks to Earn Millions in Effort to End 1MDB Probe in U.S.](#): Former RNC Deputy Finance Chair and Trump ally Elliott Broidy tried to receive payment for his work pushing to end a Department of Justice investigation into a Malaysian state investment fund, raising corruption concerns.
481. [Trump Organization Says It Has Removed Presidential Seal from Golf Markers](#): In a flagrant bid to capitalize on President Trump's occupancy of the White House, the Trump Organization placed the White House seal on golf flags at Trump properties. Following an ethics outcry, the Trump Organization was forced to remove the logos.
482. [Trump Charges His Campaign Top Dollar to Rent A Basically Empty Trump Tower Office](#): The Trump political operation has once again been shown to be using its resources to enrich the Trump Organization, paying top dollar for a "campaign office" in the Trump Tower that is largely empty and unused. What's more, the current rental rate is significantly higher than what Trump was charging himself back when he was largely self-financing his electoral bid.

483. [Trump Tower Gift Shop Sells Various Tchotchkes with the Presidential Seal](#): In yet another example of the Trump Organization profiting off the presidency, the Trump Tower in New York City has been selling Trump-branded items emblazoned with the White House seal.
484. [EPA Appointee Gets Approval to Consult for Outside Clients](#): John Konkus, an aide to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Pruitt, was cleared to work for private clients, while simultaneously serving in his position with the EPA, raising concerns he may use his public office for private gain.
485. [Defense Dept. Charged Nearly \\$140,000 at Trump-Branded Properties](#): In the first 8 months of the Trump presidency, the Department of Defense spent close to \$140,000 in taxpayer dollars at Trump-branded properties.
486. [Pentagon Spent \\$17,000 at Panama Trump Hotel](#): Pentagon officials spent over \$17,000 in taxpayer dollars on lodging at a Trump-branded property in Panama.
487. [Oil Group to Lobby President After Stay at Trump Hotel](#): In an apparent attempt to curry favor with the Trump Administration, the American Petroleum Institute held their annual board meeting at the Trump International Hotel in Washington, D.C.
488. [Trump Jr., Donor Have Longtime Undisclosed Ties](#): Donald Trump Jr. and Gentry Beach have been shown to have previously undisclosed business ties. The disclosure raises questions about whether Trump Jr. may be exploiting his access to the Trump Administration to the benefit of Beach, and thereby indirectly profiting off the Presidency.
489. [Ivanka Trump Never Cut Ties with the Trump Organization](#): Ivanka Trump continues to blur the line between public service and private business, never fully severing ties with the Trump Organization, resulting in a litany of conflicts of interest that cast doubt on her ability to properly work in the public's interest – not her own interests.
490. [Out of Public View, Trumps and Kushners Are Talking Business](#): In an unprecedented turn, the Trump and Kushner family businesses are now in talks to enter into business together, magnifying the existing conflicts of interest that have come under scrutiny since both families took few steps to separate their private affairs from their responsibilities as public servants.
491. [Republican-Affiliated Groups Have Spent More Than \\$3M at Trump Properties](#): Republican organizations continue to spend big at Trump properties, lining the pockets of President Trump.
492. [Wilbur Ross Says He Divested from Chinese Shipping Firm Months Ago. Ethics Filings Show Otherwise](#): U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross seems to have broken his pledge to divest from his business holdings, including major stakes in the Chinese shipping industry – a direct conflict of interest to his responsibilities as head of the Commerce Department.
493. [Kushner Companies Confirms Meeting with Qatar on Financing](#): The Kushner companies confirmed a meeting with officials from Qatar to consider direct investment from the state's sovereign wealth fund, raising more questions about whether the family business sought to leverage Jared Kushner's White House position for private gain.

494. [Fund-Raiser Held Out Access to Trump as a Prize for Prospective Clients](#): Elliot Broidy reportedly touted his access and influence in the Trump Administration in attempt to win private business, an apparent bid to capitalize on Trump's presidency that may implicate federal lobbying and anti-corruption law.
495. [Wooing Saudi Business, Tabloid Mogul Had a Powerful Friend: Trump](#): David Pecker – chairman of the National Enquirer – is reported to have leveraged his close ties and access to President Trump to court Saudi investment, an unsavory arrangement that may implicate federal lobbying and anti-corruption law.
496. [White House Investigating Loans to Kushner's Business](#): In the face of mounting criticism and suspicion of untoward business dealings, the White House Counsel's Office has been forced to open an investigation into \$500 million in loans secured by the Kushner Companies and whether there are any illicit ties to Jared Kushner's acts as an officer of the White House.
497. [Trump to Host Japanese Prime Minister at Mar-a-Lago](#): Once again, Trump hosted Prime Minister Abe at his Florida Resort, Mar-a-Lago, raising the ire of ethics watchdogs who believe the use of Mar-a-Lago for White House business amounts to taxpayer-subsidized advertising for the Trump Organization.
498. [Critics Say Payday Lenders Are Buying White House Access with Industry Conference at Trump National Doral Hotel This Week](#): In yet another example of an industry seeking to curry favor with the President by spending money with his private business, the payday lending industry hosted its annual conference at the Trump Organization's Doral Hotel in Florida.
499. [Philippine Government to Hold Independence Day Event at Trump Hotel](#): Following in the footsteps of many other nations, the Philippine government spent large at the Trump Hotel in what some consider an attempt to curry favor with President Trump and the Trump Administration more broadly.
500. [Qatar Bought \\$6.5M Apartment in Trump Property](#): In yet another example of the Qatar government seemingly seeking to influence the Trump Administration through private business transactions, the Qatar mission to the United Nations purchased an apartment in the Trump World Tower for \$6.5 million.
501. [Kushners Near Deal with Qatar-Linked Company for Troubled Tower](#): Kushner Companies may soon receive a massive infusion of capital from the Qatari government to bail out the company's failed 666 Fifth Avenue property, fueling concerns that the arrangement suffers from political conflicts of interest.
502. [Company Owned by Chinese Government Awarded Another Contract at Trump Development](#): Despite President Trump's pre-inauguration promise that his businesses would not conduct any new deals with foreign governments, the Trump World Golf Club Dubai awarded a contract to China State Construction Engineering Corp., a government-owned enterprise.

503. [Exclusive: Zinke Linked to Real Estate Deal with Halliburton Chairman](#): Interior Secretary Zinke and his wife Lola are enmeshed in a real estate development deal funded by the chairman of oil company Halliburton, which has significant business in front of the Interior Department. A foundation created by the Zinkes and run by Lola is providing land for and helping shepherd the development, which promises to increase the value of land owned by the Zinkes and will include a microbrewery for the Zinkes to own and operate.
504. [We've Found \\$16.1 Million in Political and Taxpayer Spending at Trump Properties](#): The Trump campaign, other Republican campaigns and organizations and the federal government have combined to spend at least \$16.1 million at Trump-owned properties since his campaign launched. The potentially illegal situation allows the President to direct taxpayer money to his own pocket and creates an additional conduit for the wealthy and well-connected to influence the President.
505. [Ivanka Trump's Business Approved for New Trademarks In Japan](#): The day after the 2016 election, Ivanka Trump's company applied for two new trademarks in Japan, which were later approved around the same time that Vice President Pence was visiting Japan. Ivanka famously joined her father for a pre-inauguration meeting with Prime Minister Abe at the Trump Tower in New York, raising concerns about the intersection of her business interests and the presidency.
506. [Melania Trump Quietly Profits Off of News Outlets Using Her Photos](#): First Lady Melania Trump earned up to \$1 million from a unique agreement with Getty Images that grants her royalties when media outlets use photos of her and stipulates that the photos can only accompany positive stories, another instance of a Trump blurring the line between public service and private profit.
507. [Son of U.S. Envoy to China Using Political Ties to Elevate His Business](#): Eric Branstad, son of former Iowa Governor and current Ambassador to China Terry Branstad, spoke at a conference in Shanghai on the implications of a U.S.-China trade war. The younger Branstad briefly worked for the Trump Administration and plans to return to work on his 2020 campaign, but is currently working on expanding his public relations business to China. At the event, he discussed his personal ties to President Trump.
508. [Some Members of Trump's Exclusive Clubs Appear to Have Been Invited to An Air Force One Tour](#): Members of President Trump's private Mar-a-Lago and Trump International Golf Club in Florida were given private tours of Air Force One, in another instance of President Trump using his office to reward dues-paying club members.
509. [Kushner's Firm Deepens Ties to Those with Business in Washington](#): Jared Kushner's family real estate business has gotten major financial boosts from companies with business before the Trump Administration, raising concerns that the business is benefitting from Kushner's job in the White House and that government decisions are being made to benefit Kushner's bottom line. Brookfield Asset Management is investing \$700 million in Kushner's 666 Fifth Avenue building while also seeking approval from the Administration to acquire a nuclear-power company.
510. [At President Trump's Hotel in New York, Revenue Went up This Spring — Thanks to a Visit from Big-Spending Saudis](#): After two years of falling revenue, the Trump International Hotel in Manhattan earned a bump in revenues in the first quarter of 2018, largely due to a five-day visit by the Saudi Crown Prince's entourage – the Crown Prince himself stayed elsewhere.
511. [Top Trump Donor Agreed to Pay Michael Cohen \\$10 Million for Nuclear Project Push](#): President Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, who was not registered as a lobbyist, was offered \$10 million to help secure government approval and a \$5 billion loan for a nuclear plant project.

512. [In 2014, Political Spending at Trump Properties Was \\$35K. In 2018, it's \\$3.5M](#): A new analysis found that in the first 18 months of the Trump Administration, Trump properties brought in more than \$3.5 million from more than 125 Republican campaigns and political groups hosting events. The total is a hundred-fold increase over the 2014 election cycle, the last before he ran for office.
513. [Trump Offers White House Staffers a Special Perk at His Golf Club](#): President Trump has offered administration staffers a discount at his New Jersey golf club's pro shop, raising concerns that he is both offering an unethical perk and driving staffers to spend money at his club.
514. [GOP Fundraiser Broidy Under Investigation for Alleged Effort to Sell Government Influence, People Familiar with Probe Say](#): Former Deputy Finance Chair of the RNC Elliott Broidy is being investigated for seeking millions of dollars from foreign governments in exchange for using his connections to the Trump Administration to accomplish their goals, including the extradition of a Chinese dissident and the closing of a probe into corruption in the Malaysian government.
515. [Admission to President's Fundraiser Tonight at Trump International Hotel Won't Come Cheap](#): President Trump hosted a fundraiser at his own hotel, charging guests \$70,000 for a photo and \$100,000 for a roundtable discussion, while directing cash into his own pocket via the hotel.

Pursued Public Policy for Trump's Personal Benefit

President Trump's business interests often appear to color his policy priorities. The Trump Administration has both avoided policies that would be detrimental to the Trump Organization and advanced policies that would directly benefit the Trump Organization's bottom line.⁹

Examples include:

516. [Trump Tax Plan Would Drastically Lower His Own Taxes](#): The proposed elimination of the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) by the Trump Administration would drastically reduce the President's effective tax rate – potentially to zero.
517. [Trump Considers Limiting Charitable Tax Deductions to Finance Rate Reduction for Wealthy, Like Himself](#): Reportedly the Trump Administration is considering capping the charitable tax deduction in an effort to finance tax cuts for the wealthy – a particularly cynical proposal, given the reported lack of charitable giving by President Trump and the Trump Foundation
518. [Trump to Review H-1B Immigration Visas, But Not H-2B Visas on Which Trump Businesses Rely](#): President Trump signed an executive order making significant changes to the H-1B Visa program, while ignoring altogether the H-2B visa program on which several Trump owned properties – including Mar-a-Lago – rely for immigrant workers.

⁹ The full extent to which the Trump Organization profits from the Administration's policy agenda is unknown, given his refusal to disclose his tax returns.

519. [Trump's Muslim Ban Excluded Every Muslim Majority Country Where the Trump Org Has Investments](#): The Trump Administration's executive order excluded those Muslim-majority countries – namely, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Dubai, Egypt and Saudi Arabia – in which the Trump Organization conducts business or has investments.
520. [President Trump Changes H-2B Visa Policy, Trump Organization Immediately Asks DOL for Increase in H-2B Allotment](#): The Trump Administration increased the number of H-2B visas permitted per year from 66,000 to 81,000. Three days later the Trump Organization submitted paperwork to the Department of Labor for approval of 76 additional H-2B visa holders. This increase comes as the Trump Administration seeks to reduce other visa types.
521. [Trump's Executive Order to Unwind Rules Governing Pollution Runoff into Small Bodies Water Benefits Trump Golf Courses](#): The Trump Administration's Executive Order to review an EPA rule governing pollution runoff into small bodies of water is thought to benefit the Trump Organization's many golf courses.
522. [Trump Changes U.S.-Cuba Policy, Hindering Trump Organization Hotel Industry Rivals](#): The Trump Administration's restrictions on business with Cuba will significantly limit the hotel industry's plans to develop on the island – undermining the business interests of the Trump Organization's competitors. Some allege the shift in policy may have been an attempt to 'pause' Cuba hotel development until the Trump Organization is better positioned to capitalize on the new market.
523. [Trouble with Trump's Scottish Golf Course Causes Some to Question the President's Future Relations with Scotland](#): Scotland announced it is putting a hold on the development of the Aberdeen golf course property by the Trump Organization, citing environmental concerns. Given prior efforts by the President to use his official capacity to influence the property's development, it is unclear how the President may react to the announcement.
524. [Trump's Position on Gulf Nations' Feud Calls into Question Influence of Trump's Business Interests in Region](#): A diplomatic feud among Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar has some questioning whether Trump's prior business ventures – and failed ventures – in the region may be influencing U.S. foreign policy.
525. [Trump's Position on Gulf Nations' Feud Calls into Question Influence of Trump's Business Interests in Region](#): A diplomatic feud among Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar has some questioning whether Trump's prior business ventures – and failed ventures – in the region may be influencing U.S. foreign policy.
526. [Trump Company Moves to Protect Brand in Chinese Gambling Hub](#): The Trump Organization filed for trademark rights in Macau, China, leading to speculation by industry watchers that the Trump business has future development plans in the Chinese gambling hub.
527. [Trump to Guam Governor: North Korea Threats Will Boost Tourism 'Tenfold'](#): Defying conventional wisdom or logic, Trump told Guam Governor Eddie Calvo his recent saber rattling towards North Korea would fuel greater tourism to the small U.S. territory.
528. [Trump's Business Sought Deal on a Trump Tower in Moscow While He Ran for President](#): It was revealed the Trump Organization was working during the campaign to open a Trump-branded tower in Moscow.

529. [Kushners' China Deal Flop Was Part of Much Bigger Hunt for Cash](#): Senior White House Adviser Jared Kushner spent the past two years courting potential investors for his family's business, leading some watchers to worry his personal business interests may conflict with his official White House duties.
530. [Trump Could Save More Than \\$1 Billion Under His New Tax Plan](#): The White House tax outline would yield huge savings for President Trump if enacted into law.
531. [Flynn Backed For-Profit Nuclear Scheme Inside Trump Transition](#): Before his ouster, National Security Council Advisor Michael Flynn advanced a plan to build private nuclear facilities in the Middle East without disclosing he had previously been paid by the firm advocating for the plan.
532. [Trump's Company Had More Contact with Russia During Campaign, According to Documents Turned Over to Investigators](#): Efforts to expand the Trump Organization's business footprint in Russia during candidate Trump's campaign for President were far more extensive than previously disclosed, leading to some to question potential conflicts of interest.
533. [Trump Interrupts Foreign Trip to Promote Trump-Branded Hotel](#): During an official trip – funded by American taxpayers – to Hawaii, President Trump made an unannounced stop at the Trump Hotel in Waikiki, where he promoted the hotel, greeted employees and thanked them for making the hotel a “tremendously successful project.”
534. [Flynn's Lobbying Subject of Probe](#): Former National Security Council Advisor Michael Flynn is being investigated for previously undisclosed illicit payment by foreign interests – payments that may have influenced his actions as an official of the Trump Administration.
535. [Trump's "Great Relationships" with World Leaders Make Sense for His \[Business\] Empire](#): President Trump's trip to Asia included several locations where the Trump Organization is invested, leading some to question whether his drive to make nice with world leaders – including several who had recently been at odds with the United States – was motivated by the Trump Organization's business interests, as opposed to the U.S. national interest.
536. [The Tax Plan's Mega Gift To Some of Trump's Richest Appointees](#): The Trump-Republican tax plan is a boon to the President, but also several of his senior cabinet officials – each of whom would reap huge savings from the repeal of the estate tax, the lowering of tax rates, and the elimination of the Alternative Minimum Tax.
537. [Trump Winery Again Seeks to Hire Foreign Guest Workers](#): Despite cultivating a public perception that he is opposed to increased immigration, President Trump's businesses petitioned once again to utilize the H-2B Visa program, which enables American businesses to hire foreign guest workers in place of American workers.
538. [Tax Plan Crowns a Big Winner: Trump's Industry](#): The Republican tax plan included major changes to tax law impacting the real estate industry – changes that will significantly benefit the Trump Organization and Trump family.
539. [Special Giveaways in Tax Bill Benefit Family Members, Colleagues of GOP Senators](#): Taking a cue from President Trump, Republican Senators included provisions impacting the alcohol industry in the tax bill that directly benefit their families and those of their friends.

540. [Cornyn's Fossil Fuel Provision Would Enrich Republican Lawmakers](#): A little-noticed tax provision in the Republican's tax giveaway greatly benefited several members of Congress who own an esoteric investment vehicle – so-called energy-related master limited partnerships.
541. [Trump and Cabinet Heirs Stand to Gain More Than \\$20.7 Million](#): Changes to the estate tax included in the Republican tax giveaway are estimated to benefit Trump Administration officials and their heirs to the tune of \$20,000,0000.
542. [Donald Trump and GOP Leaders Could Be Enriched by Last Minute Tax Break Inserted Into Final Bill](#): The Republican tax giveaway included a provision permitting large real-estate-related LLCs to deduct a portion of their “pass-through” income from their taxes – a change that will benefit the Trump Organization, as well as members of Congress with significant real estate holdings.
543. [Trump Administration Waives Punishment for Banks That Trump Owes](#): During the Christmas holiday week, the Trump Administration waived fines on five financial institutions implicated in a global interest rate fixing scandal. One of the benefiting institutions – Deutsche Bank – is owed at least \$130 million in outstanding debt by President Trump.
544. [Florida \(and Mar a Lago\) to Be Spared in Offshore Drilling Expansion](#): The Trump Administration's plan to open offshore drilling along the coast of the United States exempted Florida – and thereby the President's Mar-a-Lago estate – from its plan.
545. [Trump's Company Is Suing Towns Across the Country to Get Breaks on Taxes](#): The Trump Organization has continued its practice of suing municipal governments to lower its tax bills, raising new concerns about the obvious conflicts of interest that cities – which rely on federal funding controlled in part by the Trump Administration – must confront in battling the President's private business.
546. [Ivanka's Clothing Company Will Be Spared from Tariffs, Thanks to Her Dad](#): Proposed tariffs on Chinese goods excluded clothing, shielding Ivanka Trump's clothing line that enjoys trademark protection in China and raising ethical questions of how the decision was reached by the Administration.
547. [New Memo Shows How Republicans Used Tax Bill to Enrich Themselves](#): Taking a page out of President Trump's book, new research shows how Republican members of Congress directly benefited financially from provisions in the “tax reform” package.
548. [Ryan Zinke Is Opening Up Public Lands. Just Not at Home.](#): As U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke moves to ease rules governing energy exploration on federal land, one state has been conspicuously absent from the deregulatory campaign: Montana – Zinke's home state.
549. [After China Approves Money for Trump Project, Trump Orders Help](#): A Trump development project in Indonesia recently received a \$500 million loan from the Chinese government. Days later, Trump called for a bailout for Chinese-government technology firm, ZTE.
550. [Ivanka Wins China Trademarks, Then Her Father Vows to Save ZTE](#): Ivanka Trump was awarded seven new trademarks for business in China, just days after her father promised to help the Chinese-government-backed technology firm, ZTE, raising ethical questions.

551. [Who Gets a New 20% Tax Break? The Treasury Dept. Speaks, and Trump May Save](#): The GOP Tax Scam allows “pass-through” companies to receive a 20% tax deduction, but failed to define what constitutes a pass-through, instead leaving that to the Trump-Mnuchin Treasury Department. Treasury produced a business-friendly definition that experts say will allow the Trump Organization to reap benefits.
552. [Trump Helps Sanctioned Chinese Phone Maker After China Delivers a Big Loan to a Trump project](#): President Trump vowed to help Chinese company ZTE – which had been fined and then prohibited from doing business in the US for violations of sanctions against Iran and North Korea – after a Chinese government-owned business loaned \$500 million to an Indonesian development project that included Trump properties. The Trump Administration eventually rescinded the prohibition on ZTE. Despite a bipartisan promise to push back on ZTE, the White House successfully lobbied Republicans in Congress to drop stringent language against ZTE from the National Defense Authorization Act.
553. [Supreme Court Nominee Has Argued Presidents Should Not Be Distracted by Investigations and Lawsuits](#): President Trump nominated Judge Brett Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court, where Kavanaugh may well make key decisions on constitutional issues raised by the special counsel investigation. Kavanaugh was added to the list of potential justices only after the Mueller investigation started and is notable for his expressed views that presidents cannot be indicted or subpoenaed while in office, raising concerns that President Trump’s personal interests guided one of the most consequential decisions he will make.
554. [Justice Department Seeks to Halt Lawsuit Involving President Trump’s Business](#): The Justice Department has worked to shield President Trump and his businesses, arguing that a suit against the President for violating the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution can’t be allowed to proceed, as it would distract the President from his duties.
555. [IG Confirms Trump’s Involvement in FBI Headquarters Project Across From His Hotel](#): A report by the Inspector General of the GSA found that President Trump was directly involved in the decision to abandon a plan to move the FBI headquarters – currently located across the street from the Trump International Hotel in Washington – to another site and instead to seek to rebuild the current headquarters. President Trump, according to the members of Congress and Administration officials, has taken an especial interest in the project.

Raided the Treasury to Pay for Vacations & Private Business Promotion

President Trump has continued his frequent and unnecessary travel at great expense to the American taxpayer – and often to the benefit of the Trump-owned properties that he visits. All the while, his adult children – namely, his two sons who manage the family business’s day-to-day operations – continue to exhaust taxpayer dollars on Secret Service protection as they travel the globe in promotion of their private interests, with the false imprimatur of the United States government. This same profligacy with taxpayer money has infected Trump’s cabinet, with numerous officials wasting significant sums on first-class travel.

Examples include:

556. [Secret Service Forced to Request More Money to Accommodate Trump's Travel-Heavy Lifestyle](#): The Secret Service has requested an additional \$60 million in funding to cover Trump's travel costs. \$26.8 million of that money is to protect the Trump family at Trump Tower in New York.
557. [Trump's Trips to Mar-a-Lago Have Cost Taxpayers More Than \\$20 Million](#): Less than 5 months into the Trump presidency, his trips to Mar-a-Lago have cost more than \$20 million. That figure includes all 7 of his trips there thus far, with each trip costing an estimated \$3 million.
558. [Secret Service Racking up Costs for Protection of the Trump Family](#): The Secret Service has spent over \$190,000 to protect Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr.
559. [Secret Service Paid \\$64,000 to Inspect Trump Tower Elevators](#): In December 2016, the Secret Service spent nearly \$70,000 to inspect the elevators in Trump Tower in order to prepare the building for the President to spend time there.
560. [Secret Service Has Paid \\$35,000 in Golf Cart Rentals to Protect Trump on Golf Excursions](#): Purchasing orders show that the Secret Service has spent over \$35,000 on golf cart rentals to protect President Trump on the course since his inauguration.
561. [Secret Service and State Department Spent More Than \\$53,000 on Hotel Rooms for a Trump Organization Business Trip to Vancouver](#): When Donald Jr., Eric, and Tiffany Trump took a business trip to Vancouver this year, the U.S. taxpayer ended up spending over \$50,000 on their tab.
562. [Secret Service and State Department Spent More Than \\$16,000 on Hotel Rooms for a Trump Organization Business Trip to Dubai](#): When Eric and Donald Trump Jr. took a business trip to Dubai this February, it cost U.S. taxpayers over \$16,000 to secure Secret Service hotel rooms.
563. [Secret Service and State Department Spent Nearly \\$100,000 on Hotel Rooms for a Trump Organization Business Trip to Uruguay](#): On Eric Trump's trip to Uruguay to conduct private business, nearly \$100,000 of public funds were used on hotel rooms required to protect him there.
564. [Secret Service Spent More Than \\$12,000 on Ski Rentals for Trump Kids' Vacation](#): When Ivanka Trump, along with her husband Jared Kushner and brother Eric Trump, took to the slopes in Aspen this winter, the U.S. taxpayer spent \$12,208 on ski rentals alone through the secret service.
565. [Secret Service Gets Millions More in Taxpayer Money to Protect Trump and Family](#): The Secret Service was forced to request millions of additional taxpayer dollars to finance the continued protection of President Trump and his family.
566. [State Department Spends Thousands on Trump Hotel Rooms](#): The State Department spent more than \$15,000 for Trump Hotel rooms on a recent trip to Vancouver. The State Department officials were on hand to provide "assistance with security and logistics" for the international trip.

567. [U.S. Government in Contractual Dispute with the Trump Organization over a Lease in Trump Tower](#): The General Services Administration is reportedly at odds with the Trump Organization regarding a lease for office space in Trump Tower to allow the Secret Service to provide security for the Trump Family. The dispute is reportedly over the price and terms of the lease agreement.
568. [Trump Has Spent More Than a Quarter of His Time in Office at Trump Properties](#): As of July 31, President Trump had spent 58 of his 196 days in office at Trump-owned properties, at great expense to the American taxpayer.
569. [Bedminster, New Jersey – Home to Trump’s Bedminster Golf Course – Designated Secret Service Priority](#): The Secret Service will now receive millions in federal funding to secure the town of Bedminster, New Jersey, given President Trump’s frequent visits to the golf course.
570. [EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt Spends Thousands in Taxpayer Money to Regularly Fly Home to Oklahoma](#): Citing “informal meetings,” EPA Administrator Pruitt has routinely used taxpayer dollars to fly home to Oklahoma, raising the ire of watchdog organizations that claim the travel is not for official purposes.
571. [Secret Service Can't Pay Agents for Trump and His Family, Report Says](#): The Secret Service has been unable to pay its agents in full citing the undue financial strain of Trump’s regular travel, as well as the cost associated with the protection of his family.
572. [Taxpayers Paid \\$100K on Car Rentals for Tiffany Trump’s Vacation in Italy](#): The Secret Service spent over \$100,000 in car rental payments for President Trump’s daughter’s vacation in Italy.
573. [Mike Pence NFL Game Walkout Was Unethical and Cost Local Police \\$14,000, Watchdog Says](#): Vice President Pence’s trip to an Indianapolis Colts football game, from which he walked out in protest, cost local law enforcement \$14,000 in additional security costs affiliated with the accommodation of the Vice President’s attendance.
574. [Taxpayers Billed \\$1,092 for an Official’s Two-Night Stay at Mar-a-Lago](#): An official of the Trump Administration was billed over \$1,000 for a two night stay at the Trump Mar-a-Lago resort. The U.S. government paid the bill, leading some to question how much the Trump Organization has profited from Administration officials staying at Trump-owned properties while traveling for official business.
575. [Mnuchin Inquired About Using Government Plane for His Honeymoon](#): Treasury Secretary Mnuchin attempted to use a government plane for his recent honeymoon to Europe.
576. [Price’s Private-Jet Travel Breaks Precedent](#): Former HHS Secretary Tom Price regularly used privately-chartered planes to conduct official business, exhausting over \$1 million in taxpayer funds despite the availability of more affordable means of travel.
577. [Trump Kids’ Ski Vacation Incurs Over \\$300,000 in Security Costs](#): Expenditures associated with Secret Service security costs for the Trump family’s ski vacation, previously reported in a Democracy Reform Task Force report, are now thought to total over \$300,000.
578. [Seven Flights for \\$800,000: Mnuchin’s Travel on Military Jets](#): Treasury Secretary Mnuchin spent over \$800,000 on seven separate flights using military aircraft.

579. [Secret Service Paid Mar-A-Lago at Least \\$63,000, Documents Show](#): Between the months of February and April, the Secret Service paid at least \$63,700 in miscellaneous payments to the Mar-a-Lago resort.
580. [Secret Service Spent \\$7,500 on Golf Carts on Trump's Mar-A-Lago Trip](#): Government security officials were required to spend more than \$7000 in taxpayer funds on golf cart rentals from the Trump-owned property – revenue that directly benefits the bottom line of the Trump Organization and President Trump.
581. [Zinke's Wife's Travel Caused Headaches for Interior Staff](#): Lola Zinke has exhausted federal tax dollars with out of the ordinary travel demands, causing some ethics watchdogs to cry foul.
582. [Interior Official Stayed At Resort Owned by Zinke's Billionaire Friend](#): A senior aide to Interior Secretary Zinke stayed three nights at a high-end conference center in Montana on the taxpayer's dime. The property is owned by a billionaire Republican donor and friend of Zinke.
583. [First-Class Travel Distinguishes Scott Pruitt's EPA Tenure](#): EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and his staff have flown first class on the taxpayer dime on numerous occasions – a break from past precedent of EPA Administrators and government-paid travel.
584. [VA Watchdog to Say Chief Wrongly Accepted Wimbledon Tickets, Airfare](#): A report from the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs found that Secretary Shulkin was wrong to accept tickets to the Wimbledon tennis tournament and misused federal funds in financing his wife's travel to Europe.
585. [Donald Trump's Scottish Resort Paid by U.S. Taxpayers for 'VIP Visit](#): President Trump's resort and golf club in Turnberry, Scotland received more than \$6,000 in taxpayer dollars for hotel rooms ahead of the President's official trip to Scotland in July of this year.
586. [Trump in Palm Beach: Sheriff's OT Bill for Feds \\$3.3 Million and Growing](#): Taxpayers paid nearly \$3.3 million to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department between November 2017 and February 2018 to cover overtime costs for sheriff's deputies that provided security to President Trump during his frequent trips to Mar-a-Lago – the exclusive, \$200,000-per-member resort he owns and regularly visits.
587. [Trump Cabinet Members Accused of Living Large at Taxpayer Expense](#): Across the Trump Administration, cabinet officials are under scrutiny for their profligate spending of taxpayer dollars.
588. [White House Scolds Cabinet Officials After Embarrassing Ethics Reports](#): The White House was forced to meet privately with four cabinet officials to reprimand them for their profligate spending of taxpayer dollars.
589. [Pruitt Spent Over \\$105,000 on First-Class Flights](#): During his first year as U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, Scott Pruitt spent more than \$105,000 in taxpayer money on first-class flights – a sum that does not include the \$58,000 that Pruitt spent on charter flights and a military jet.

590. [Pruitt Had Travel Wish List and Asked Staff to Find 'Official' Reasons to Go](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt compiled a travel wish list with several destinations - including Canada, Colombia, India, Japan, Panama, Poland and Saudi Arabia – and asked his staff to find official reasons to justify travel to those countries.
591. [Lobbyist Helped Arrange Scott Pruitt's \\$100,000 Trip to Morocco](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt spent \$100,000 on a taxpayer-funded trip to Morocco and Paris. During the trip, Pruitt was accompanied by eight EPA staffers and a permanent security detail. The trip was organized by a lobbyist and personal friend of Pruitt, Richard Smotkin, who earned a \$40,000-per-month contract from the government of Morocco after the trip concluded.
592. [EPA Explored Private Jet Lease for Pruitt's Travels Last Year](#): To accommodate U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt's propensity for first-class travel, EPA officials considered leasing a private, \$100,000-per-month jet.
593. [Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke Accused of Mixing Politics with Government Business](#): New reporting raises questions about whether Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is using his public office to advance political purposes – a potential violation of U.S. law that bars public officials from using public resources for political reasons.
594. [Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's NRA Visit Among Several Trips Being Questioned](#): U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke raised eyebrows after documents revealed that he inappropriately mixed several official business trips with political events, using taxpayer money to pay for travel costs and accommodations at a number of unofficial engagements, including a National Rifle Association-sponsored retreat at the Four Seasons resort in Dallas for female gun enthusiasts.
595. [Zinke Brought Security Team to Vacation in Turkey and Greece](#): On a private vacation to Greece and Turkey, U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke used taxpayer money to pay for a security detail of U.S. Park Police officers to accompany Zinke and his wife during the entire trip.
596. [Trump's Trade Rep Spends \\$1M on New Furniture, Blames Obama](#): In a flagrant abuse of the public trust, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer spent more than \$917,000 to furnish two offices.
597. [Pruitt Spent at Least \\$9600 on Office Decor, Desks: Email](#): U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt spent at least \$9600 in taxpayer funds to decorate his personal office with art from the Smithsonian.
598. [Pruitt Spent \\$3.5 Million on Security During First Year as EPA Head](#): Newly released U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data shows that Administrator Scott Pruitt spent \$3.5 million on round the clock security, greatly exceeding past EPA Administrators' spending on security.
599. [Scott Pruitt Has Spent A Total Of \\$4.6 Million On Security, New Disclosures Show — Including \\$1,500 On "Tactical Pants"](#): The EPA spent nearly \$5 million on security for EPA Administrator Pruitt, including thousands on “tactical” pants and shirts. The EPA Investigator General found that the supposed security threats against Pruitt did not justify the massive spending totals.

600. [In Trump's U.K. Visit, Some See 'Infomercial' for Money-Losing Golf Resort](#): President Trump plugged his Turnberry golf club during a NATO meeting and while conducting official meetings in the United Kingdom. He then visited the club, which profits from the spending required by his security detail and entourage.



ABOUT THE DEMOCRACY REFORM TASK FORCE

The **Democracy Reform Task Force** is a concerted effort in the House of Representatives to build a government that puts the public interest ahead of special interests. Despite promises to “drain the swamp,” President Trump and the Republican-controlled Congress are pursuing an agenda that primarily benefits the wealthy and well-connected, while flouting long-established norms and laws that prevent public corruption.

To fight back, the **Democracy Reform Task Force** – chaired by Congressman John Sarbanes – is working to confront the Trump Administration’s conflicts of interest and ethical lapses and fight back against special-interest policies in Congress, while advancing positive reforms to improve accountability and transparency in government.