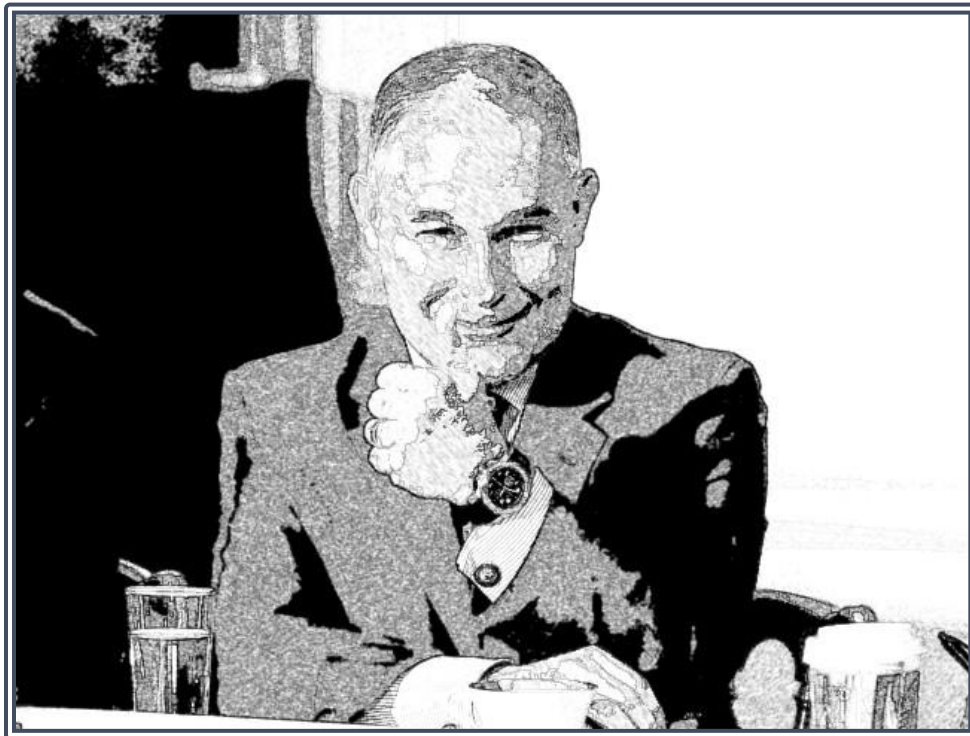




SCOTT GOT BOUGHT, THEN HE GOT CAUGHT

**How Scott Pruitt Wasted Millions of Taxpayer Dollars,
Used His Position for Private Gain and Put the Interests of
Dirty Polluters Ahead of the American People**



A Report from the Democracy Reform Task Force

April 25, 2018

A PERSONAL FIEFDOM AT THE EPA

From the very beginning, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt has treated the EPA as his own personal fiefdom. He has abused taxpayer dollars for first class flights and private plane trips. He's wasted inordinate sums on a large personal security detail and needless upgrades to his personal office. He has leveraged his official government position for private gain, securing a sweetheart condo deal and other special favors from influence peddlers in Washington and back home in the State of Oklahoma.ⁱ

And all the while, as Pruitt hobnobs and curries favor with dirty polluters and other special interests, he has sought to decimate the environmental protections and safeguards that many Americans depend on for clean air, clean water and public health. Pruitt is the official who perhaps has most embraced the ethos of the Trump Administration: stepping on the American people to enrich himself and his donors.

Almost every single day, it seems, Administrator Pruitt finds new and creative ways to break longstanding norms and ethical boundaries – all at the expense of protecting the health and safety of American families. His egregious conduct prompted David J. Apol, the federal government's top ethics official, to take the rare step of sending a letter to the EPA, asking several questions about Pruitt's actions and encouraging the agency to take "appropriate actions to address any violations."ⁱⁱ Pruitt also faces at least 10 ongoing investigations into his conduct, including inquiries led by the White House's Office of Management and Budget, the Government Accountability Office, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and the EPA's own inspector general.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition, Pruitt's cloud of corruption prompted 170 Members of Congress to call for his resignation.^{iv}

ⁱ Friedman, Lisa. "[Expenses, Emails and a Phone Booth: A Guide to Pruitt's Conflicts.](#)" The New York Times. April 18, 2018.

ⁱⁱ Lipton, Eric. "[In Letter to E.P.A., Top Ethics Officer Questions Pruitt's Actions.](#)" The New York Times. April 9, 2018.

ⁱⁱⁱ Lubben, Alex. "[Scott Pruitt Is the Target of No Less Than 10 Federal Investigations.](#)" Vice News. April 22, 2018.

^{iv} Green, Miranda. "[170 Lawmakers Sign Resolution Calling for Pruitt's Resignation.](#)" The Hill. April 18, 2018.



Scott Pruitt is Exhibit A of the contagion that's taken hold in the Trump Administration. Many senior officials – from White House aides to cabinet members to the President himself – simply don't care about conflicts and ethics. Pruitt's disregard for ethical governance is matched only by his disregard for the health of the American people and our environment; for every private flight and special favor, there is an attempt to pollute our water and air, prop up carbon-emitting fossil fuel industries and introduce hazardous chemicals and pesticides into our foods and our ecosystems. These frequent ethical violations and irresponsible policymaking decisions demonstrate once again that this Administration is putting private interests ahead of public interests.

This report by the Democracy Reform Task Force documents the mounting issues that surround EPA Administrator Pruitt's conduct in office.

[First Class Travel](#)

Pruitt has spent hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars flying first class and using private planes to jet back home to Oklahoma, across the country and around the world.

- [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."
By Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis. The Washington Post. February 11, 2018.
- [EPA Explored Private Jet Lease for Pruitt's Travels Last Year](#): "Aides to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt considered leasing a private jet on a month-to-month basis to accommodate his travel needs, according to current and former agency officials."
By Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis. The Washington Post. April 2, 2018.
- [EPA Chief Taps Taxpayer Dollars for Weekend Flights Home](#): "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."
By The Associated Press. July 25, 2017.



Round-the-Clock Security Detail

Unlike any of his predecessors, Pruitt has amassed a large, 24-hour personal security detail, and has justified it by falsely claiming that he faces numerous death threats.

- [EPA Chief Spent Millions on Security and Travel](#): “EPA chief Scott Pruitt’s concern with his safety came at a steep cost to taxpayers as his swollen security detail blew through overtime budgets and at times diverted officers away from investigating environmental crimes. Altogether, the agency spent millions of dollars for a 20-member full-time detail that is more than three times the size of his predecessor’s part-time security contingent.”
By Michael Biesecker. The Associated Press. April 7, 2018.
- [Details Hazy on 'Death Threats' Against EPA's Scott Pruitt](#): “President Donald Trump cites “death threats” to justify the \$3 million round-the-clock security detail for Environmental Protection Agency head Scott Pruitt, who cites his own security to justify lavish spending on first-class air travel. But details about any threats to Pruitt are sparse.”
By Mary Papenfuss. The Huffington Post. April 9, 2018.

Office Upgrades

Pruitt made a number of controversial, taxpayer-funded changes to his office.

- [Scott Pruitt Broke the Law When He Installed a \\$43,000 Soundproof Phone Booth in His Office](#): “Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, broke spending laws when he installed a \$43,000 soundproof privacy phone booth in his office, the Government Accountability Office ruled. Under federal law, Presidential appointees are allotted \$5,000 to decorate their offices, unless Congress is notified in advance.”
By Alana Abramson. Fortune. April 16, 2018.
- [EPA Chief Scott Pruitt Sweeps Office for Bugs, Installs High-Tech Locks](#): “The head of the Environmental Protection Agency used public money to have his office swept for hidden listening devices and bought sophisticated biometric locks for additional security.”
By Michael Biesecker. The Associated Press. December 19, 2017.



[A Sweetheart Condo Deal](#)

Pruitt landed arguably the best rental agreement on Capitol Hill – a condo for \$50 a night that he rented from the wife of an energy lobbyist with business before the EPA.

- [Scott Pruitt, E.P.A. Chief, Rented Residence from Wife of Energy Lobbyist](#): “Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, rented a residence in Washington in 2017 that was partly owned by the wife of a top energy lobbyist whose firm, according to disclosure forms, conducted business before the E.P.A. that same year.”
By Brad Plumer and Eric Lipton. The New York Times. March 30, 2018.
- [Pruitt Had a \\$50 A Day Condo Linked to Lobbyists. Their Client's Projects Were Approved](#): “The EPA signed off last March on a Canadian energy company’s pipeline-expansion plan at the same time that the E.P.A. chief, Scott Pruitt, was renting a condominium linked to the energy company’s powerful Washington lobbying firm.”
By Eric Lipton. The New York Times. April 2, 2018.
- [EPA Chief Pruitt Joined by Family in Condo Tied to Lobbyist 'Power Couple'](#): “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt’s adult daughter used a second room in the Capitol Hill condo co-owned by the wife of a top lobbyist for energy firms, ABC News has learned, despite statements from the EPA that Pruitt paid for only one bedroom.”
By John Santucci, Matthew Mosk and Stephanie Ebbs. ABC News. March 31, 2018
- [EPA Administrator's Lobbyist-Owned Pad Was GOP Fundraising Hub](#): “The lobbyist-owned townhouse that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt rented for relatively small nightly sums also served as a hub for GOP lawmakers raising money for their congressional campaigns.”
By Lachlan Markay and Sam Stein. The Daily Beast. April 2, 2018.

[Pay Raises for Favorite Aides; Demotions for Anyone Who Challenged Him](#)

Pruitt ignored the advice of the White House and gave two of his staffers large raises – on the taxpayers’ dime. At the same time, he sidelined any aide who questioned his conduct.



- [Scott Pruitt Bypassed the White House to Give Big Raises to Favorite Aides](#): “In early March, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt approached the White House with a request: He wanted substantial pay raises for two of his closest aides. The aides, Sarah Greenwalt and Millan Hupp, were part of the small group of staffers who had traveled with Pruitt to Washington from Oklahoma, where he had served as attorney general.”
By Elaina Plott and Robinson Meyer. The Atlantic. April 3, 2018.
- [Internal Email Contradicts Scott Pruitt's Account of Controversial Raises](#): “An email that suggests EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt personally signed off on a controversial pay raise for a favored aide last month is roiling the agency.”
By Elaina Plott. The Atlantic. April 9, 2018.
- [EPA Officials Sidelined After Questioning Scott Pruitt](#): “At least five officials at the Environmental Protection Agency, four of them high-ranking, were reassigned or demoted, or requested new jobs in the past year after they raised concerns about the spending and management of the agency’s administrator, Scott Pruitt.”
By Eric Lipton, Kenneth P. Vogel and Lisa Friedman. The New York Times. April 5, 2018.
- [E.P.A. Contractor Has Scoured the Agency for Anti-Trump Officials](#): “One of the top executives of a consulting firm that the Environmental Protection Agency has recently hired to help it with media affairs has spent the past year investigating agency employees who have been critical of the Trump administration, federal records show.”
By Eric Lipton and Lisa Friedman. The New York Times. December 15, 2017.

[Selling Access to Industry Insiders](#)

Pruitt has used his position as EPA Administrator to grant special access to industry polluters and campaign donors. As a result, he’s embraced and advanced a pro-pollution agenda.

- [Embattled EPA Chief's Calendar Shows Industry Had His Ear](#): “EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt held 25-times more meetings with industry representatives than environmental advocates during his first seven months in office, according to a Reuters analysis of his schedule, reflecting the agency’s pro-business approach under his tenure.”
By Timothy Gardner and Richard Valdmanis. Reuters. April 6, 2018.



- [E.P.A. Chief's Calendar: A Stream of Industry Meetings and Trips Home](#): "Since taking office in February, Mr. Trump's E.P.A. chief has held back-to-back meetings, briefing sessions and speaking engagements almost daily with top corporate executives and lobbyists from all the major economic sectors that he regulates — and almost no meetings with environmental groups or consumer or public health advocates, according to a 320-page accounting of his daily schedule from February through May, the most detailed look yet at what Mr. Pruitt has been up to since he took over the agency."
By Eric Lipton and Lisa Friedman. The New York Times. October 3, 2017.
- [During First Year, Pruitt Met with 39 Donors Who Gave \\$286K to OK Campaigns and PACs](#): "Environmental Protection Agency administrator Scott Pruitt has met during the last year with more than three dozen organizations that donated to his past campaigns and political committees, according to a MapLight analysis."
By Andrew Perez. MapLight. April 10, 2018.
- [At Adelson's Request, Pruitt Met with Israeli Company That EPA Will Study](#): "EPA has signed a research agreement with an Israeli company that Administrator Scott Pruitt met with last year at the request of GOP mega-donor Sheldon Adelson."
By Alex Guillén. POLITICO. March 28, 2018.
- [Pruitt Huddled with Coal Executive Who Raised Over \\$1M for Trump](#): "EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt met with an Indiana coal executive last year who was seeking to soften a pollution rule — and who once boasted about raising more than a million dollars for President Donald Trump's campaign, according to documents provided to POLITICO."
By Alex Guillén. POLITICO. March 16, 2018.
- [EPA Appointee Gets Approval to Consult for Outside Clients](#): "A key aide to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has been granted permission to make extra money moonlighting for private clients whose identities are being kept secret."
By Michael Biesecker. The Associated Press. March 6, 2018.
- [Pruitt Bars Some Scientists from Advising E.P.A.](#): "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."
By Lisa Friedman. The New York Times. October 31, 2017.



- [Scott Pruitt Is Carrying Out His E.P.A. Agenda in Secret, Critics Say](#): "... As he works to roll back regulations, close offices and eliminate staff at the agency charged with protecting the nation's environment and public health, Mr. Pruitt is taking extraordinary measures to conceal his actions, according to interviews with more than 20 current and former agency employees." By Coral Davenport and Eric Lipton. The New York Times. August 11, 2017.

[Advancing a Pro-Pollution Agenda](#)

Pruitt has undermined the EPA's mission and opened his arms to scores of dirty polluters, putting industry profits ahead of clean air, clean water and public health.

- [Counseled by Industry, Not Staff, E.P.A. Chief Is Off to a Blazing Start](#): "In the four months since he took office as the Environmental Protection Agency's administrator, Scott Pruitt has moved to undo, delay or otherwise block more than 30 environmental rules, a regulatory rollback larger in scope than any other over so short a time in the agency's 47-year history, according to experts in environmental law." By Coral Davenport. The New York Times. July 1, 2017.
- [The U.S. Government Is Ignoring Its Own Scientists' Warning That a Dow Pesticide Causes Brain Damage in Children](#): "Chlorpyrifos is one of the most widely used pesticides on American farms.... It's cheap, and it works well; chlorpyrifos is derived from the same chemical family as sarin nerve gas, and kills insects by attacking their nervous system. But exposure to chlorpyrifos is also linked to brain damage in infants and kids, and nervous system damage in adults, like the farm workers who handle it. After his agency's scientists sounded a clear signal of these harms, Scott Pruitt, the new administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, chose not to ban the chemical." By Zoë Schlanger. Quartz. March 30, 2017.
- [67 Environmental Rules on the Way Out Under Trump](#): "Scott Pruitt, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, has frequently met with industry executives and lobbyists. The E.P.A. has been involved in nearly one-third of the policy reversals." By Nadja Popovich, Livia Albeck-Ripka and Kendra Pierre-Louis. The New York Times. January 31, 2018.



[Questionable Conduct Back in His Oklahoma Days](#)

Pruitt's shady behavior dates back to his days as Oklahoma Attorney General.

- [Scott Pruitt Before the E.P.A.: Fancy Homes, a Shell Company and Friends with Money](#): "At the E.P.A., Mr. Pruitt is under investigation for allegations of unchecked spending, ethics lapses and other issues, including his interactions with lobbyists. An examination of Mr. Pruitt's political career in Oklahoma reveals that many of the pitfalls he has encountered in Washington have echoes in his past."
By Steve Eder and Hiroko Tabuchi. The New York Times. April 21, 2018.
- [Scott Pruitt, Trump's Embattled EPA Chief, Involved in Shady 2011 Real Estate Deal](#): "In 2011, Pruitt and his wife, Margaret, bought a property in Tulsa, Oklahoma, just days before a court ruled that it had been fraudulently transferred by a Las Vegas developer who was on the hook for a \$3.6 million loan default. Pruitt, who was then Oklahoma attorney general, apparently flipped the property for a \$70,000 profit four months later, selling it to a dummy corporation set up by a major campaign contributor, Kevin Hern."
By Arn Pearson. Salon. April 5, 2018.
- [Donors Lobbying EPA Gave \\$181K to Pruitt Oklahoma Committees, Now Reaping Benefits](#): "As an Oklahoma politician, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt received \$181,000 in political contributions from donors who lobbied the EPA last year."
By Andrew Perez and Laura Curlin. MapLight. April 2, 2018.





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 the long-established norms and laws that prevent public corruption.

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.

