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Big Law, Big Conflicts: More than 75 Trump Administration Lawyers Present Revolving Door Concerns

[Alan Zibel](#)

Under the Trump administration, the revolving door between the U.S. government and law firms that represent big, powerful corporations is spinning like never before.

Dozens of Trump administration lawyers working in agencies including the White House, Department of Justice, Interior Department and the Environmental Protection Agency — are now overseeing the government's interactions with the same kinds of clients they recently represented, a Public Citizen analysis finds. A list of revolving-door lawyers is below, and the full spreadsheet with sources is [available here](#).

Public Citizen studied the backgrounds of 127 senior Trump administration lawyers, examining their prior employers and clients. Of those officials, 76 present revolving-door concerns in Public Citizen's judgment, meaning they previously represented companies with business before the government, or worked in the same field they now oversee. They have moved to the Trump administration from doing legal work and lobbying for BP, Ford Motor Co., Verizon, Koch Industries and many others.

Corporate lawyers are in charge of almost every major division at the Justice Department, charged with enforcing laws they recently sought to defend against or undermine:

- The department's solicitor general [represented the tobacco industry](#).
- The antitrust division is headed by [a former lobbyist](#) for big corporations.
- The nominee to run the civil rights division has [defended corporations](#) against employment discrimination charges.
- The nominee to run the criminal division [defends white-collar, corporate crime cases](#) and [helped a Russian bank](#) investigate whether its computer servers communicated directly with Donald Trump's company.
- The national security division is led by [Boeing's](#) former assistant general counsel.
- The nominee to run the environment and natural resources division [represented BP](#) in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster. The official temporarily [holding that spot](#) is a former lobbyist who [represented](#) a major electric utility, [authored](#) a paper that was critical of endangered species protection and [recused](#) himself from a long list of cases and topics.

The problem is pervasive in the Trump administration, as evidenced by examples in other agencies:

- At the Environmental Protection Agency, the Trump administration has hired or nominated at least 10 lawyers who have represented or worked for polluters including [coal miners](#), oil refiners, [the Koch brothers](#), paper companies and agricultural giants.
- At the Interior Department, the second-ranking official is a lawyer and former lobbyist who represented a [controversial copper mine](#) and a [major agricultural water district](#). The Trump administration has hired lawyers with close ties to the Koch Brothers, who own major oil refineries and have been funding efforts to open up public lands to energy exploration.
- One of the Koch-tied lawyers in the Trump administration recently [renewed](#) mining leases in Minnesota for a Chilean company. That company is controlled by a Chilean billionaire who the U.S. government after the Obama administration [blocked](#) renewal of the copper-mining leases and also rents out [a Washington, D.C.](#) mansion to Ivanka Trump and her family.
- At the Education Department, a lawyer who worked [at a for-profit college](#) that got into trouble with the government is playing a key role in developing government policy on higher education issues.

Public Citizen's analysis excludes independent regulators such as the Securities and Exchange Commission, but those agencies have their [own fair share](#) of revolving-door issues. Others who worked in relatively junior roles at corporate law firms and lacked a long legal track record did not show enough evidence of revolving-door issues in Public Citizen's analysis. Some Trump lawyers previously worked in government and military jobs and thus do not present a revolving door issue. Others have extreme right-wing views on such issues as abortion and civil rights, but don't have a track record of working for corporate interests.

The analysis highlights how Trump's promise to "drain the swamp" when he got to Washington, D.C. has turned out to be a typical substance-free boast. Trump's appointments have included dozens of lobbyists whose governmental responsibilities fall into the same specific issue areas on which they lobbied within the past two years. Public Citizen previously identified [36 such appointees](#).

While the names of government lawyers are rarely in the headlines, they are crucial to the functions of government. They make decision after decision that impacts Americans' lives. They decide whether the government will give polluters, scam artists, predatory lenders and other wrongdoers a harsh penalty or an easy pass. They determine whether the federal government will go soft on corporate wrongdoers or allow them to prosper.

Certainly, many Trump lawyers have recused themselves from specific cases that involve their former clients. But doing so does not solve the problem. Having spent years defending corporate clients and absorbing their worldview it defies commonsense that such lawyers would pivot from representing BP to cracking down on Shell or ExxonMobil.

Public Citizen's analysis also highlights the disproportionate influence of a few high-powered corporate law firms. Jones Day has 12 alumni in the Trump administration, while Kirkland & Ellis has 11 alumni.

Employer	Trump Lawyer Alumni
U.S. Senate	15
U.S. House	13
Jones Day	12
Kirkland & Ellis LLP	11
Justice Department	8
Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher	4
Heritage Foundation	4
King & Spalding LLP	4
Squire Patton Boggs/Patton Boggs	4
Sullivan & Cromwell	4
Freedom Partners	3
White House (George W. Bush)	3
Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP	2

For the sake of comparison, Public Citizen identified 23 key legal jobs and compared Trump legal hires to the Obama administration officials who held the same positions. In the Obama administration, nine presented revolving-door concerns, compared with 17 in the Trump administration. Close connections between the government and a handful of corporate law firms are by no means exclusive to the Trump administration. They are a longstanding problem that has often eluded attempts at [reform](#).

Under the Obama administration, former lobbyists could not be appointed to any agency they had lobbied in the last two years. If appointed to an agency they had not lobbied, they could not oversee the same "specific issue areas" they had lobbied in the last two years.

This restriction applied only to former lobbyists, many of whom were lawyers. All Obama administration officials had to recuse themselves from official actions impacting their former employers or clients within the last two years. Waivers could be granted but were rare. By contrast, the Trump administration has granted a slew of waivers for [White House](#) and [federal agency officials](#), vastly exceeding the number issued in the early months of the Obama administration and authorizing conflicts that were not permitted in the Obama administration.

These officials bring to the job a deep appreciation of the views of the corporations they will now help regulate. It would be folly to expect anything else of the Trump administration, which is destined to be remembered as the most corrupt in American history.

Search:

Agency	Name	Title	Previous Employer	Previous Employer #2	Previous Employer #3
Agriculture	Rebeckah Adcock	Senior Advisor	CropLife America	U.S. Senate	American Farm Bureau Federation
Commerce	Catherine Bellah Keller	Deputy general counsel for strategic initiatives	Latham & Watkins	Dimensional Fund Advisors	
Commerce	Gilbert Kaplan	Undersecretary for international trade	King & Spalding LLP		
Commerce	Mike Walsh	Deputy general counsel	O'Melveny & Myers LLP		
Commerce	Peter B. Davidson	General counsel	Verizon		
Director of National Intelligence	Jason Klitenic	General counsel (Nominated)	Holland & Knight		
Education	Carlos G. Muxiz	General counsel (Nominated)	McGuireWoods LLP		
Education	Robert Eitel	Senior Counselor to the Secretary	Bridgepoint Education		
Energy	Bernard Leonard McNamee	Deputy General Counsel for Energy Policy	McGuireWoods LLP		
Energy	G. Michael Brown	Deputy General Counsel for Compliance	Jordan, Houser & Flournoy, LLP	Ben Carson presidential campaign	Chesapeake Energy

Agency	Name	Title	Previous Employer	Previous Employer #2	Previous Employer #3
Energy	George Fibbe	Deputy General Counsel for Litigation, Regulation and Enforcement	Sunnova Energy	BHP Billiton	
Energy	Mark Menezes	Undersecretary of Energy	Berkshire Hathaway Energy	Hunton & Williams	U.S. House
Energy	Sean Cunningham	Executive Director, Office of Energy Policy and Systems Analysis	Balch & Bingham LLP,	U.S. House	
Environmental Protection Agency	Andrew Wheeler	Deputy Administrator (nominated)	Faegre Baker Daniels	U.S. Senate	Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Protection Agency	Bill Wehrum	Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation	Hunton & Williams	Environmental Protection Agency	
Environmental Protection Agency	David Fotouhi	Deputy general counsel	Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP		
Environmental Protection Agency	Erik Baptist	Senior Deputy General Counsel	American Petroleum Institute	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	McDermott Will & Emery
Environmental Protection Agency	George Sugiyama	Senior Advisor for the Office of Policy	Troutman Sanders	U.S. Senate	
Environmental Protection Agency	Justin Schwab	Deputy General Counsel	Baker & Hostetler LLP		
Environmental Protection Agency	Marcella Burke	Deputy general counsel	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP		
Environmental Protection Agency	Matthew Z. Leopold	General counsel	Carlton Fields	Florida Department of Environmental Protection	Justice Department

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Environmental Protection Agency	Patrick Traylor	Deputy Assistant Administrator at EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	Hogan Lovells	American Chemistry Council	
Environmental Protection Agency	Samantha Dravis	Associate Administrator, EPA's Office of Policy	Republican Attorneys General Association	Rule of Law Defense Fund	Freedom Partners
Environmental Protection Agency	Susan Bodine	Assistant administrator for enforcement and compliance assurance	U.S. Senate	Barnes & Thornburg LLP	
Executive office of the President	Jeffrey Gerrish	Deputy U.S. trade representative, (rank of ambassador)	Skadden, Arps		
Health and Human Services	Brian R Stimson	Deputy general counsel for litigation	Alston & Bird LLP		
Health and Human Services	Eric Hargan	Deputy secretary	Greenberg Traurig		
Health and Human Services	Kelly Cleary	Deputy general counsel	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP		
Health and Human Services	Robert Charrow	General Counsel	Greenberg Traurig	Intrexon Corp.	
Homeland Security	John Marshall Mitnick	General counsel	Heritage Foundation	Raytheon	
Housing and Urban Development	J. Paul Compton Jr.	General counsel	Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP		
Housing and Urban Development	Neal J. Rackleff	Assistant secretary for community	Locke Lord LLP	City of Houston	

Agency	Name	Title	Previous Employer	Previous Employer #2	Previous Employer #3
		planning and development			
Interior	Brandon Middleton	Deputy solicitor for water resources	U.S. Senate	Harrison, Temblador, Hungerford & Johnson	Pacific Legal Foundation
Interior	Daniel Jorjani	Principal Deputy Solicitor/Special Assistant to the Secretary	Freedom Partners	Charles Koch Institute	
Interior	David Bernhardt	Deputy secretary	Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck		
Interior	Gary Lakowski	Counselor to the Solicitor	Freedom Partners	Federal Election Commission	
Interior	Richard Goeken	Deputy solicitor for parks and wildlife	Smith Currie & Hancock, L.L.P	Saltman & Stevens	
Justice	Beth Ann Williams	Assistant attorney general for the Office of Legal Policy	Kirkland & Ellis LLP		
Justice	Brian Allen Benczkowski	Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division (Nominated)	Kirkland & Ellis LLP		
Justice	Chad Readler	Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division	Jones Day		
Justice	Christopher A. Wray	Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation	King & Spalding LLP		
Justice	Eric S. Dreiband	Assistant attorney general for the civil	Jones Day		

Agency	Name	Title	Previous Employer	Previous Employer #2	Previous Employer #3
		rights division (Nominated)			
Justice	James Burnham	Senior Counsel, Civil Division	White House	Jones Day	
Justice	Jeffrey Bossert Clark	Assistant Attorney General, Environment and Natural Resources (Nominated)	Kirkland & Ellis LLP		
Justice	Jeffrey Bryan Wall	Principal Deputy Solicitor General	Sullivan & Cromwell		
Justice	Jesse Panuccio	Associate attorney general (Acting)	Foley & Lardner	Florida state govt	Cooper & Kirk PLLC
Justice	Jeffrey Wood	Acting Assistant Attorney General for Environment and Natural Resources	Balch & Bingham LLP		
Justice	John C. Demers	Assistant attorney general for the national security division	Boeing		
Justice	John Gore	Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights	Jones Day		
Justice	Makan Delrahim	Assistant attorney general for the antitrust division	Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck		
Justice	Noel J. Francisco	Solicitor general	Jones Day		
Labor	Kate O'Scannlain	Solicitor of Labor	Kirkland & Ellis LLP		
National Labor Relations Board	Peter B. Robb	General counsel	Downs Rachlin Martin		

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State	John J. Sullivan	Deputy secretary of State	Mayer Brown	Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher	
Transportation	Jeffrey A. Rosen	Deputy secretary	Kirkland & Ellis LLP		
Transportation	Steven Gill Bradbury	General Counsel	Dechert LLP		
Treasury	Brent McIntosh	General counsel	Sullivan & Cromwell	White House (George W. Bush)	Justice Department
Treasury	Brian Richard Callanan	Deputy general counsel	Cooper & Kirk PLLC	U.S. Senate	King & Spalding LLP
Treasury	Heath P. Tarbert	Assistant secretary for international markets and development	Allen & Overy LLP		
Treasury	Martha M. Pacold	Deputy general counsel	Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar Scott		
Treasury	Sigal Mandelker	Under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence	Proskauer Rose		
US Trade Representative	Stephen P Vaughn	General counsel	King & Spalding LLP	Skadden, Arps	
Veterans Affairs	James Byrne	General counsel	Lockheed Martin		
White House	Andrew Olmem	Special Assistant to the President for Financial Policy	Venable LLP	U.S. Senate	Mayer Brown
White House	Annie Donaldson	Deputy Assistant to the President, Special Counsel to the President, and Chief of Staff for the Office of the White House Counsel	Jones Day	Patton Boggs	Romney for President

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White House	D.J. Gribbin	Special Assistant to the President for Infrastructure Policy	HDR Inc.	Macquarrie Group	Department of Transportation
White House	Don McGahn	White House Counsel	Jones Day	Patton Boggs	Federal Election Commission
White House	Grace Koh	Special Assistant to the President for Technology, Telecom, and Cyber-Security Policy.	U.S. House	Cox Enterprises	
White House	Jim Carroll	Deputy Director and Acting Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.	Ford Motor Co.	Treasury Department	White House (George W. Bush)
White House	John Eisenberg	Deputy Assistant to the President, National Security Council Legal Advisor, Deputy Counsel to the President for National Security Affairs	Kirkland & Ellis LLP	Justice Department	
White House	Kevin O'Scannlain	Special Assistant to the President and Associate Counsel to the President	Chevron	DLA Piper LLP	U.S. Senate
White House	Lance Leggitt	Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy	Baker Donelson	White House (George W. Bush)	Health and Human Services
White House	Schuyler Schouten	Special Assistant to the President and Associate	Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP	Henry Kissinger	

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White House	Stefan Passantino	Counsel to the President Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Counsel to the President	Dentons	McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP	Newt 2012
White House Office of Management and Budget	Joe Grogan	Associate Director, Health Programs	Gilead	Amgen	The Marwood Group
White House Office of Management and Budget	Nicholas Matich	Deputy general counsel	Bancroft Williams & PLLC	Williams & Connolly LLP	

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