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Fossil Favors

50 House Lawmakers Received Nearly \$28M Over Their Careers from Dirty Energy Interests as Republicans Push False 'War on Energy' Narrative

By Alan Zibel

Flush with record profits from sky-high energy prices, the U.S. energy industry has poured millions into the campaigns of House lawmakers supporting giveaways to the fossil fuel industry.

Republican energy [legislation](#), misleadingly dubbed the “Lower Energy Costs Act” would represent a return to the drill-everywhere, climate-denying policies of the Trump administration. Contrary to claims that it would “[unleash American energy dominance](#),” the bill is chock full of favors for the fossil fuel industry. It would raise consumers’ energy bills by promoting exports of fossil fuels to Asia. With renewable energy making up [a rapidly growing share](#) of U.S. energy production, the Republican bill would go in the opposite direction, rolling back policies to promote clean, renewable energy enacted in last year’s Inflation Reduction Act.

To illustrate the extraordinary power of the oil and gas industry in bankrolling lawmakers in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives, Public Citizen analyzed campaign finance data from OpenSecrets.org. The analysis¹ found that:

- Fifty members of the House of Representatives have received a combined total of \$27.9 million over their careers from fossil fuel interests That includes \$8.3 million in the 2022 election cycle alone.
- These top 50 House career recipients of oil and gas campaign contributions include 45 Republicans and five Democrats, with \$24.2 million going to Republicans and \$3.6 million to Democrats.
- The top 10 House career recipients of oil and gas money include nine Republicans — including House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-La.) and one Democrat, Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-Texas). McCarthy has [raised \\$2.8 million](#) over his career from fossil fuel interests, including [Chevron and Occidental Petroleum](#). Scalise has raised [\\$2.1 million](#) over

¹ The analysis examined OpenSecrets data on candidates who were elected to Congress in 2022 and were the top 50 recipients of oil and gas contributions during that cycle. We compiled career oil and gas contributions for those members, also from OpenSecrets data. The data includes campaign contributions from company political action committees as well as contributions over \$200 from individuals.

his career from fossil fuel interests. Cuellar has raised [\\$1.3 million](#) from oil and gas interests over his career.

- New GOP House lawmakers have been prodigious oil and gas fundraisers. Seventeen lawmakers in their first or second term in Congress, all Republicans, have raised a combined \$2.9 million from oil and gas interests over their careers and \$5.4 million in the 2022 election cycle alone. Rep. August Pfluger (R-Texas) has been an especially prodigious oil and gas fundraiser, [raking in nearly \\$1.1 million](#) from oil and gas interests in just two election cycles.
- Of the top 50 career fossil fuel money recipients, 19 are from Texas — by far the most of any state, including 15 Republicans and four Democrats.

False Claims About Energy, Fearmongering About Chinese ‘Communism’

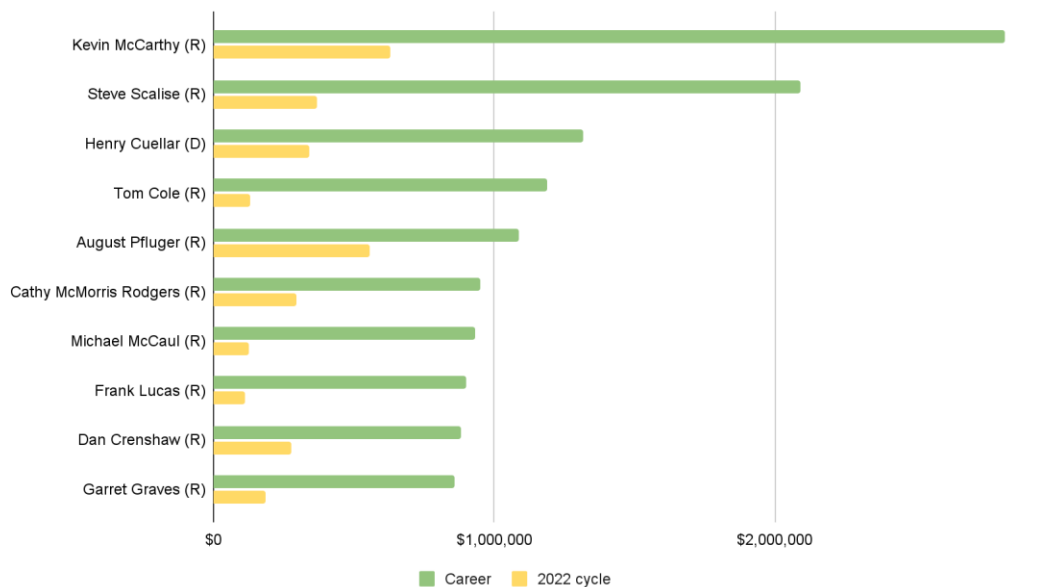
Big Oil has long captured Republicans with generous campaign contributions. In the 2022 election cycle, political contributions from oil and gas industry political action committees and individuals exceeded \$29 million, with about \$23 million, or 80%, going to Republicans, [according to OpenSecrets.org](#). Since President Joe Biden’s inauguration in 2021, Republican lawmakers [backed by the fossil fuel industry](#) have repeatedly echoed industry talking points and distorted the Biden administration’s record on energy issues. Industry executives battled Biden’s decision to [pause](#) federal oil and gas leasing on public lands and offshore waters. The industry and oil states initially [won a court victory](#), causing the Biden administration to reopen public lands and waters for oil and gas drilling. However, that ruling was later [struck down](#).

Since then, Republicans have continued to falsely claim that Biden administration policies have pushed up energy prices and have continued this messaging campaign even as prices have gradually declined. Scalise, whose Louisiana district is home to numerous fossil fuel companies, recently [alleged](#) that “President Biden and his extremist friends in Washington have waged a war on American energy, and hard-working families across the country are paying the price.”

Similarly, the chairwoman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R- Wash.), [claimed that](#), “From the gas station to the grocery store, President Biden’s war on energy is making life unaffordable for the hardworking people of this country and forcing us to be dangerously reliant on supply chains controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.” McMorris Rodgers has received nearly \$950,000 in oil and gas campaign contributions during her career. She did not mention that the GOP energy bill will deregulate exports of liquified natural gas for purchase by companies around the world. That includes Chinese companies, who are already major buyers of U.S.-produced natural gas. In fact, an analysis by Friends of the Earth, Public Citizen and BailoutWatch documented that Chinese companies signed long-term contracts for [more than one-fifth](#) of total LNG volumes agreed to in export [deals](#) reached since the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-Mont), whose term as Interior Secretary under the Trump administration was marked by [scandal](#) and rapid expansion of fossil fuel industry [giveaways](#), including massive [sales of leases to drill on public lands](#), has framed Biden administration policies in hyperbolic terms. “The only campaign promise Joe Biden is keeping is his promise to kill the American energy sector,” Zinke said. The Montana congressman has received about \$537,000 over his congressional career from energy companies, including [Continental Resources, Marathon Oil and Occidental Petroleum](#).

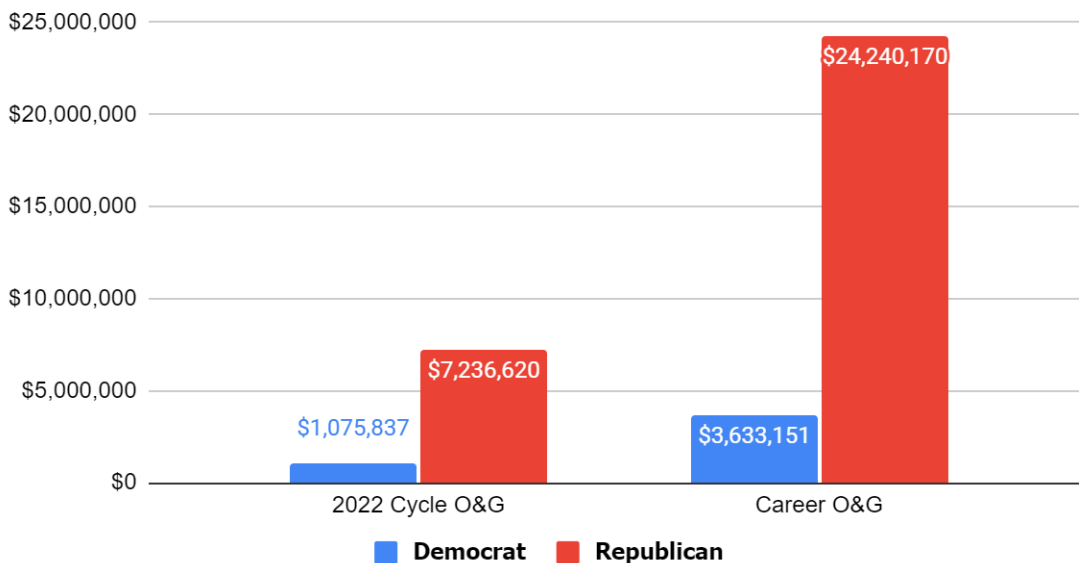
Figure 1: Top Oil Industry Campaign Contributions to Current U.S. House Members



Several fossil fuel-friendly lawmakers have pushed specific industry giveaways into the bill. Pfluger, representing oil-producing west Texas, [inserted](#) a provision [repealing](#) a fee intended to discourage harmful methane emissions. This methane fee was supported by several oil and gas companies and fossil fuel-friendly Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.V.) when it passed last year as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-Wyo.) [inserted](#) a provision to promote the leasing of federal lands for coal mining. “I know and firmly believe that coal is the energy of the future,” Hageman [said](#) at a House committee hearing earlier this year. (Renewables have now [surpassed](#) coal in the share of electric generation in the United States.) Another coal advocate, right-wing extremist Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.) [mocked](#) the science of climate change at the same hearing, saying: “I’m not here to deny climate change. I don’t think anyone here is. It happens four times a year — we’re very, very much aware of that.”

Figure 2: Oil & Gas Contributions to U.S. House Members

Analysis of OpenSecrets.org data for top 50 recipients of fossil fuel campaign contributions (2022)



An Ongoing Threat to Green Energy Policy

The Republican energy bill stands no chance of being enacted in full, as lawmakers in the Senate, controlled by Democrats, will not take it up and President Biden has already threatened to veto it. But, Republicans are sure to push pieces of the bill, potentially using the looming debt ceiling expiration as leverage. “At some point, Republicans are going to have to vote for a debt-limit increase. At some point, they’re gonna have to vote to keep the government open,” Mike Sommers, president of the American Petroleum Institute, said at an industry conference earlier this month. “And the question that I think the Republican majority in the House of Representatives is gonna be asking is: What am I ... going to get for that? And energy is at the top of the agenda of almost every Republican that I talk to on Capitol Hill now.” Speaker McCarthy has listed “measures to lower energy costs” as one of the numerous items he wants to discuss with Biden as part of debt ceiling negotiations. It is possible that GOP policy ideas like these could become the basis for a bipartisan deal, potentially jeopardizing bedrock laws like the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Biden administration has little to do with the day-to-day fluctuations in the international markets for oil and gas. Instead, prices hinge on short-term factors such as economic growth forecasts and the global balance between supply and demand. Gasoline demand plunged during the early months of the pandemic, sending crude oil prices below zero at one point in 2020. But consumer demand for energy rebounded faster than the industry anticipated. Prices at the pump soared as demand surged. Then last year, the war in Ukraine sent prices skyrocketing even higher, but energy prices have gradually declined as the global energy markets adapted to the temporary disruption.

In fact, one of the key components of the Republican plan – pushing more fossil fuel exports and especially shipping more fuel to Asia – would increase prices for American consumers. The Republican proposal would put upward pressure on the price of methane gas used to heat homes and fuel power plants.

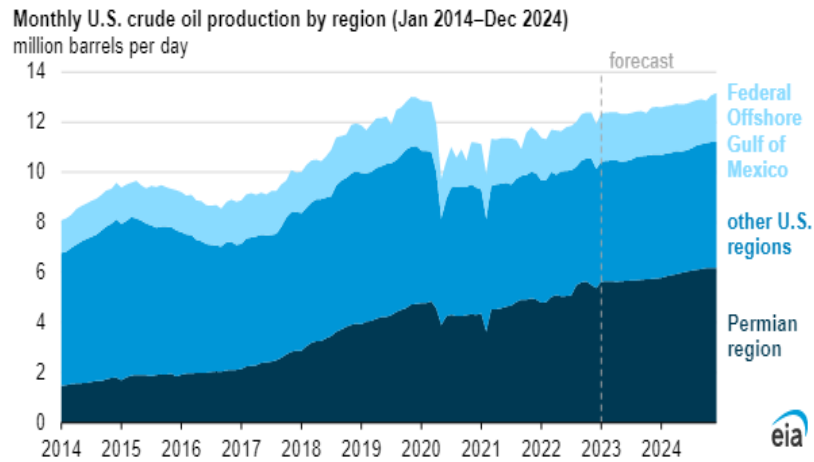
The Republican legislation would force the Interior Department to lease all lands nominated by the fossil fuel industry for oil drilling automatically and at least four times a year. It would repeal commonsense [reforms](#) passed last year to ensure oil and gas drillers pay a reasonable rate to drill on public lands and eviscerate [standards](#) for federal review of natural gas export terminals while short-circuiting meaningful public input and review and gutting protections for public health, safety and the environment. The legislation mandates at least two offshore lease sales every year in both the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska and curtail meaningful environmental reviews before drilling. The bill would allow mining companies to dump waste on public lands and exempt the oil and gas industry from complying with endangered species protection.

Table 1: Top Recipients of Oil & Gas Contributions Among New U.S. House Members

First Name	Last Name	Party	First election	2022 Cycle O&G	Career O&G
August	Pfluger	R	2020	\$556,381	\$1,086,161
Kelly	Armstrong	R	2020	\$217,250	\$607,801
Tony	Gonzales	R	2020	\$271,452	\$506,234
Wesley	Hunt	R	2022	\$408,525	\$408,525
Beth	Van Duyne	R	2020	\$196,227	\$400,612
Matt	Rosendale	R	2020	\$88,359	\$392,039
Stephanie	Bice	R	2020	\$173,663	\$351,827
Claudia	Tenney	R	2020	\$81,724	\$302,558
Jake	Laturner	R	2020	\$78,841	\$225,371
Ronny	Jackson	R	2022	\$148,391	\$216,684
Ashley	Hinson	R	2020	\$79,756	\$145,759
Lauren	Boebert	R	2020	\$97,014	\$143,156
Troy	Nehls	R	2020	\$74,879	\$141,156
Morgan	Luttrell	R	2022	\$129,059	\$129,059
Monica	De La Cruz	R	2022	\$127,377	\$127,377
Jake	Ellzey	R	2021	\$80,600	\$100,750
John	James	R	2022	\$80,219	\$80,219
Totals				\$2,889,717	\$5,365,288

Source: Public Citizen analysis of OpenSecrets data.

Despite Republican claims to the contrary, the Biden administration has [not slowed](#) U.S. energy production. In reality U.S. crude oil production is expected to exceed its Trump-era high this year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. While Republicans have accused the Biden administration of mounting a “war on energy” and of being hostile to energy interests, Biden has, in recent cases, sided with the oil industry. In March, the Biden administration approved a massive arctic oil and gas drilling project, allowing ConocoPhillips to drill for oil in the remote Alaskan wilderness. Both the American Petroleum Institute and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have prioritized the expansion of liquefied natural gas exports as a centerpiece of their energy lobbying. The Biden administration has also embraced the efforts to export LNG overseas, disregarding the interests of U.S. consumers and marginalized communities alike. These policy decisions threaten to undermine the many clean-energy policies enacted under Biden.



Conclusion

Just one week after international experts [warned](#) that the planet is in danger of crossing a key global warming threshold within a decade, fossil fuel-funded policymakers are pushing to accelerate the climate crisis by locking in decades of new fossil fuel production and emissions. The Republican energy legislation represents a shameful neglect of our collective responsibility to protect Americans and the world from climate chaos. By irresponsibly promoting the expansion of fossil fuel production and exports, this energy package would delay the transition to a clean, secure, and affordable energy system that would bring true energy independence and security.

The fossil fuel industry is already raking in record profits at the expense of consumers and future generations, yet their supporters in Congress wish to lock us into increased extraction, volatile energy prices, and environmental degradation in exchange for even higher profits for oil and gas companies. If proponents truly cared about lowering energy prices, helping U.S. consumers and spurring the U.S. economy, they would instead insist on accelerating the transition to 100% clean energy. Every day we wait increases both the cost of the transition and the costs that climate chaos will impose on society.

Table 2: Top 50 Career Recipients of Oil & Gas Contributions Among Current Members of U.S. House of Representatives

First Name	Last Name	Party	State	First election	2022 Cycle O&G	Career O&G	Major fossil fuel and utilities contributors (individual and PAC)
Kevin	McCarthy	R	California	2006	\$630,785	\$2,821,908	Chevron Corp. , Occidental Petroleum.
Steve	Scalise	R	Louisiana	2008	\$370,523	\$2,090,868	Edison Chouest Offshore. , Koch Industries. , Berkshire Hathaway. , Entergy.
Henry	Cuellar	D	Texas	2004	\$339,092	\$1,317,156	Marathon Petroleum. , Chesapeake Energy. , WPX Energy. , Koch Industries. , Anadarko Petroleum. , Phillips 66. , Ovinitiv.
Tom	Cole	R	Oklahoma	2002	\$128,950	\$1,189,250	Devon Energy. , Chesapeake Energy. , Valero Energy.
August	Pfluger	R	Texas	2020	\$556,381	\$1,086,161	Oryx Midstream Services. , Bc Operating. , HI Brown Operating. , Double Eagle Energy.
Cathy	McMorris Rodgers	R	Washington	2004	\$295,367	\$949,950	PG&E. , Energy Transfer. , Cheniere Energy. , Northwest Natural Gas. , Valero Energy. , Berkshire Hathaway. , Chesapeake Energy.
Michael	McCaul	R	Texas	2004	\$125,376	\$932,201	Koch Industries.
Frank	Lucas	R	Oklahoma	1994	\$112,100	\$900,900	Devon Energy.
Dan	Crenshaw	R	Texas	2018	\$278,337	\$881,635	Petroleum Wholesale LP. , Valero Energy. , Chevron. , ExxonMobil. , Enterprise Products Partners. , Occidental Petroleum. , Phillips 66.
Garret	Graves	R	Louisiana	2014	\$184,500	\$859,295	Edison Chouest Offshore. , Koch Industries. , Marathon Petroleum.
Bill	Johnson	R	Ohio	2010	\$109,299	\$795,112	Koch Industries. , First Energy. , Dominion Energy. , American Electric Power. , Marathon Petroleum.
Jim	Costa	D	California	2004	\$105,900	\$717,659	Chevron Corp.
Lizzie	Fletcher	D	Texas	2018	\$306,295	\$683,919	Plains All American Pipeline. , Shell. , Exxon Mobil.
Kelly	Armstrong	R	North Dakota	2020	\$217,250	\$607,801	Hess Corp. , Continental Resources. , Koch Industries. , Cody Oil and Gas. , Marathon Oil.
Michael	Burgess	R	Texas	2002	\$72,350	\$589,827	Koch Industries. , Energy Future Holdings.
Bob	Latta	R	Ohio	2007	\$94,758	\$553,091	Marathon Petroleum. , FirstEnergy. , Dominion Energy. , Koch Industries.

First Name	Last Name	Party	State	First election	2022 Cycle O&G	Career O&G	Major fossil fuel and utilities contributors (individual and PAC)
Ryan	Zinke	R	Montana	2014	\$192,058	\$537,058 ²	Continental Resources , American Petroleum Institute , Marathon Oil , Occidental Petroleum , Phillips 66 , ConocoPhillips
Marc	Veasey	D	Texas	2012	\$139,850	\$530,455	Exxon Mobil , Bonanza Oil
Richard	Hudson	R	North Carolina	2012	\$88,933	\$529,774	Koch Industries , Duke Energy , Valero Energy
Jodey	Arrington	R	Texas	2016	\$179,796	\$527,299	Marathon Petroleum , Valero Energy
Chip	Roy	R	Texas	2018	\$131,664	\$513,915	Nustar Energy , Valero Energy , CrownQuest Operating , Discovery Operating , Koch Industries
Tony	Gonzales	R	Texas	2020	\$271,452	\$506,234	Valero Energy , Enterprise Products Partners , Howard Energy Partners , Hilcorp Energy
David	Valadao	R	California	2012	\$72,583	\$470,944	Koch Industries , Chevron
Bruce	Westerman	R	Arkansas	2014	\$184,200	\$430,725	Murphy Oil , Koch Industries
Sam	Graves	R	Missouri	2000	\$127,700	\$427,433	Williams Cos , Valero Energy , PG&E , Cheniere Energy , Sempra Energy , CenterPoint Energy , Berkshire Hathaway
Kevin	Hern	R	Oklahoma	2018	\$172,720	\$413,226	NGL Energy Partners , Koch Industries , Devon Energy , Williams Cos
Wesley	Hunt	R	Texas	2022	\$408,525	\$408,525	Plains All American Pipeline , Enterprise Products Partners , Valero Energy , Koch Industries , Continental Resources , Cabot Oil & Gas
Beth	Van Duyne	R	Texas	2020	\$196,227	\$400,612	Pioneer Natural Resources , Jetta Operating Co , Koch Industries
Matt	Rosendale	R	Montana	2020	\$88,359	\$392,039	Ariel Corp
Jeff	Duncan	R	South Carolina	2010	\$79,700	\$386,863	Koch Industries , Energy Marketers of America , ExxonMobil
Vicente	Gonzalez	D	Texas	2016	\$184,700	\$383,962	Valero Energy , Ovinitiv , Devon Energy , Chesapeake Energy , Cheniere Energy , NRG Energy , WPX Energy

² Zinke recently returned for his second stint in Congress after serving as Interior Secretary under the Trump administration, and a tally encompassing his full career is not available. To arrive at a total, we added \$345,000 in oil and gas contributions cited in a 2016 OpenSecrets [analysis](#) to his contributions from the 2022 election cycle.

First Name	Last Name	Party	State	First election	2022 Cycle O&G	Career O&G	Major fossil fuel and utilities contributors (individual and PAC)
Ron	Estes	R	Kansas	2017	\$123,500	\$358,599	Koch Industries, Vess Oil
Stephanie	Bice	R	Oklahoma	2020	\$173,663	\$351,827	Devon Energy, Valero Energy, HollyFrontier Corp, Saulsbury Industries
Brian	Babin	R	Texas	2014	\$85,100	\$346,818	Kirby Corp., ExxonMobil, Valero Energy
Claudia	Tenney	R	New York	2020	\$81,724	\$302,558	Koch Industries
Troy	Balderson	R	Ohio	2018	\$73,333	\$267,214	American Electric Power, Koch Industries
Jason	Smith	R	Missouri	2013	\$102,600	\$265,450	Ameren Corp., Marathon Petroleum
Darin	LaHood	R	Illinois	2015	\$72,200	\$262,950	Exelon Corp., Marquis Energy,
Jake	Laturner	R	Kansas	2020	\$78,841	\$225,371	Vess Oil, Koch Industries
Ronny	Jackson	R	Texas	2022	\$148,391	\$216,684	Valero Energy, Koch Industries
Pete	Stauber	R	Minnesota	2018	\$109,130	\$216,141	Koch Industries
Greg	Pence	R	Indiana	2018	\$80,041	\$213,250	Marathon Petroleum
Ashley	Hinson	R	Iowa	2020	\$79,756	\$145,759	Koch Industries
Dusty	Johnson	R	South Dakota	2018	\$69,300	\$143,186	Black Hills Corp, Moyle Petroleum, Koch Industries, Berkshire Hathaway
Lauren	Boebert	R	Colorado	2020	\$97,014	\$143,156	Hilcorp Energy
Troy	Nehls	R	Texas	2020	\$74,879	\$141,156	Marathon Petroleum, Occidental Petroleum, Energy Transfer
Morgan	Luttrell	R	Texas	2022	\$129,059	\$129,059	Koch Industries, Valero Energy, Murphy Oil, Phillips 66
Monica	De La Cruz	R	Texas	2022	\$127,377	\$127,377	Energy Transfer, Phillips 66, Koch Industries, Valero Energy, Murphy Oil
Jake	Ellzey	R	Texas	2021	\$80,600	\$100,750	Energy Transfer LP, Valero Energy,
John	James	R	Michigan	2022	\$80,219	\$80,219	Valero Energy, Phillips 66, Marathon Petroleum
					\$8,312,457	\$27,873,321	