The People Shaping the Trump Administration

Despite Running on a Pledge to ‘Drain the Swamp’ and Crack Down on Special Interests, Donald Trump Has Filled His Transition Team With Lobbyists and Others With Potential Conflicts

November 16, 2016 – Donald Trump rode to the White House by raging about alleged rampant corruption in Washington and pledging to “drain the swamp.” Each of the five points in the ethics platform he issued in October focused on diminishing the influence of lobbyists.1

These included a promise to impose a five-year ban on former executive branch officials lobbying the federal government. Trump further promised to crack down on special interest-influence by expanding the definition of lobbyist to include consultants and others who trade on inside government information and expertise.2

But Trump’s nascent transition team, which will shape his administration, is swarming with lobbyists and other special interests. Many of the lobbyists are working for the transition on areas for which they currently are lobbying the federal government. Meanwhile, many of those who aren’t lobbyists appear to have potential conflicts of interest.

Vice president-elect Mike Pence reportedly said on November 15 that the transition team would be purged of lobbyists, but the transition team has not made the point official.3 Even if true, that remedy would not address cases such as a defense contractor working on defense interests, or a lawyer for health care interests working on health care reform.

Here are brief summaries of individuals who have been reported in the media as overseeing agencies or policies for Trump’s transition team. These names do not include the transition leadership – largely consisting of politicians, political operatives and members of Trump’s family – that was officially announced Friday.4

**Bud Albright** is reported by Politico to be chairing the “agencies task force” for the transition. Albright is a former undersecretary in the Department of Energy who has since become a federal lobbyist. Albright’s clients include Calpine, a power generation company, and Center Point Energy, an energy distribution company.

**Paul Atkins** is in charge of financial regulation for the Trump transition. He is the CEO of Patomak Global Partners, a consulting firm that advises financial services companies on compliance issues. Atkins formerly served as a commissioner of the Securities and Exchange Commission, where he was viewed as being largely opposed to regulation.

**David Bernhardt** is in charge of transition matters involving the Interior Department. He is a lobbyist and lawyer for Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, one of the nation’s largest lobbying firms. Bernhardt has disclosed working as a federal lobbyist for four clients in 2016. These include the Rosemont Copper Company, a controversial proposed open-pit copper mine near Tucson, Ariz. Brownstein Hyatt’s web site additionally says that Bernhardt has represented various unnamed organizations, including entities involved in energy development on Indian lands and those accused of violating Interior Department regulations.

**Ken Blackwell** is in charge of domestic policy for the Trump transition. Blackwell, a former Ohio secretary of state, is a senior fellow at the Family Research Council, which opposes gay marriage and legalized abortion. Blackwell also ”is on every board you’ve ever heard of” in the conservative movement, including the anti-tax Club for Growth, a source told *The Wall Street Journal*.

**Andrew Bremberg** is overseeing Health and Human Services on the transition team. Bremberg was an adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell on nominations, then joined the 2016 presidential campaign of Gov. Scott Walker (R-Wis.). In 2012, he served on Mitt Romney’s transition team, where he worked on plans to repeal Obamacare.

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16 [http://www.frc.org/ken-blackwell](http://www.frc.org/ken-blackwell)
Ron Burgess, a retired lieutenant general, is working on issues focused on security and intelligence matters. Burgess was director of the Defense Intelligence Agency from 2009 to 2012. He currently is listed as the chairman of the board of Noblis NSP, a Virginia-based nonprofit company that provides security services.

Jim Carafano, State Department. Carafano served for 25 years in the U.S. Army and is the Heritage Foundation’s vice president for foreign and defense policy studies.

James Carter is working on tax reform issues. Carter is an in-house lobbyist for St. Louis-based manufacturing firm Emerson. Among the issues on which he reported lobbying in Emerson’s most recent federal lobbying disclosure report were fundamental tax reform principles including: lower corporate tax rates, and repatriation of foreign earnings.

Michael Catanzaro is in charge of “energy independence.” He is a federal lobbyist who has represented more than 50 organizations so far in 2016. Those in the energy sector include the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, oil and gas exploration company Devon Energy Corp., energy services firm Halliburton Corp., oil exploration firm Hess, and Koch Companies Public Sector (which represents the conglomerate Koch Industries). Catanzaro has lobbied on rules to limit methane emissions and on permission for U.S. businesses to export crude oil.

Bill Chatfield is listed on the Trump transition team’s policy implementation chart as in charge of Veterans Administration reform. He served as the director of the Selective Service during the George W. Bush administration.

Rob Collins is reported by Politico to be handling “personnel.” Collins is a federal lobbyist whose clients include Google, JP Morgan Chase and United Launch Alliance.

Danielle Cutrona is listed on the Transition’s Policy Implementation chart as being in charge of “Immigration Reform & Building the Wall.” She is counsel to Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) on the

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23 https://www.politicopro.com/ll/?id=00000158-4ae1-dd2d-a1fc-4bf3993e0000
29 https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3217279-2016-11-10-Transition-Team-List.html
30 http://www.taps.org/about/default.aspx?id=1660
31 http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2016/11/more-lobbyists-on-the-transition-217372
33 https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3217279-2016-11-10-Transition-Team-List.html
Judiciary Committee. Sessions is a crusader against immigration, who was the first U.S. senator to endorse Trump. 

Dan DiMicco is overseeing the transition for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. DiMicco was Trump’s top trade advisor during the campaign. DiMicco was the CEO of Nucor, a successful steel company based in North Carolina, from 2000 to 2013. DiMicco is on the board of Duke Energy, an electric power company.

Myron Ebell is overseeing the transition for the Environmental Protection Agency. Ebell is the head of environmental and energy policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a libertarian advocacy group. He is one of the nation’s most prominent critics of the scientific consensus that the earth is warming due to the manmade causes.

Jeffrey Eisenach is in charge of the transition for the Federal Communications Commission. Eisenach opposes proposed FCC rules calling for “net neutrality,” which would require Internet service providers to permit content to travel over the Internet equality regardless of the source of the content. The New York Times reported that Eisenach has served as a consultant for Verizon and other telecommunications companies. Eisenach posted to his Twitter account that he is not currently working for Verizon and has no business before FCC at present. We left messages with Eisenach but were unable to reach him. We will post an update if we hear back from him. Eisenach is a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Williamson M. Evers is working on education for the transition. He was a senior advisor to U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings during the George W. Bush administration and also worked on education matters for the Coalition Provisional Authority, which attempted to govern Iraq on an interim basis after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Evers is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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47 http://www.hoover.org/profiles/williamson-m-evers
Mike Ference is assisting the transition on “energy independence.” Ference is a lobbyist who represents General Dynamics, General Motors, Halliburton, Koch Industries and Marathon Oil, among others.

Rob Gordon is working on regulatory reform. He is the senior policy adviser for the House Natural Resources, Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. Gordon is a “non-staff member” of the Heritage Foundation. His most recent writing for the group was in December 2014.

Steve Hart is handling the transition for the Department of Labor. He is the chairman of lobbying and law firm Williams and Jensen. Hart has had more than 50 lobbying clients in 2016, alone. He lobbied for GSEs Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac extensively last decade. The Washingtonian described Hart as “the man corporations call when they’re having trouble with labor unions.”

Cindy Hayden is in charge of Homeland Security. She is an in-house lobbyist for Altria, one of the world’s largest tobacco companies.

Kay Cole James, who ran the Office of Personnel Management during the George W. Bush administration, is handling that office for the transition. She is president of the Gloucester Institute, which seeks to train leaders in the African American community.

Brian Johnson is helping select personnel for financial services agencies. He is a lawyer on the House Financial Services Committee.

Keith Kellogg, a retired lieutenant general, is listed as spearheading Defense for the administration’s agency transition team. Kellogg was chief operating officer of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. He has worked for several defense contractors and currently is vice president for Cubic Corporation, a defense contractor.
Ken Klukowski is listed on the transition’s Policy Implementation chart as being in charge of “Protecting Constitutional Rights.” He is a writer for Breitbart, the right-wing web site formerly led by Steve Bannon, who departed to become Trump’s campaign CEO.

Kris Kobach is secretary of state in Kansas is serving on the transition team as an advisor on immigration issues. Kobach helped write the controversial Arizona law SB 1070, which required non-citizens to carry registration papers at all times and permitted law enforcement offices to request those papers if they suspect a person is not here legally. Kobach also has helped draft anti-immigration laws in other states.

Michael Korbey is in charge of the Social Security Administration. Korbey “led President George W. Bush’s effort to privatize America’s retirement system” last decade, ABC News reported.

Rolf Lundberg is working on trade reform. He was senior vice president for congressional and public Affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Ado Machida is heading up the Policy Implementation team. He is a former domestic policy aide to Vice President Dick Cheney. Machida was a registered federal lobbyist representing numerous companies last decade before and after serving in the Bush administration.

David Malpass is listed on the Agency Transition chart of as the co-leader of the economic issues team. He was the chief economist for Bear Stearns in the lead-up to that firm’s near bankruptcy in 2008, which was one of the seminal events in the financial crisis. In 2015, Malpass wrote in The Wall Street Journal, “Housing and debt markets are not that big a part of the U.S. economy, or of job creation. It’s more likely the economy is sturdy and will grow solidly in coming months, and perhaps years.” Malpass is a member of the board of trustees of the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank.

Michael McKenna is “helping to pick key administration officials” on energy policy, according to The New York Times. McKenna has been a federal lobbyist since 2000. Current clients include electricity generation firm Competitive Power Ventures, the lobbying arm of conglomerate Koch.

65 https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3217279-2016-11-10-Transition-Team-List.html
66 http://www.breitbart.com/author/ken-klukowski/
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69 http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/trump-transition-packed-washington-insiders-lobbyists-43486143
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77 http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/wireStory/trumps-transition-team-signals-return-gop-establishment-43486211
78 http://www.manchester-institute.org/board-of-trustees
Industries and Southern Company, a major electric utility that is a leading opponent of measures to address climate change.  

**Ed Meese** is spearheading Management and Budget on the transition’s Agency chart. He is an emeritus fellow at the Heritage Foundation and was attorney general during the Reagan administration.

**Michael Meese** is overseeing work relating to the Veterans Affairs administration. Meese served 32 years in the Army, including deployments as chief of staff to General David Petraeus in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is the son of Edwin Meese, who is also on the transition team.

**Ron Nicol** is in charge of the "behind the scenes transition operation," according to the Associated Press. Nichol is a Boston Consulting Group executive, consultant to numerous Fortune 50 companies, with a focus on telecommunications and airlines.

**Kevin O’Conner** is overseeing the transition at the Justice Department. He is general counsel for Point72 Asset Management, a hedge fund created by Steven A. Cohen in the wake of the Security and Exchange Commission’s investigation of Cohen’s SAC Capital, which pleaded guilty to insider trading and paid a $1.8 billion fine.

**Mira Ricardel** is working on the Department of Defense. She is a consultant for Federal Budget IQ, which analyzes the federal budget for public sector clients, and as a vice president for aerospace contractor Boeing. She was a deputy assistant secretary of defense in the early part of the George W. Bush administration.

**Gerard Robinson** is assisting with education on the transition team. Robinson is a former Florida education commissioner and Virginia secretary of education. He is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. He works on “choice in public and private schools,” among other issues.

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81 [https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000158-4ae1-dd2d-a1fc-4bf3993e0000](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000158-4ae1-dd2d-a1fc-4bf3993e0000)
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93 [https://www.aei.org/scholar/gerard-robinson/](https://www.aei.org/scholar/gerard-robinson/)
Carlos Diaz Rosillo is the executive authority adviser for the Policy Implementation team. He is a lecturer on government at Harvard University, where he teaches a popular class on the “Road to the White House,” according to the Harvard Crimson.

Linda Springer is working on Office of Management and Budget issues. She is a previous director of the Office of Personnel Management and controller of the Office of Management and Budget.

Paula Stannard is working on health care reform. She is a lawyer at Alston & Bird, where she advises health care providers, health insurance companies and health plans.

Christine Toretti is working on Small Business Administration issues. From 1990 through 2010, she was the chairman and chief executive officer of S.W. Jack Drilling Company, once described as the largest privately held land-based drilling company in the United States. The company went out of business in 2010. She is a member of the board of directors of EQT, a natural gas drilling company and of S&T Bank, of Indiana, Pa.

Michael Torrey is working on Department of Agriculture Issues. He is a federal lobbyist who represents numerous clients connected to the food and beverage industry. These include the soft drink trade association American Beverage Association and national pizza chain Little Caesars. Torrey also represents the trade group of the crop insurance industry, which lobbies for federal subsidies.

Bill Walton, along with David Malpass, is at the top of the Agency Transition chart on economic issues. He is chairman Rappahannock Ventures LLC, a private equity firm. He is also a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, which promotes the theory of intelligent design, an alternative to evolution. At the Discovery Institute, Walton is a senior fellow of the Center on Wealth, Poverty

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102 https://www.nagop.org/about/leadership/national-committeewoman/ and
104 https://www.eqt.com/about/board-directors, https://www.eqt.com/about/corporate-profile and
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108 https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000158-4ae1-dd2d-a1fc-4bf3993e0000
109 http://www.discovery.org/p/641
and, Morality, which seeks to “provide a multifaceted defense of the practical and moral necessity of free markets.”¹¹⁰

**Ray Washburne** is in charge of Department of Commerce for the transition team.¹¹¹ He was a leader of Trump’s fundraising effort during the campaign. He served as the finance team leader for the presidential campaign of New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and before that as national finance chair of the Republican National Committee.¹¹² He is the CEO of Charter Holdings, a real estate company.¹¹³

**Martin Whitmer** is in charge of transportation and infrastructure for the transition.¹¹⁴ He is a federal lobbyist who in 2016 has represented 16 clients, including the Association of American Railroads.¹¹⁵

**Paul Winfree** is working on the Office of Management and Budget for the transition.¹¹⁶ He is an economist at the Heritage Foundation who recently co-authored an article in *Politico* outlining a strategy to repeal Obamacare.¹¹⁷

**Shirley Ybarra** is overseeing the transition for the Department of Transportation.¹¹⁸ She is a former analyst for the libertarian Reason Foundation, which credits her with authoring public-private partnership legislation.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁰ [https://www.discovery.org/econ/about/](https://www.discovery.org/econ/about/)
¹¹¹ [https://www.politicopro.com/f/?id=00000158-4ae1-dd2d-a1fc-4bf3993e0000](https://www.politicopro.com/f/?id=00000158-4ae1-dd2d-a1fc-4bf3993e0000)
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¹¹⁹ [http://reason.org/authors/show/shirley-ybarra](http://reason.org/authors/show/shirley-ybarra)