

# Project On Government Oversight

Exposing Corruption, Exploring Solutions

Presentation Before the  
Interagency Ethics Council

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# Who is POGO?

Founded in 1981, the Project On Government Oversight is an independent nonprofit that investigates and exposes corruption and other misconduct in order to achieve a more accountable federal government.



# POGO's Five Areas of Investigation

- **Contract Oversight**
  - Aggressive Negotiations and Full and Open Competition
  - Accountability
  - Transparency
  - Ban/Restrict risky contracting vehicles and bundling
  - Preserve Inherently Governmental Functions
  - Monitor the Revolving Door
- **Defense**
- **Open Government**
- **Homeland Security**
- **Energy and Natural Resources**

# How POGO Works

- Systemic Corruption or Other Misconduct in Federal Government
- POGO Launches Independent Investigations
- Work with Whistleblowers, Insiders, and Other Knowledgeable Individuals to Research and Confirm
- Identify Solutions for Substantive Change
- Inform Public of Findings & Solutions
- Work with Government Officials to Initiate Systemic Policy Improvements
- **Ultimate Goal:** Create a More Accountable Federal Government

# Recent Scandals

- **Executive Branch** – Druyun, Safavian, Iraq Bribery/Bid Rigging, Katrina Portable Classrooms
- **Congressional Branch** – Delay, Cunningham, Abramoff
- **Companies** – Custer Battles, MZM, Boeing Launch Services



# Recent Developments

- **Lobbying Reform Legislation** - restricting meals, travel, trips; improving disclosure
- **Hill Activity** - Senators Byrd & McCain
- **DoD Action** - Wolfowitz Memo 10/25/04 certification, briefings, guidance
- **Defense Science Board** - study promoting integrity
- **GAO** - report (GAO-05-341) on strengthening procurement integrity
- **U.S. Attorney's Office** - Procurement Fraud Working Group
- **OGE** - review of criminal conflict of interest statutes & public comment concerning financial disclosure forms
- **Revolving Door Working Group** - report issued October 2005

# How Washington Looks to Citizens

## **The federal government:**

- Panders to Companies/Industry
- Rewards Friends
- Conducts Backroom Deals
- Keeps Secrets / Lack of Transparency
- Is a Stepping Stone to the Private Sector

# Revolving Door Recommendations

1. **Simplify the complex system of laws**, Executive Branch regulations, department and agency regulations, executive orders, and agency directives that add ambiguity to government ethics laws. Repeal the multi-tiered system of laws and regulations and incorporate required provisions in a clear and consistent model rule of ethical conduct for the entire federal government;
2. Prohibit, for a specified period of time, **political appointees and SES policymakers** (people who develop rules and determine requirements) from being able to seek employment from contractors who significantly benefited from the policies formulated by the government employee;
3. Require government officials to enter into a **binding revolving door exit plan** that sets forth the programs and projects from which the former employee is banned from working. Like financial disclosure statements, these reports should be filed with the Office of Government Ethics and available to the public. This requirement would benefit government employees who are unaware of or confused by post-government restrictions or who have multiple post-employment bans covering different time periods. It would also enhance public trust in the government;

# Revolving Door Recommendations

4. Require recently retired government officials and their new employers to **file revolving door reports** attesting that the former government employee has complied with his or her revolving door exit plan;
5. **Prohibit government employees** from overseeing or regulating their former private sector employer;
6. **Close the loophole** that allows former government employees to work for a department or division of a contractor different from the division or department that they oversaw as a government employee;
7. Establish an **Executive Branch-wide law** for federal government employees, requiring notification of recusal or disqualification to a supervisor;
8. The **Office of Government Ethics** should provide enhanced oversight of private sector employees who enter public service. Those types of revolving door cases should receive enhanced oversight because government officials may be placed in positions in which they regulate or oversee programs and policies that may affect their private employer.



# Federal Advisory Committee Recommendations

1. Remove or modify conflict of interest and Freedom of Information Act **exemption and waiver provisions** for advisory board members and ensure that unclassified portions of board meeting minutes are publicly available; and
2. Enact Executive Branch-wide law requiring federal advisory committee members to **recuse or disqualify** themselves from any discussion on matters where they or their private employer or client have a significant financial interest. This disclosure or recusal statement, including name, title and employer should be filed with the Office of Government Ethics and made publicly available.



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