

Overflowing Swamp: Non-Partisan Watchdog Report Shows Political Bribery Now at Record Levels



By Rachel Blevins | [Activist Post](#)

While President Trump promised to “drain the swamp” when he was on the campaign trail, a new report from a non-profit, nonpartisan research group shows that after one year of the Trump administration, lobbying is at records levels in Washington.

The Center for Responsive Politics [reported](#) that in 2017, “the number of registered lobbyists along with federal lobbying expenditures went up, reversing annual declines in both registrations and spending that began a decade ago.” This increase occurred **for the first time since 2007.**

The report noted that the money spent on federal lobbying increased by 6 percent, rising from \$3.15 billion to **\$3.34 billion**, and marking the largest increase in one year since former President George W. Bush's last year in office.

In contrast, spending on lobbying had declined five of the past six years, and up until 2017, the report claimed that "the number of registered lobbyists had dropped each of the past 10 years, from a record 14,827 in 2007 to a 20-year low of 11,169 in 2016." The number then increased last year:

Last year, 11,444 registered lobbyists appeared in quarterly reports filed with Congress. Those reports include basic information on spending, issues and entities lobbied, usually with vague language and broad strokes.

A fourth-quarter report by Kevin Kayes of QGA Public Affairs, for instance, said the firm was paid \$37,500 by U.S. Steel to lobby on 'trade law enforcement.' The audience was 'U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives.'

Based on the report—typical for most filings—the members of Congress who were lobbied by the firm is obscured from public scrutiny.

The Center for Responsive Politics also found that thousands of lobbyists who were supposed to report their activities failed to do so until after the filing deadlines had passed—and they faced no consequences.

In 2017, there were a number of companies that significantly increased the amount they spent on lobbying—many of which were tech companies. The report noted that [Facebook](#) spent \$11 million, [Amazon](#) spent \$13 million—about \$2 million more than it spent in 2016—and [Google](#) spent \$18 million on lobbying.

While lobbying expenditures went down under the Obama administration, it should be noted that the results were nowhere near what Obama promised when he was on the campaign

trail.

“No political appointees in an Obama-Biden administration will be permitted to work on regulations or contracts directly and substantially related to their prior employer for two years,” Obama promised. “And no political appointee will be able to lobby the executive branch after leaving government service during the remainder of the administration.”

However, *Politifact* [reported](#) that the administration “granted waivers to several former lobbyists, allowing them to serve. The administration also allows recusals, where former lobbyists simply recuse themselves from discussions concerning whatever interest it is for which they used to lobby.”

President Trump was also critical of the corruption in Washington while he was on the campaign trail. He [told](#) CBS’ *Face The Nation* in June 2016 “he would ‘have no problem’ banning lobbyists and big donors from working in his administration.”

While it appears that Trump has changed his tune—in the same way that Obama retreated on his promises—a comment made about Trump in 2015 is notable today. When one Twitter user [wrote](#), “The Donald owes NOTHING to lobbyists. He could restore our Republic,” Trump retweeted the statement and wrote, “True.”

"@pbstwo: @realDonaldTrump @hyannis1952 @FoxNews The Donald owes NOTHING to lobbyists. He could restore our Republic." True.

– Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) [June 22, 2015](#)

Rachel Blevins is an independent journalist from Texas, who aspires to break the false left/right paradigm in media and politics by pursuing truth and questioning existing narratives.

Follow Rachel on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Steemit](#) and [Patreon](#). This

article [first appeared at The Free Thought Project.](#)

[Read more great articles at Activist Post.](#)