



REVOLVING DOOR WORKING GROUP
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public confidence in government

www.revolvingdoor.info

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**COALITION RELEASES REPORT WARNING THAT THE REVOLVING DOOR
IS GIVING BUSINESS INTERESTS UNDUE INFLUENCE
OVER FEDERAL POLICY AND PROCUREMENT DECISIONS**

**Revolving Door Working Group Proposes
Aggressive Set of Lobbying and Ethics Reforms**

Washington, October 26, 2005—Business interests are “capturing” the federal government and exerting undue influence over policy and procurement decisions as a result of the revolving door—the frequent appointment of corporate executives and lobbyists to public posts and the movement of government officials into lucrative jobs in the private sector. So warns a report titled *A Matter of Trust* issued today by the Revolving Door Working Group. The report is available on the Working Group’s website at www.revolvingdoor.info

The Revolving Door Working Group is a broad-based network of 18 organizations ranging from Public Citizen and Common Cause to Farm Aid and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. The Working Group promotes ethics in public service and an arm’s length relationship between the federal government and the private sector.

The Working Group’s report calls for extensive changes in federal lobbying and ethics rules—a sentiment echoed by Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Rep. Marty Meehan (D-MA), both of whom appeared at a press conference today in Washington, DC.

“For too long, lobbyists and special interests have had too much power in Washington, and much of that power is hidden from public view,” charged Sen. Feingold (D-WI), author of a reform bill—The Lobbying and Ethics Reform Act (S.1398)—that incorporates a number of the same proposals as those put forth by the Revolving Door Working Group.

“There’s an ethical cloud hanging over Congress and the executive branch,” said Rep. Meehan who has introduced the Special Interest Lobbying and Ethics Accountability Act (H.R. 2412). “It’s time to take steps to restore the American people’s confidence in the federal government.”

Speaking on behalf of the Revolving Door Working Group, Public Citizen President Joan Claybrook said: “The mishandling of Hurricane Katrina and the Abramoff lobbying scandal are only the latest examples of how cronyism and excessive corporate influence are undermining the

federal government. Addressing the revolving door problem will go a long way toward restoring integrity in the system.”

“Whether it's Katrina relief or support for our troops in Iraq, the American people deserve to know that our money is not being wasted and is being used effectively,” said Chellie Pingree, President of Common Cause. “Our public servants must be just that—people who hold federal jobs because they have the right qualifications, not because they know the right people.”

The Revolving Door Working Group report provides a thorough analysis of the three major forms of the revolving door:

THE INDUSTRY-TO-GOVERNMENT REVOLVING DOOR, through which the appointment of corporate executives and business lobbyists to key posts in federal agencies establishes a pro-business bias in policy formulation and regulatory enforcement.

THE GOVERNMENT-TO-INDUSTRY REVOLVING DOOR, through which public officials move to lucrative private-sector positions in which they may use their government experience to unfairly benefit their new employer in matters of federal procurement and regulatory policy.

THE GOVERNMENT-TO-LOBBYIST REVOLVING DOOR, through which former lawmakers and executive-branch officials become well-paid advocates and use their inside connections to advance the interests of corporate clients.

Based on this analysis, the Working Group recommends steps including:

- Strengthening conflict-of-interest rules to allow the disqualification of potential appointees whose employment background would make it difficult for them to comply with the rule requiring impartiality on the part of federal employees;
- Strengthening the recusal rules that bar appointees from handling matters involving their former employers in the private sector;
- Extending to two years the “cooling off” period during which former officials cannot become paid lobbyists after leaving government;
- Revoking the special privileges granted to former members of Congress while they are lobbyists; and
- Placing all lobbyist disclosure reports, recusal agreement, waivers and other ethics filings on the internet for all to see.

Larry Mitchell, CEO of the American Corn Growers Association, highlighted the need for these reforms by focusing on revolving door abuses in the Department of Agriculture: “The movement of corporate executives and lobbyists into key posts at the Department of Agriculture—along with the movement of officials back into high-paying private-sector jobs—has resulted in a

distortion of USDA policymaking. The interests of small farmers get lost in a Department oriented to the needs of big agribusiness.”

The members of the Revolving Door Working Group are:

American Corn Growers Association * Center for Corporate Policy * Center for Environmental Health * Center for Science in the Public Interest * Center of Concern/Agribusiness
Accountability Initiative * Common Cause * Corporate Research Project of Good Jobs First *
Defenders of Wildlife * Edmonds Institute * Farm Aid * Government Accountability Project *
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy * National Catholic Rural Life Conference *
Organization for Competitive Markets * Project On Government Oversight * Public Citizen *
Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility * Revolt of the Elders