

January 2, 2017

President-elect Donald J. Trump  
Trump Tower  
725 5th Avenue  
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-elect Trump,

On December 9, 2016, some of us joined in a bipartisan letter to you to express our concern that unless you take appropriate steps to dispose of your business enterprises, conflicts of interest, appearance of conflicts, and Emoluments Clause problems will face you as president.

We urged you in the letter “to divest your business enterprises into a true blind trust managed by an independent trustee having no family relationship with you, or the equivalent, in accordance with the guidelines of the Ethics in Government Act.”

We write to you again as organizations and individuals from all parts of the political spectrum with expertise in governance issues, including ethical conduct and conflicts of interest.

We recognize that you have taken some steps and are considering others to address the conflicts problems facing your presidency. You have said you will announce your full plan in January.

We appreciate the steps you have taken. According to the *New York Times*, these include "terminating pending or nearly completed hotels and apartment buildings in Brazil, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Argentina, while also forgoing other early-stage ventures in places such as India."

You have also said that you recognize the potential appearance of conflict issues posed by your charitable foundation, and that you will shutter it. Your son Eric has announced his intent to do the same with his foundation, and your family has also terminated, or disassociated itself from, several charitable and inaugural fundraising activities that raised concerns.

That is a good start, but we wish to be clear that the only way to solve the problems you face remains divesting your business enterprises into a blind trust managed by an independent trustee or the equivalent. As long as you continue to maintain ownership of The Trump Organization, no other steps that you take will prevent the serious conflicts of interest, appearance of conflicts, and Emoluments Clause problems that will exist throughout your presidency.

In these circumstances, you cannot separate the presidency from your business enterprises.

Domestic interests and foreign individuals, companies, banks and governments involved in business activities with The Trump Organization will be doing business with and

potentially providing financial benefits and profits directly to the president of the United States.

The domestic and foreign interests that provide financial benefits and profits inuring directly to you also may have policy issues pending before your administration. Your own substantial business interests also may influence the policy decisions you and your administration make.

As long as you retain ownership of The Trump Organization, you will ultimately be the financial beneficiary of business arrangements made by domestic and foreign interests who are seeking favorable treatment from your administration on policy matters.

The problems you face cannot be solved by turning management of The Trump Organization over to your family members. The same conflicts and appearance of conflicts problems would exist in these circumstances. Domestic and foreign interests would see providing financial benefits to your family as a means to curry favor and obtain influence with you.

Respectfully, you cannot serve the country as president and also own a world-wide business enterprise, without seriously damaging the presidency.

In order to protect the integrity and credibility of the presidency, we again urge you to divest your business enterprises into a true blind trust managed by an independent trustee, or the equivalent, in accordance with the guidelines of the Ethics in Government Act.

Thank you for your attention to our letter.

Ambassador (ret.) Norm Eisen, chief White House ethics lawyer, 2009-2011

Richard Painter, chief White House ethics lawyer, 2005-2007

Campaign Legal Center

Arne H. Carlson, Former Governor of Minnesota (R)

Center for American Progress

Center for Media and Democracy

Former Rep. Rod Chandler (R-WA)

Common Cause

CREW

Democracy 21

Former Rep. Mickey Edwards (R-OK), Former Chairman, House Republican Policy Committee

Every Voice

Former Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD)

Issue One

Thomas Mann

Norm Ornstein

People For the American Way

Project On Government Oversight (POGO)

Public Citizen

John Pudner, Executive Director, Take Back our Republic

Former Rep. Claudine Schneider (R-R.I.)

Peter Schweizer, President, Government Accountability Institute

Former Rep. Peter Smith (R-VT)

Revolving Door Project

Sunlight Foundation

Zephyr Teachout, Associate Law Professor, Fordham Law School, Affiliation noted for identification purposes only

Laurence H. Tribe, Carl M. Loeb University Professor and Professor of Constitutional Law, Harvard Law School, Affiliation noted for identification purposes only

Anne Weismann

Christie Whitman, Former Governor of New Jersey (R)