

Dear President Joseph R. Biden Jr.,

You have described your charge as “[restoring](#) faith in American government” after your predecessor’s disastrous presidency and demonstrating with your “actions – not empty words – that public servants serve all Americans, not themselves or narrow special interests.” With your executive order on ethics, you built on past progress and took an important step towards your goal. Your decision not to draw from old mainstays like Wall Street c-suites when selecting appointees further demonstrated to the American people that your promises were not empty words.

These actions notwithstanding, however, your White House is still not free of potential conflicts of interest. Personal financial disclosures released last month reveal that countless members of your White House team have recently worked for, or hold investments in, practically every sector of the world economy. These documents raise the specter that officials with obvious recent and ongoing ties to, for example, Amazon or Apple will set policy more favorable to that company. The diversity of policy areas that White House officials inevitably touch only aggravates this concern.

As should be clear from these reports, mere disclosure of potential conflicts of interest is insufficient. The public deserves assurances that these conflicts are being effectively managed so that they know senior public servants are “serv[ing] all Americans, not themselves or narrow special interests.” For Senate-confirmed officials, such information is available in the form of publicly accessible ethics agreements. But for the hundreds of senior political appointees who are not subject to Senate confirmation, including those in the White House, the public will be left in the dark. Without access to these officials’ agreements, the public cannot know if those with apparent conflicts have been made to divest problematic holdings or recuse from matters where they may lack impartiality.

You have the means to address this lack of transparency right away by requiring that every employee of the White House, in addition to other senior-level political appointees throughout the executive branch, agree to have their ethics documents made publicly available. We, the undersigned, are calling on you to make this commitment without delay.

You have acknowledged that current ethics law is “imperfect” and taken steps that begin to address its deficiencies. Rebuilding trust in government after Donald Trump’s destructive reign, however, still requires more. While you cannot, single handedly, repair all of the damage, this is a step you can take right away to move the country closer towards that goal.

Signed,

Blue Wave Postcard Movement
Clean Elections Texas
Demand Progress Education Fund
Fix Democracy First

Government Accountability Project
Government Information Watch
International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR)
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Open The Government
Publish What You Pay--United States
Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
RepresentUs New Mexico
Revolving Door Project
X-Lab