

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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January 12, 2017

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request that the Committee convene a hearing next week for Committee Members and the American people to have the opportunity to hear public testimony from the nation's top government ethics expert regarding President-Elect Donald Trump's massive global business entanglements.

Specifically, I request that you invite Walter M. Schaub, Jr., the Director of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE), which is charged with "interpreting and advising on ethics laws, policies, and program management ... and implementing the ethics rules and regulations."<sup>1</sup>

At a press conference yesterday, President-Elect Trump announced his plan to defy warnings from OGE and Republican and Democratic ethics experts by refusing to do what every previous president has done for decades, divest himself of his corporate ownership interests, liquidate his business assets, and place them in a truly blind trust operated by an independent entity.

Following this announcement, Director Schaub warned that President-Elect Trump's plan is "wholly inadequate." He also stated: "We can't risk creating the perception that government leaders would use their official positions for profit." He explained:

I was especially troubled by the statement that the incoming administration is going to demand that OGE approve a diversified portfolio of assets. No one has ever talked to us about that idea, and there's no legal mechanism to do that.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Government Ethics, *Mission and Responsibilities* (online at [www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/Mission%20and%20Responsibilities](http://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/Mission%20and%20Responsibilities)) (accessed Jan. 12, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Office of Government Ethics, *Director Schaub's Remarks at the Brookings Institution* (Jan. 11, 2017) (online at [www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/0/6E08189CF6AF742B852580A500799063/\\$FILE/Remarks%20of](http://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/0/6E08189CF6AF742B852580A500799063/$FILE/Remarks%20of)

Other Republican and Democratic ethics experts also expressed alarm that the President-Elect's plans do not adequately address these concerns.<sup>3</sup>

I believe it is imperative that Director Schaub be permitted to testify in public—before the American people—to avoid any perception that he is being unfairly targeted behind closed doors for expressing his views. Protecting those who speak truth to power is one of this Committee's core values and purposes, and we should fully support government officials charged with increasing transparency and ethical governance when they provide independent advice that is based on the law.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings  
Ranking Member

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<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *Trump Is 'Walking Through a Minefield Blindfolded': Experts Say His Business Plan Is Not Enough*, CNBC (Jan. 11, 2017) (online at [www.cnbc.com/2017/01/11/trump-is-walking-through-a-minefield-blindfolded-experts-say-his-business-plan-is-not-enough.html](http://www.cnbc.com/2017/01/11/trump-is-walking-through-a-minefield-blindfolded-experts-say-his-business-plan-is-not-enough.html)).