THE COST OF CORRUPTION:
How Trump Turns Power into Profit at Americans' Expense

Donald Trump promised to "end government corruption and to take our country back from the special interests." He promised to slash prices and put American families first.

He has failed. Instead, Trump has used the power of the federal government to enrich himself and deliver windfall profits to friends, family, and fraudsters while the costs of gas, groceries, housing, health care and much more are skyrocketing for working families.

> **"MY CONTRACT WITH THE AMERICAN VOTER BEGINS WITH A PLAN TO END GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION AND TO TAKE OUR COUNTRY BACK FROM THE SPECIAL INTERESTS."**
> –Then-Candidate Donald Trump [Rally, 11/7/16]

Turning Power into Trump Family Profits

Trump and his family have systematically turned the power of the presidency into eye-popping profits. Donald Trump himself has earned at least $2 billion since returning to the White House in 2025 according to a recent financial disclosure – a stunning sum for a sitting president. That number balloons to more than $4 billion when taking into account earnings for his entire immediate family, according to an estimate by *The New Yorker.* While American families are spending upwards of $3,100 because of Republicans' cost-of-living crisis, Trump and his family are making money hand over fist.

How do a president and his family secure billions in profits after just a year and a half in office? By exploiting lucrative ventures intractably linked to Trump's presidential role.

The various ventures pursued by the Trump family are particularly profitable. Here, we examine three cases that show how Trump and his family abuse the presidency to post massive profits at the expense of working American families.

Let's take a deeper look

A BILLION DOLLAR MINING DEAL

> The Trump administration cut a billion-dollar mining deal with Kazakhstan to open one of the world's largest untapped reserves of tungsten—a critical metal used in semiconductor manufacturing—worth an estimated $80 billion. The United States government set aside $1.6 billion to fund and finance the project. Trump's sons have a stake in the deal and are positioned to reap a generous profit.

PROFITING OFF PENTAGON CONTRACTS

> Trump's sons have profited heavily from investing in a huge portfolio of defense technology start-ups that are benefiting from Pentagon contracts. According to the Washington Post, more than a dozen firms have reportedly generated "at least $3.2 billion in direct government business since the sons invested and an additional $3.1 billion in future contract options."

A TRUMP FAMILY CRYPTO VENTURE

> World Liberty Financial, the Trump family crypto venture, might just take the cake. The Trump family has over $1 billion in this crypto fund that is tied to foreign governments. The largest business partner in World

> Liberty Financial is a fund backed by the United Arab Emirates, whose purchase of a 49% stake in the company funneled $187 million to the Trump family.

Why This Matters: You Pay the Price for Trump's Profits

Trump's penchant for prioritizing himself costs Americans. While the President, his family, and his friends rack up huge financial gains, the Trump administration has:

- Rolled back agencies and programs that protect consumers, support workers, and provide essential benefits like health care and food assistance;
- Wasted taxpayer dollars on presidential vanity projects; and,
- Funneled government funds to billionaire backers.

Let's take a deeper look

ROLLING BACK CONSUMER, WORKER, AND FAMILY PROTECTIONS AND RESOURCES

- **Dismantling the Agency that Protects Consumers from Financial Abuse**: The Trump administration has dismantled the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Groundwork Collaborative notes that "[u]nder Trump, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has permanently dismissed 22 of its public enforcement actions as of October 2025, costing consumers millions in foregone relief." Since it was created, the CFPB has helped get more than $21 billion back to consumers who were mistreated or overcharged by major banks and other financial companies.

  > *The Trump administration has deprived Americans tens of millions in cost relief while letting corporate campaign donors off the hook.*

- **Eroding Workers' Wages and Workplace Protections**: The Economic Policy Institute found that in "the first 100 days of his second term, Trump has hurt working people and the economy over 100 ways." This includes direct physical harms, too, like USDA's proposed line speed rule, which UFCW lamented would "risk… taking us back to the days of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, where terrible working conditions in meatpacking plants left workers sick and injured at alarming rates."

  > *Workers will face increased risks of injuries and food safety will suffer, all while food prices remain sky-high.*

- **Cutting Food Assistance to Give Tax Breaks to the Rich**: While Trump's policies have driven food prices even higher, he also made it harder for low-income households to feed their kids and for hungry seniors and veterans to receive food assistance. Trump and Congressional Republicans cut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by about 20% under their so-called "One Big, Beautiful Bill", the largest cut ever to the nation's biggest nutrition assistance program. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan research and policy institute, the number of people receiving SNAP benefits fell by more than 4 million—a 10% drop—following these cuts. Meanwhile, the cuts to SNAP benefits helped fund $1 trillion in tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefit the top 1%.

  > *More than 1.5 million children have lost food assistance to pay for Trump's tax breaks for the rich.*

WASTING TAXPAYER DOLLARS

- **Funding Trump's Vanity Projects:** After promising that "not one penny" of taxpayer funding would be used to build his gilded, gold-plated, ballroom, Trump demanded – and Republicans in Congress tried to pass – $1 billion in taxpayer dollars to finance its construction. This follows the Trump administration's illegal demolition of the White House East Wing to make way for the ballroom. In addition to the misallocation of taxpayer resources that should have instead been used to lower costs, the human toll of this demolition is coming into focus. Over 35,000 cubic yards of toxic debris from the East Wing demolition were dumped in East Potomac Park in Washington, D.C., exposing the public for nearly eight months to arsenic, lead, and mercury. No reliable asbestos testing has been released, and the contaminated piles sit just feet from the Potomac River, a key tributary of the Chesapeake Bay.

  > *A Trump arch. A taxpayer-funded ballroom draped in gold. His face on buildings, currency, and coins. None of it lowers costs. None of it helps American families.*

- **Accepting Foreign Bribes:** In May 2025, Trump accepted a $400 million luxury jet from the royal family of Qatar and declared he'd turn it into a new Air Force One. The gift, the largest foreign bribe to an American president in history, raised a multitude of ethics, security, and legal concerns. Upgrading the luxury jet's security cost American taxpayers approximately $1 billion.

  > *Republicans let the President waste $1 billion in taxpayer dollars to retrofit and operate his luxury jet – and yet it's still not secure. What a waste.*

FUNNELING GOVERNMENT FUNDS TO FRIENDS AND BACKERS

- **Boosting Billionaire Buddies**: Elon Musk, the world's first trillionaire, backed Trump and Republicans with over $250 million in election spending. Less than a month into the new administration, Musk's companies were already benefitting from their support for Trump. *The New York Times* reported that "[g]overnment investigations into Mr. Musk's companies are stalling amid President Trump's firings and Biden administration resignations." Trump bestowed unprecedented, and likely unlawful, authority to Musk to run a so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). DOGE diverted billions in taxpayer funds to benefit Musk's personal financial interests while cutting federal jobs, programs, and essential public services. At the same time, Mr. Musk continued to oversee a vast private business empire that depends heavily on government funding with no independent oversight to address obvious conflicts of interest.

  - **And it's not just Musk.** Billionaire Peter Thiel, a Republican megadonor, Vance ally, and founder of Palantir, has raked in billions in government contracts since donating millions to Trump and his allies' campaigns. Since Trump's inauguration, Palantir has been awarded over $1.3 billion in federal contracts, and Anduril, the defense tech company heavily backed by Thiel's Founders Fund, signed a 10-year contract with the U.S. Army potentially worth up to *$20 billion*.

  > *Trump's golden rule: he who has the gold makes the rules.*

- **Propping Up Big Oil and Gutting Affordable Clean Energy**: President Trump pledged to cut energy costs in half within his first year, but instead, electricity prices have increased—as much as 16 percent nationwide since early 2025, far outpacing inflation. Higher bills are a direct result of Trump and Republicans' failed policies that restrict clean energy—the fastest and cheapest sources of power to build—while he props up high cost fossil fuel generation. Trump has already spent nearly $3 billion in taxpayer money to kill offshore wind projects that were already in progress and would have created thousands of jobs, boosted local economic development, and delivered low-cost clean energy to millions of homes. Trump's defense of fossil fuels makes good on his promise to provide Big Oil donors "a great deal" if they helped him raise $1 billion for his campaign. The money now flowing out of Americans' wallets thanks to higher electricity, heating, cooling, and gasoline bills is flowing straight into these donors' pockets.

> *The result: higher prices, fewer jobs, and more pressure on working families.*

- **Trump's Pardon Profiteering**. Trump has transformed the Presidential pardon from an instrument of mercy into a currency for insiders, repeatedly using clemency to reward political donors, loyalists, cronies, and individuals with direct access to him. By pardoning these offenders, Trump is cancelling not just their punishments but their payback obligations.

  > *All in all, Trump's pardon profiteering has wiped out almost $2 billion that was supposed to go back to victims and taxpayers.*

All told, Trump and his family grow richer, and their corporate allies boost profits, while everyday Americans are hung out to dry.

Conclusion.

The Trump administration has been marked by widespread corruption, disregard for basic ethical standards, and a lack of accountability. At the same time, American families are being left high and dry, faced with increased costs for everything from groceries and gas to electricity and health care. And when President Trump was asked about the affordability crisis Americans are facing, he told the country where his priorities are: "I don't think about that."

He's made that painfully clear. Trump has placed his personal interests, his family's interests, and his special interest cronies' interests, ahead of the American people.

There are real consequences here. When public officials use governmental power to enrich themselves, their families, and major donors—through self-dealing, conflicts of interest, and preferential treatment—they distort markets, increase costs and financial risks for ordinary Americans, undermine fair competition for honest businesses, and erode public confidence in democratic institutions.