

An Open Letter to America's CEOs

To Whom It May Concern:

The Trump administration tore our government apart. It shredded norms, violated the rule of law, waged war on facts, spread misinformation and manipulated the public, and paved the way for the president's supporters to incite a violent mob attack at the U.S. Capitol. The past four years of flagrant disregard for the core tenets of our democracy made it clear that we must ensure that these un-American principles do not spread beyond this disgraceful administration.

As the Trump team exits the government, their next stop is your front door. In the coming days and weeks, scores of senior Trump administration officials will come looking for jobs, hawking their purported expertise in government as a qualification rather than a badge of dishonor.

As leaders of American business, the people you hire demonstrate your corporate values. You have an obligation to your companies and to the public to fully vet outgoing Trump administration officials and ask yourselves: Is this someone who reflects what our organization is about? You should ask yourselves whether inviting them into your workforces aligns with your commitments to diversity, equal justice, and integrity. If these officials did not speak up against the violations of the Trump administration, how can you trust them to stand up for your values?

The evidence of those violations is clear and well documented in news stories, inspector general reports, and primary source records, and more will continue to become public in the months and years ahead. From family separation to support for white supremacist violence and more, many outgoing Trump administration officials are leaving government followed by a paper trail that attests to their involvement in some of the worst episodes in our recent history.

You will be America's first line of defense against normalizing hate and misconduct. You should demand clear, evidence-based answers to whether a former official participated in enabling, crafting, implementing, or defending a concerted effort to shatter democratic norms and spread hate. If someone is selling you on their important roles over the past four years, it is fair to infer they played an important role in advancing policies you spoke out against. However strong the opposition, your words are meaningless unless they are backed up with resolute action.

Government service does not guarantee private employment. In fact, it should not. And American business should not reward the behavior of the Trump administration with the well-oiled revolving door that traditionally spins at moments of transition.

We call on you to make it clear that you will not hire for employment, contract for consulting, or seat on your boards any senior-level official from the Trump administration that has participated in undermining our democracy, endorsing violent extremism, or tearing families apart. Senior officials who did so must not be allowed to cash in on the devastation they've wrought through high-paying speaking fees, consultancies, book deals, or jobs in the boardrooms and corner offices of our nation's businesses.

There are some lines that simply cannot be crossed — and the public will be watching.

Sincerely,

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American Oversight