



A Boon Of Influence

Obama's Broken Promises Have Created A Murkier Culture Of Special Interests And Business As Usual In Washington

Obama, In 2008: “[Lobbyists] Will Not Run My White House, And They Will Not Drown Out The Voices Of The American People When I’m President.” OBAMA: “I won’t take money from PACs, won’t take money from federal registered lobbyists. (Applause.) They have not funded my campaign, they will not run my White House, and they will not drown out the voices of the American people when I’m president.” (Sen. Barack Obama, Remarks At Ault Park Pavilion, Cincinnati, OH, 10/9/08)

- **Obama: “We’re Going To Have To Change The Culture In Washington So That Lobbyists And Special Interests Aren’t Driving The Process.”** (Sen. Barack Obama, [Second Presidential Debate](#), Nashville, TN, 10/7/08)

OVER FOUR YEARS LATER, THE ONLY THING THAT’S CHANGED IN WASHINGTON IS TEAM OBAMA

The New York Times’ Mark Leibovich: “I Do Think That The Notion Of A Changed Washington Is A Complete Myth.” MARK LEIBOVICH: “The Obama experience was fascinating, because it really did begin in 2008 when my chronology begins. And this was this massive change brigade, which had these big ideas about changing Washington, and the President explicitly said that they’d failed. A very smart person is quoted in the book as saying, sort of rhetorically, did we change Washington or did Washington change us? And that very smart person is on this panel right now. ... But I do think that the notion of a changed Washington is a complete myth.” (MSNBC’s [“Morning Joe,”](#) 7/16/13)

- **Leibovich: “I Think The Whole Circle Of The Revolving Door, That This [Obama] Team Was Supposed To Stop, Has Only Been Intensified.”** MARK LEIBOVICH: “Obviously a very effective marketing strategy in 2008. I assume it was genuine then. But I also think that it’s gotten a lot of people very very wealthy. I think the whole circle of the revolving door, that this team was supposed to stop, has only been intensified.” (MSNBC’s [“Morning Joe,”](#) 7/16/13)

Former Obama Press Secretary Robert Gibbs: “Somehow We Have All Changed. ... Or Maybe Washington Just Changed Us.” “Even before he left the White House, Gibbs had asked that question many times, in various forums. He spoke often of being dispirited by all the small accommodations the Obama White House had been forced to make to the status quo that they had run against in 2008: the various exceptions to the no-lobbying rules; what he considered to be the excessive embrace of the Washington media echo-chamber; self-service winning out over public service, or at least loyalty to the

president. 'I remember saying in that meeting, 'Somehow we have all changed.' Gibbs said. 'Or maybe Washington just changed us.'" (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

OBAMA'S VERSION OF CHANGE HAS BEEN A "BOON TO LOBBYISTS" AND OTHER SPECIAL INTERESTS

"One Of The Stubborn Truths Of Obama-Era Washington Is That Everyone Is Now, In Effect, A Special Interest, A Free Agent, Performing Any Number Of Services, In Any Number Of Settings. It Goes Well Beyond The Technical Classification Of 'Registered Lobbyists.'" (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

"Obama's Aggressive Change Initiatives Were In Fact A Boon To Lobbyists." (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

- **"Whenever There Is Complicated New Legislation, There Will Be Plenty Of Business For Lobbyists. 'Complication And Uncertainty Is Good For Us,' Said The Democratic Mega-Lobbyist Tony Podesta, Who Speaks With A Bug-Eyed Intensity Leavened By Frequent Giggles At The Ends Of His Sentences." (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)**

Obama's Distinction Between Registered Lobbyists And Those Who Do Other Public Relations Issue Advocacy Is A Difference That Many On K Street Say Makes Little Sense And Causes More To Move Into The Shadows Of Lobbying Disclosures. "The Obama administration has drawn a clear distinction between registered lobbyists and those who do public relations or other types of issue advocacy. It's a difference that many on K Street say makes little sense and actually causes more work to move out of the sunlight of lobbying disclosures and into the shadows." (Kate Ackley, "Administration Staffers Head Out The Revolving Door," [Roll Call](#), 3/26/12)

- **"'The Pledge Is More A PR Thing Than Anything Else,' One K Street Executive Said. 'When You Need To Get Around It, You Get Around It. It's A Joke, And Everyone Knows It's A Joke.'" (Kate Ackley, "Administration Staffers Head Out The Revolving Door," [Roll Call](#), 3/26/12)**

People Have Their Own "Special Interest" With "Cozy Areas Of Overlap...Perhaps Even 'Deeply Troubling' Ones. "What's more, as everyone was their own 'special interest,' or brand, it was impossible to know who was carrying what water for whom. It was certainly not as easy as going down a list of 'registered lobbyists' and excluding them from White House employment or dealings. Lobbying was just one segment on the revolving door. Cozy areas of overlap abounded— perhaps even 'deeply troubling' ones. For instance, Michael Froman, chief of staff to Clinton Treasury secretary Robert Rubin, was a managing director at Citigroup while serving on Obama's transition team. Another Rubin protégé, then New York Fed president Tim Geithner, helped engineer a taxpayer bailout of Citigroup a few weeks after Obama's election. Froman later received a \$ 2.2 million bonus from Citigroup after being hired by the administration. (He ultimately gave it to charity.)" (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

"At The Same Time, Washington Is Now Crawling With People Who Are Not Registered To Lobby But Who Nonetheless Get Paid To Advocate Full-Time For Some Business, Organization, Or Industry Agenda (Either Directly To A Powerful Official Or Via Some PR Work)." (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

- **"In Other Words, They Are Engaged In Lobbying Even If Their Work Does Not Meet The Legal Standard Requiring Them To Register As Lobbyists. This Ilk Is Known Around Town As 'Unregistered Lobbyists.'" (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)**
- **Lobbyist Jack Quinn: "There Are A Lot Of People Who Have Been Registered To Lobby For Years Who Are Now Calling Themselves 'Public Affairs Consultants' Or 'Strategic Advisers.'" (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)**

“Quinn pointed out that Obama’s antilobbyist rap has merely driven a lot of the business underground, or at least into thin disguise. ‘There are a lot of people who have been registered to lobby for years who are now calling themselves ‘public affairs consultants’ or ‘strategic advisers,’” Quinn says.” (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

Lobbyists Have Not Had To Fight For White House “Face Time”

Tony Podesta, Founder Of The Lobbying Firm The Podesta Group, Said That His Lobbyists Have Not “Struggled At All To Get Face Time In The White House.” “Nor, for that matter, had the quaint vilification of lobbyists that accompanied the rise of Barack Obama stopped any of them from celebrating themselves. Four years earlier, at the Dems’ convention in Denver, the Podestas even made up scarlet L’s— for “lobbyist”— as badges of defiance. Even sweeter defiance? Business is fabulous these days, and so are the Bloody Marys. Tony Podesta’s firm, the Podesta Group, was in line to have its best year ever, Tony told me. He added that he or the lobbyists he employed had not struggled at all to get face time in the White House despite the administration’s repeated boasts about how little use they had for lobbyists. As of the end of May 2012, Tony’s name had shown up twenty-seven times on White House visitor logs. It didn’t hurt, no doubt, that he shared a last name with John Podesta, the former White House chief of staff for Bill Clinton and co-chair of the Obama transition team in 2008 and 2009. People assumed that John and Tony were brothers (because they were) and that they talked all the time (they did) and that it gave Tony a big inroad to the administration (they swore not, but clients could assume all they wanted).” (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

The Washington Post: There Is A “Steady Stream Of Lobbyists Among The Thousands Of Daily Visitors To The White House.” “It was an unremarkable January day, with a steady stream of lobbyists among the thousands of daily visitors to the White House and the surrounding executive office buildings, according to a Washington Post analysis of visitor logs released by the administration. The Post matched visits with lobbying registrations and connected records in the visitor database to show who participated in the meetings, information now available in a search engine on the Post’s web site.” (T.W. Farnam, “White House Visitor Logs Window Into Lobbying Industry,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/20/12)

Visitor Records Show That The Lobbying Industry Has “A Regular Presence” At The White House. “The visitor logs for Jan. 17 — one of the most recent days available — show that the lobbying industry Obama has vowed to constrain is a regular presence at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.” (T.W. Farnam, “White House Visitor Logs Window Into Lobbying Industry,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/20/12)

- **“The Records Also Suggest That Lobbyists With Personal Connections To The White House Enjoy The Easiest Access.”** (T.W. Farnam, “White House Visitor Logs Window Into Lobbying Industry,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/20/12)
- **“The White House Visitor Records Make It Clear That Obama’s Senior Officials Are Granting That Access To Some Of K Street’s Most Influential Representatives.”** (T.W. Farnam, “White House Visitor Logs Window Into Lobbying Industry,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/20/12)

White House Staff Holds Meetings With Lobbyists Outside Of The Office So They Don’t Have Their Names Recorded On The Visitors Logs

The White House Also Met With Lobbyists In A Complex Just Off The White House Grounds. “Caught between their boss’s anti-lobbyist rhetoric and the reality of governing, President Barack Obama’s aides often steer meetings with lobbyists to a complex just off the White House grounds – and several of the lobbyists involved say they believe the choice of venue is no accident.” (Chris Frates, “White House Meets Lobbyists Off Campus,” [Politico](#), 2/24/11)

- **By Holding The Meetings With Lobbyists At Jackson Place, The Obama Administration Is Able To Evade Their Own Transparency Rules And The Secret Service Background Checks.** “The Jackson Place townhouses are a different story. There are no records of meetings at the row houses just off Lafayette Square that house the White House Conference Center and the Council on Environmental Quality, home to two of the busiest meeting spaces. The White House can’t say who attended meetings there, or how often. The Secret Service doesn’t log in visitors or require a background check the way it does at the main gates of the White House.” (Chris Frates, “White House Meets Lobbyists Off Campus,” [Politico](#), 2/24/11)
- **The Meetings Are Diverted Off Grounds Once Lobbyists Have To Meet With Obama Staffers More Than Once Or Twice.** “They say the White House is generally happy to meet with them and their clients once or twice, but get leery when an issue requires multiple visits and begin pushing for phone calls or meetings outside the White House’s gates. ‘Without question, I think that there’s a lot of concern about being seen meeting with the same lobbyists or particular lobbyists over and over again,’ said one business lobbyist, who has been to Jackson Place meetings.” (Chris Frates, “White House Meets Lobbyists Off Campus,” [Politico](#), 2/24/11)

Obama Officials Have Met “Hundreds Of Times” With Lobbyists At A Coffee Shop Across The Street From The White House. “Here at the Caribou on Pennsylvania Avenue, and a few other nearby coffee shops, White House officials have met hundreds of times over the last 18 months with prominent K Street lobbyists -- members of the same industry that President Obama has derided for what he calls its ‘outsized influence’ in the capital.” (Eric Lichtblau, “Across From White House, Coffee With Lobbyists,” [The New York Times](#), 6/24/10)

- **White House Officials And Lobbyists Discussed Issues From Wall Street Regulation To Health Care.** “On the agenda over espressos and lattes, according to more than a dozen lobbyists and political operatives who have taken part in the sessions, have been front-burner issues like Wall Street regulation, health care rules, federal stimulus money, energy policy and climate control -- and their impact on the lobbyists’ corporate clients.” (Eric Lichtblau, “Across From White House, Coffee With Lobbyists,” [The New York Times](#), 6/24/10)

The Meetings “Reveal A Disconnect Between The Obama Administration’s Public Rhetoric ... And The Administration’s Continuing, Private Dealings With Them.” “But because the discussions are not taking place at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, they are not subject to disclosure on the visitors’ log that the White House releases as part of its pledge to be the ‘most transparent presidential administration in history.’ The off-site meetings, lobbyists say, reveal a disconnect between the Obama administration’s public rhetoric -- with Mr. Obama himself frequently thrashing big industries’ ‘battalions’ of lobbyists as enemies of reform -- and the administration’s continuing, private dealings with them.” (Eric Lichtblau, “Across From White House, Coffee With Lobbyists,” [The New York Times](#), 6/24/10)

THE REVOLVING DOOR IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE OBAMA WHITE HOUSE

Obama Overlooks Past Lobbying Ties When It Serves His Interests

Most Recently, The Obama Administration Hired Former Health Care Lobbyist Chris Jennings To Work On ObamaCare Implementation. “In an effort to put President Obama’s health care program back on track, the White House has recruited Chris Jennings, a respected veteran of the Clinton administration, to join the Obama team as a health policy coordinator and strategist, the White House said on Sunday night.” (Robert Pear, “Clinton Aide Joins Obama On Health Care,” [The New York Times](#), 7/7/13)

Jennings Was Last Registered As A Federal Lobbyist In 2010 For Clients That Included American Board Of Internal Medicine, Generic Pharmaceutical Association, And Federation Of American Hospitals. ([U.S. Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act Database](#), Accessed 7/30/13)

- **Issues Jennings Reported Lobbying On Included The “Pending Health Reform Legislation.”** (Jennings Policy Strategies, [Lobbying Report](#), Filed 4/20/10)
- **Chris Jennings Is Still Listed On *The Hill*’s “Top Lobbyists” List As A “Respected Authority” On ObamaCare.** “Chris Jennings, Jennings Policy Strategies. A veteran of Washington’s healthcare reform battles, Jennings is a respected authority on President Obama’s healthcare law.” (“The Hill’s 2012 Top Lobbyists,” [The Hill](#), 10/31/12)
- **Jennings Currently Serves As President Of Jennings Policy Strategies – A “Health Care Consulting Firm” That Develops And Implements Health Care Policies.** “Chris Jennings is a three decades-long health policy veteran of the Congress, the White House, and the private sector. He currently serves as president of Jennings Policy Strategies (JPS), a nationally respected health care consulting firm. He and his staff specialize in assisting foundations and purchasers (and those aligned with them) to develop and implement policies that ensure higher quality, more affordable health care for all Americans.” ([Jennings Policy Strategies Website](#), Accessed 7/30/13)

“Last Year, One Of K Street’s More Prominent Democratic Lobbyists, Steve Ricchetti, Was Hired As A Counselor To Vice President Biden. Ricchetti Hadn’t Been Registered Since 2008, So He Also Didn’t Need A Waiver.” (Kevin Bogardus, “‘The Good Lobbyist’ To Join Obama Administration,” [The Hill](#), 7/9/13)

- **From 2001 To 2011, Ricchetti Served As The President Of The Lobbying Firm Ricchetti Inc.** ([Center For Responsive Politics](#), Accessed 7/30/13)
- **Ricchetti’s Clients Included AT&T Eli Lilly And The American Hospital Association.** “Steve Ricchetti, who starts work for Biden today, founded a lobbying firm with clients including AT&T, drug-maker Eli Lilly, and the American Hospital Association.” (T.W. Farnum, “Biden Hires Former Lobbyist,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/5/12)
- **A Top White House Adviser Said Ricchetti Was Hired Because Biden “Really Wanted Him” And They “Didn’t Think It Would Get Much Traction Outside The Fake Umbrage Crowd Anyway.”** “‘We knew we were going to get hit for this,’ one top Obama adviser in the White House told me a week after the Ricchetti announcement. ‘But Biden really wanted him and fought for him. And we didn’t think it would get much traction outside of the fake umbrage crowd anyway.’ Maybe, too, the reelection campaign hiring Broderick Johnson— a former lobbyist for AT& T, BellSouth, and Microsoft, among other companies— would get them spanked. For a day or two, tops.” (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)
- **“This Had Become The Essential Team Obama MO Whenever The Cynical Realities Of Washington Collided With Its Shiny Ideals From 2008. Acknowledge The Exception, Wait Out The Indignant Blog Posts And Press Releases, And Move On. That Lobbying Ban Was So Four Years Ago Anyway.”** (Mark Leibovich, *This Town*, 2013)

“Other Lobbyists Have Been Granted Waivers To Serve In The Administration Despite Being In Violation Of The Two-Year Cooling-Off Period For Lobbying.” (Kevin Bogardus, “‘The Good Lobbyist’ To Join Obama Administration,” [The Hill](#), 7/9/13)

Obama's Lobbyist Ban Has Long Been His "Biggest Broken Promise"

In A Second Term, K Street Expects The Obama Administration To "Quietly Open Its Doors To More Lobbyists Through Waivers." "When President Barack Obama took office, he immediately installed unprecedented revolving-door restrictions that banned federal lobbyists from serving in his administration without a waiver. And in his rhetoric, he made no secret of his disdain for the influence industry. Few people, from lobbyists to those who keep tabs on them, expect radical changes in Obama's relationship with K Street during his second term. But many predict that his administration will quietly open its doors to more lobbyists through the waivers. And they expect the president to court the business community, as he did in December during fiscal cliff negotiations, and like-minded activists when it will help him sell his priorities on Capitol Hill." (Kate Ackley, "Obama Expected To Ease Lobby Posture," [Roll Call](#), 1/20/13)

PolitiFact: "We Rate Obama's 'Revolving Door' Policy For Former Lobbyists His Biggest Broken Promise." (Angie Drobnic Holan, "Not So Fast On Obama Revolving Door Policy," [PolitiFact](#), 1/23/09)

- **PolitiFact: "Obama Was Very Clear With His Promise. He Said No Lobbyists Would 'Work On Regulations Or Contracts Directly And Substantially Related To Their Prior Employer For Two Years.' No Means None. Promise Broken."** (Angie Drobnic Holan, "Former Lobbyist In The White House? It's Okay If They Say It's Okay," [PolitiFact](#), 3/17/09)
- **The Center For Responsive Politics Reports That 392 Individuals Have Been Through Obama's Revolving Door, With Over 130 Individuals Who Are Former Or Current Registered Lobbyists.** ([Center For Responsive Politics](#), Accessed 7/30/13)

"It's Well-Known That President Barack Obama Has Surrounded Himself With Lobbyists." (John Carney, "Obama's Lobbyist-Heavy Administration," [CNBC](#), 11/1/11)