

Nov. 13, 2024

The Hon. Charles Schumer, Majority Leader  
The Hon. Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

The below civic organizations and scholars write to you out of concern that a year-long hold by Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) on the confirmation of David Huitema for Director of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) is placing ethics compliance of the presidential transition process at risk. We encourage the Senate to lift that hold and complete the appointment of fair and impartial leadership of OGE.

Sen. Lee declared more than a year ago that he would prefer the appointment of the OGE Director be made after the inauguration of a new administration and has thus placed a Senatorial hold on the appointment of Huitema ever since.

*Ethics should never be viewed as a partisan game.* In fact, the Directorship is a five-year term, specifically designed to overlap administrations to minimize the influence of partisan politics. And David Huitema, much like the prior Director Emory Rounds appointed by then-President Trump, has a seasoned career of impartial ethics enforcement. Huitema has long been managing the State Department's ethics program in a fair and prudent manner, without consideration of partisanship. Huitema is precisely suited to be the kind of balanced Director of OGE that ethics requires.

One of the most important roles of the Office of Government Ethics is to oversee and advise the presidential transition process. The selection and nomination of most new administration officials takes place during the transition, in which OGE's vetting of pending nominees for conflicts of interest is most critical. The Office needs to be fully staffed and operational during the course of the transition period.

We strongly encourage the Senate to override the hold of David Huitema as Director of the Office of Government Ethics and allow for the proper enforcement of the ethics process without undue consideration of partisan favoritism.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Teachers

American Oversight

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)

Colorado Black Women for Political Action

Court Accountability

Alexander B. Howard, Co-Founder, Open Government Roundtable

Freedom from Religion Foundation Action Fund

Issue One

MOVI, Money Out Voters In

Newtown Action Alliance

Norman J. Ornstein

Peoples Parity Project

People Power United

Public Citizen

Reboot Our Democracy

Reform for Illinois

Richard Painter, Law Professor, and former ethics officer in the  
Bush Administration (2005-2007)

Prof. James A. Thurber

Secure Elections Network

The Workers Circle