

One Hundred Days of Ethics Erasure

In just the first one hundred days of his second term in the White House, President Trump has already eroded public trust by flouting ethics norms, rules, and enforcement. The Administration prompted alarms before even taking office by missing the pre-Election Day deadline to submit an ethics code, and eventually presenting an inadequate plan that excluded language explaining how it would apply to the President himself. This lukewarm gesture set the stage for an administration uncommitted to ethical government.

President Trump has disregarded **ethics norms** with actions that draw concerns about transparency as well as his personal conflicts of interest. He began the day of his second inauguration, when he failed to release ethics rules for political appointees in his administration, allowing for a revolving door of lobbyists in government. The President has also used his office to advance his own personal financial interests, particularly with respect to the cryptocurrency industry. In the days before taking office, President Trump launched a meme coin, which surged in value after holders were promised a chance at dinner with the President in Washington.

The Trump Administration has also appeared to break **ethics rules** that prohibit conflicts of interest by promoting the companies of close allies and advisors, most notably Elon Musk. After joining the federal government as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), President Trump gave Musk decision-making power over agencies that clearly overlap with his business interests. Further, President Trump endorsed Tesla, and his Commerce Secretary urged the public to buy stock in the company (violating federal ethics laws).

Finally, President Trump has hindered **ethics enforcement** by removing key government officials. He ended his first week in office by firing inspectors general across at least 17 federal agencies, and went on to oust numerous watchdog officers at the Department of Justice and multiple independent agencies. These officials, responsible for investigating violations and enforcing ethics laws, are an essential guardrail against corruption. The Trump Administration has further rolled back enforcement by issuing questionable pardons to supporters indicted on or convicted of corruption-related charges.

The table below identifies 27 times that the Trump Administration violated ethics norms and rules and impaired enforcement during just the first 100 days in office.

ETHICS NORMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trump <u>ignores</u> custom of issuing strict ethics rules for political appointees (1/20) • Trump <u>refuses</u> to release White House visitor logs (2/11) • Trump <u>hosts</u> Saudi investors and <u>gives</u> speech at investment conference, drawing concerns about his business ties (2/19-2/20) • Trump political committee <u>sells</u> DOGE membership cards (2/23) • White House <u>hosts</u> crypto summit, highlighting concerns of his personal holdings and meme coins (3/7) • Trump <u>attacks</u> nonpartisan nonprofit, CREW, in speech to DOJ (3/13) • The SEC <u>drops</u> lawsuit against cryptocurrency company Ripple (3/19) • Trump <u>expands</u> pardon power to cover a crypto corporation (3/31) • DOJ <u>disbands</u> crypto investigations unit (4/7) • Trump offer dinner event in Washington D.C. for top holders of his meme coin, <u>leading</u> to a surge in value (4/23)
ETHICS RULES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trump appears to violate ethics rules by <u>endorsing</u> Tesla (3/11) • Top lawyer in SEC lawsuit against Musk over Twitter purchase <u>resigns</u> days after DOGE enters the agency (4/4) • Musk appears to <u>violate</u> conflict of interest rules when FAA conducts business with his company, Starlink (2/24) • Musk's company, SpaceX, stands to <u>benefit</u> from an Air Force proposal for a rocket testing facility, raising ethics questions (3/3) • Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick appears to <u>violate</u> rules prohibiting the promotion of specific stocks by urging the public to buy Tesla (3/19) • Elon Musk appears to <u>circumvent</u> oversight procedures by donating Starlink internet service to the White House (unknown date)
ETHICS ENFORCEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trump <u>fires</u> Inspectors General across at least 17 federal agencies (1/24) • DOJ's public corruption chief <u>resigns</u> (1/27) • DOJ <u>drops</u> illegal contribution case against fmr. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (1/29) • Federal prosecutors <u>drop</u> their investigation into Rep. Andy Ogles (R-TN5) <u>related</u> to false financial disclosure statements (1/31) • Trump <u>fires</u> the head of the Office of Special Counsel, a top federal ethics watchdog (2/7) • Trump <u>removes</u> government ethics director (2/10) • Trump <u>pardons</u> fmr. Illinois Gov. Blagojevich for corruption charges (2/10) • DOJ <u>drops</u> corruption charges against NYC Mayor Eric Adams (2/11) • Trump <u>claims</u> power over independent regulatory agencies (2/18) • Trump <u>fires</u> DOJ's chief of legal ethics (3/7) • Trump <u>pardons</u> Brian Kelsey for campaign finance fraud scheme (3/12)

Voters have a right to know that their elected officials are acting in the public interest and not prioritizing their own wealth or the wants of special interests. CLC will continue to monitor ethics under President Trump and hold the Administration accountable.