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TI-USA Issues Key Recommendations for New Administration to Avoid Conflicts of Interest

November 21, 2016. Transparency International-USA, a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening integrity and combating corruption in the United States and internationally, urges President-elect Donald J. Trump to strictly enforce, without exceptions, a conflict of interest policy for his transition team members and appointees.

“The president-elect has an early and excellent opportunity to make good on his campaign promise to run a government that works for the people and not for the political class. The transition team putting in place a code of ethics is an important step. Establishing a transparent transition operation that maintains a zero-tolerance policy on conflicts of interest should be a top priority,” said Claudia Dumas, President of TI-USA.

The potential conflicts of interest the president-elect’s global business holdings present make setting high standards for transparency imperative. By embracing the spirit of transparency, integrity, and accountability, the president-elect can assure the American people that his family and his businesses are not given preferential treatment or perceived as given preferential treatment.

Without exception, transition team members should be prohibited from overseeing political appointments or participating in policy decisions that may affect their own financial interests, as well as the interests of their families and business associates.

Qualifications should serve as a guiding principle for all appointments. Nominees should be required to publicly disclose all campaign contributions and political expenditures they made or bundled. They also should be required to disclose any conflicts of interest their appointments may present. Full disclosure will facilitate confirmation; it will also enable an essential conversation about nominee qualifications.

TI-USA makes the following key recommendations based on best practice conflict of interest policies:

- The president-elect and his administration should strictly enforce and make no exceptions to his transition team’s code of ethical conduct.
- The president-elect should put all assets that may pose potential conflicts of interest in a true blind trust, run by an independent trustee. The family of the president-elect should not control the Trump businesses while he is in office.
- The president-elect should be transparent about his personal and business debt obligations to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.
- The president-elect should publicly release his tax returns.
- The nominating process for appointees should be fully transparent and based on qualifications. Appointees should disclose all campaign contributions and political expenditures, and any interests in any Trump businesses.

By taking the lead on these issues, President-elect Trump can begin the important and much-needed process of restoring public faith in government.