

Rightsizing corporate voice

A briefing for business on responsible political engagement

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AGENDA

- Oxfam and a new briefing for business
- The case for change
- Towards a new approach
- Essential actions for businesses



WORDS MATTER, BUT LOBBYING DOLLARS GET THE JOB DONE

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US Capitol building in Washington, DC. (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)

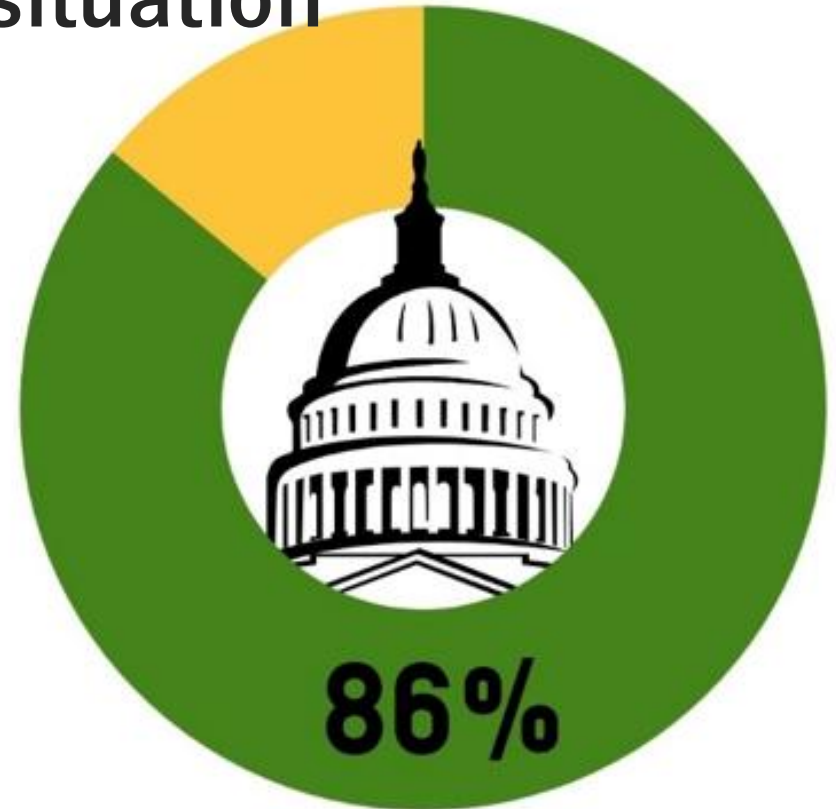
How some of the biggest companies have used their advocacy voice in response to the Trump agenda.

Over the last year there has been a lot of hubbub about how the private sector has stood up to some of President Trump's harshest policy proposals. We wanted to know: have those public statements and stances made any headway with policymakers?

The case for change – the current situation

- A. The massive scale of corporate political engagement
- B. Businesses narrow short term financial prioritization
- C. Lack of meaningful disclosure

 Inherent risk of corporate policy capture



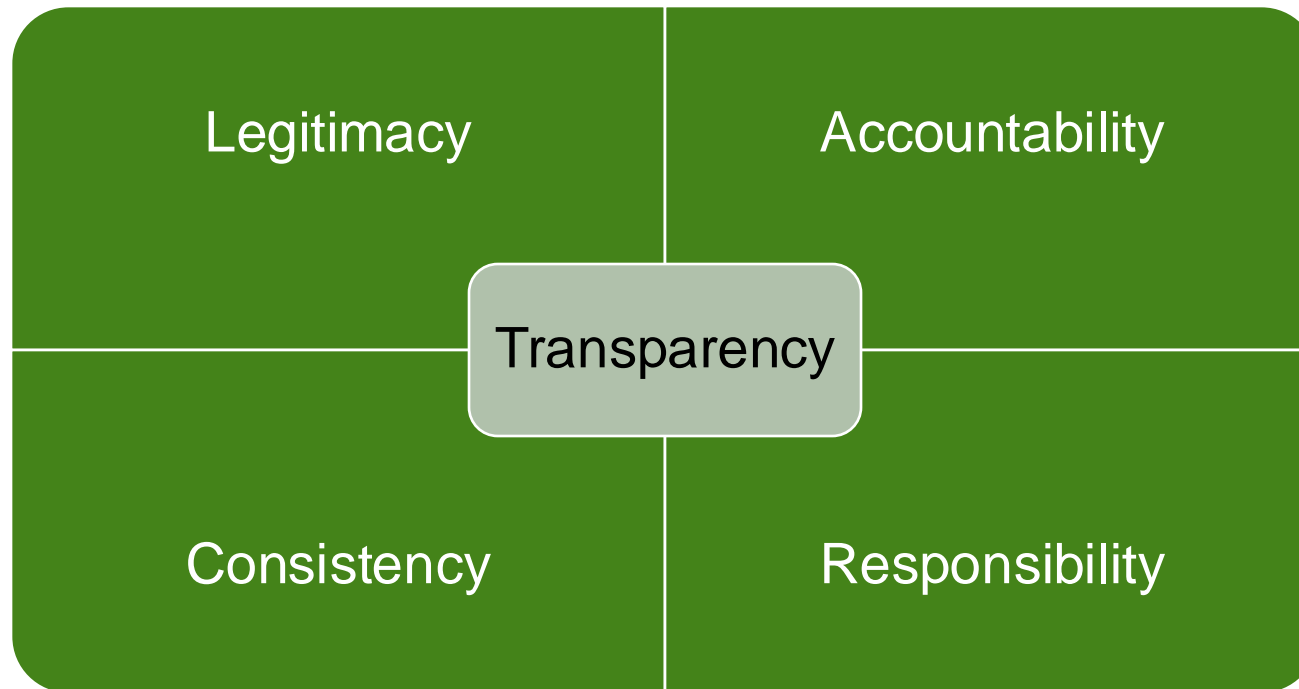
In 2022, companies accounted for US\$4.1bn – 86% of the total – in reported spending to lobby the US Congress and other federal bodies.

The case for change – specific risks








LOBBYING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal misalignment• External misalignment• Revolving door
ADVOCACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influence on the public debate• Influence on science and academia• Influence on judiciary
POLITICAL SPENDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donations to political parties, individuals and causes• Donations to third parties• Astroturfing

Towards a new approach

- Emerging consensus among investors, civil society and others approach to CPE should be based on key principles



Towards a new approach – emerging company good practice

Political spending	 
Trade association review	  
Scientific research	
Policy positions	

Towards a new approach – using a human rights framing



- Putting risk to people, the environment and the political systems that businesses rely on at the heart of CPE would drive alignment to the concept of long-term business value and a company's social and environmental commitments.

Essential roadmap for business – 7 key actions

Assess: Understand your current political engagement practices and their impacts		
Map your current political footprint	Assess your political engagement through a human rights and environmental sustainability lens	
Act and integrate: Take actions to integrate responsible political engagement in your business and third parties		
Change practices and processes to minimize the risk of policy capture	Develop policy positions on your salient human rights and environmental issues to drive positive outcomes	Ensure that political engagement by trade associations and business partners is aligned to your human rights and environmental commitments, and use leverage to influence others
Communicate: Be transparent about your approach and progress, and promote responsible political engagement to others		
Publicly disclose political engagement so that stakeholders can assess your approach, priorities and impact	Engage with the debate and positively contribute to the development of responsible corporate political engagement	

Essential actions for businesses – Potential key practices to prioritise



STOP

- Any lobbying or advocacy that could lead to human rights and/or environmental harms.
- Making political donations to any candidates or political parties.
- Company and business partners invoking Investor-State Dispute Settlements or Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation.



START

- Creating a mechanism to measure and take action on trade association misalignment.
- Looking for ways to increase access for marginalized groups to the policymaking process.
- Introducing mandatory cooling-off periods of at least six months for any new employees hired directly from government and vice versa.



CONTINUE

- To support multi-stakeholder groups that advocate for strong policies in support of ambitious human rights and environmental outcomes for society.
- Board oversight of all aspects of political engagement including lobbying objectives and political spending.

Thank you for joining



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