



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on November 1, 2019

New Report Reveals the Depth and Despotism of Congress' Legalized "Pay to Play" Corruption Factory

"But though in all governments, this great power must exist somewhere, yet it can rarely be delegated with prudence to inferior magistrates; who, out of ambition, revenge, or faction, or for bribes and preferments, or out of fear and flattery, or in concert with the ill measures or selfish intrigues of statesmen, may pervert so dangerous a trust to the destruction of those whom it was intended to preserve."



— John Trenchard, *Cato's Letters* No. 12, January 14, 1721

In a thorough investigation of congressional pay-to-play schemes, federal grants, campaign cash, investments, employment, power, and influence, the Open The Books organization is pulling back the curtain of corruption to reveal that most of the federal government is for sale to the highest bidder.

[The report](#) begins with some staggering statistics: 97 percent of members of Congress get reelected each year even though only 17 percent of the American people believe our representatives are doing a good job.

In other words, everybody complains about the government, everybody calls on us every two years to "vote the bums out" or to "clean the swamp," but only a slim three percent of those "bums" are sent home after their first term.

Open the Books calls this phenomenon the "incumbent protection system" and identifies several key components of that system.

First, "most districts are gerrymandered by states to protect incumbents. In a real sense, politicians pick their voters as much as voters pick their politicians."

Second, "members of Congress more or less write their own rules. It's no surprise they know how to play the game."

Next, "the top donors to Members giving hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign cash and receiving millions — if not billions of dollars — in federal subsidies and contracts."

What is perhaps the most frightening fact revealed in the report is that what Congress is doing IS LEGAL!

That's right. Congress is constitutionally empowered to make laws, and they abuse that power in a way that makes their fleecing of the American families "legal."

Open the Books asserts that this is "the scandal."

The report published by Open the Books — a private charity that receives no government funding — "provides an analysis on the relationship between federal contractors receiving grants and contracts and giving campaign donations to key Members of the 115th Congress (2017-2018)."



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The reader should click over and read the entire 31-page report, but for the sake of space and to pique the public's interest in just how corrupt Congress is — including their own congressman — I present here some of the principal takeaways from the report.

First, the investigation focused on eight members of Congress who hold powerful committee assignments in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The way these men and women work the system to benefit themselves is perfectly legal and perfectly immoral.

The expose reveals that perquisites for rigging the rules to the game include lucrative lobbying positions, preferred stock ownership, immeasurable influence, easy employment, and cushy board memberships.

Now, it goes without saying that in order to have money to funnel toward their corporate cronies, congressmen have to take that money from taxpayers. While that doesn't sound shocking — although it should — it is also fact that these key congressmen almost always vote to grow the size of government and to increase the weight of the tax burden borne by working Americans.

The investigation found an abhorrent correlation between the members of Congress profiled in this report and their votes to increase federal spending. Over the last two years, the overwhelming majority of these members voted for the omnibus budget bills, which increased federal spending to all-time highs.

You read it right. Republicans AND Democrats with leadership positions have almost always voted to increase the size of government and to increase the the amount of money Congress can take from the working people in order to eventually see it help the corporations that in turn take care of them.

Despicable.

Please, dear reader, take the time to read the Open The Books report on the corruption in Congress. Perhaps if enough of us read this, we will demand that our representatives do just that — represent us, rather than rob us.

As the report itself reminds us, "Members of Congress are elected to oversee the federal activity in their districts. It's time to hold these politicians accountable."

Finally, you may have noted at the beginning of the article I included a selection from [Cato's Letters, written by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon](#). These essays become the letters of liberty read by our Founding Grandmothers to our Founding Fathers when they were children. The principles of individual liberty promoted by men such as Trenchard and Gordon taught our Founders to jealously guard their rights and to vigilantly keep their governors inside the narrow confines of their constitutional authority.

Perhaps if we read what they read, we might one day raise a generation that will do what they did: throw off the shackles of despotism and "wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

I give the last word to Thomas Gordon, who on March 4, 1721 instructed his readers on how to identify those powerful people who don't deserve our votes or our money. These representatives will be ready to be returned home when they:

have been known to have employed their whole power and interest in opposition to the public interest; when, being trusted with a nation's affairs, they have desperately projected, and obstinately pursued, schemes big with public ruin; when they have weakened the authority of their



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prince to strengthen their own, and endangered his safety for the security of their own heads, and the protection of their crimes; when they have thriven by the public ruin; and, being the known authors of universal calamities, have become the proper objects of such universal detestation, as not to have one real friend in their country, or one sincere advocate even amongst the many that they have bribed to be so.

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