

# Checks, Balances, and Background Checks

## Filling Vacancies in the Federal Government

**Conflicts of interest among government officials can be a huge deal if not properly managed. Do not fear!**

The Ethics in Government Act of 1978 and the Stock Act of 2012 put checks and balances in place that require government officials to submit financial disclosures to the US Office of Government Ethics (OGE).



Over **1,200**

executive branch senior executives, political appointees, and administrative nominees go through a series of rigorous background checks and hearings before they take office.

**Cabinet Secretaries and Presidential Appointees** That Need Senate Confirmation



Other **Presidential Appointees**



**Senior Executive Service** and Other Filers

### Nomination Process

- The White House vets candidates for office.
- Appointees and executives send a draft financial disclosure to OGE using *Integrity*.
- OGE reviews the draft for conflicts of interest and makes recommendations to mitigate problems.
- Candidates begin a series of background checks from FBI, IRS, and, if applicable, OGE.
- OGE works with nominees to eliminate any conflicts of interest found in their financial disclosure before they take office.
- POTUS announces the nomination to the Senate.

### Senate Review

- The nomination goes to the Senate Committee with jurisdiction over the nominee's position to review information gleaned from the background check and financial disclosure to ask follow-up questions on the findings.
- The appropriate Senate Committee holds a public hearing with the nominee.
- The committee then makes recommendations to the Senate about the candidate.
- Senators debate the nomination and take a vote. A majority vote is needed to confirm a candidate.
- The results of the vote determine if the candidate can be appointed.
- The White House appoints the nominee.

### 15,000 Annual Filers

- The executive takes office.
- On an ongoing basis, filers submit periodic transaction reports to disclose the sale or purchase of assets.
- Filer submits an annual disclosure encompassing all reportable financial interests.
- The filer's agency ethics officials review the disclosure for potential conflicts of interest.
- OGE reviews the financial disclosures of Presidentially Appointed, Senate-Confirmed (PAS) and Designated Agency Ethics Officials (DAEOs) for conflicts of interest.

## Integrity

*Integrity* is an electronic financial disclosure filing system originally created by OGE with TCG's support in 2014.



### Integrity improves...

- oversight of executive branch ethics
- transparency
- overall satisfaction of financial disclosure filers and ethics reviewers

### Integrity is used by...

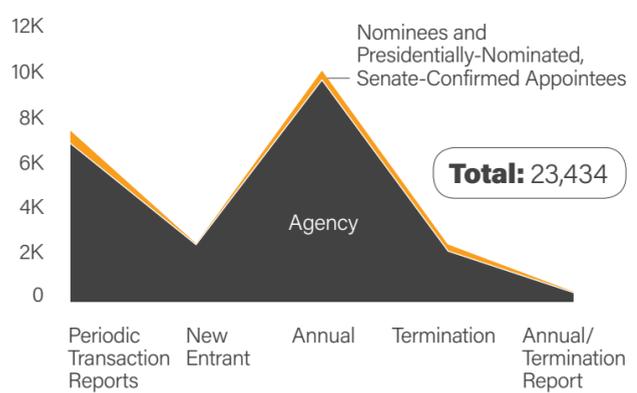
- 20,000** users
- 140** agencies
- 95%** executive branch agency penetration

In conjunction with OGE's own process improvement efforts, reports processed using *Integrity* are processed **significantly faster** versus paper processing.

Average days from filer signature to OGE certification for filers who used both processes	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>41</b>
	<b>Paper</b>	<b>81</b>

Average days from filer signature to OGE certification	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>38</b>
	<b>Paper</b>	<b>113</b>

### Certified in FY17



Speed and agility are key to the financial disclosure review process working successfully. If a candidate's background check is delayed, the whole process is pushed back, leaving vacancies in federal leadership. Tools like *Integrity* help boost government's ability to accelerate democracy and make government more efficient.

**SOURCES:** Appointment confirmation process. (n.d.). In Ballotpedia. Retrieved from [https://ballotpedia.org/Appointment\\_confirmation\\_process](https://ballotpedia.org/Appointment_confirmation_process)  
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