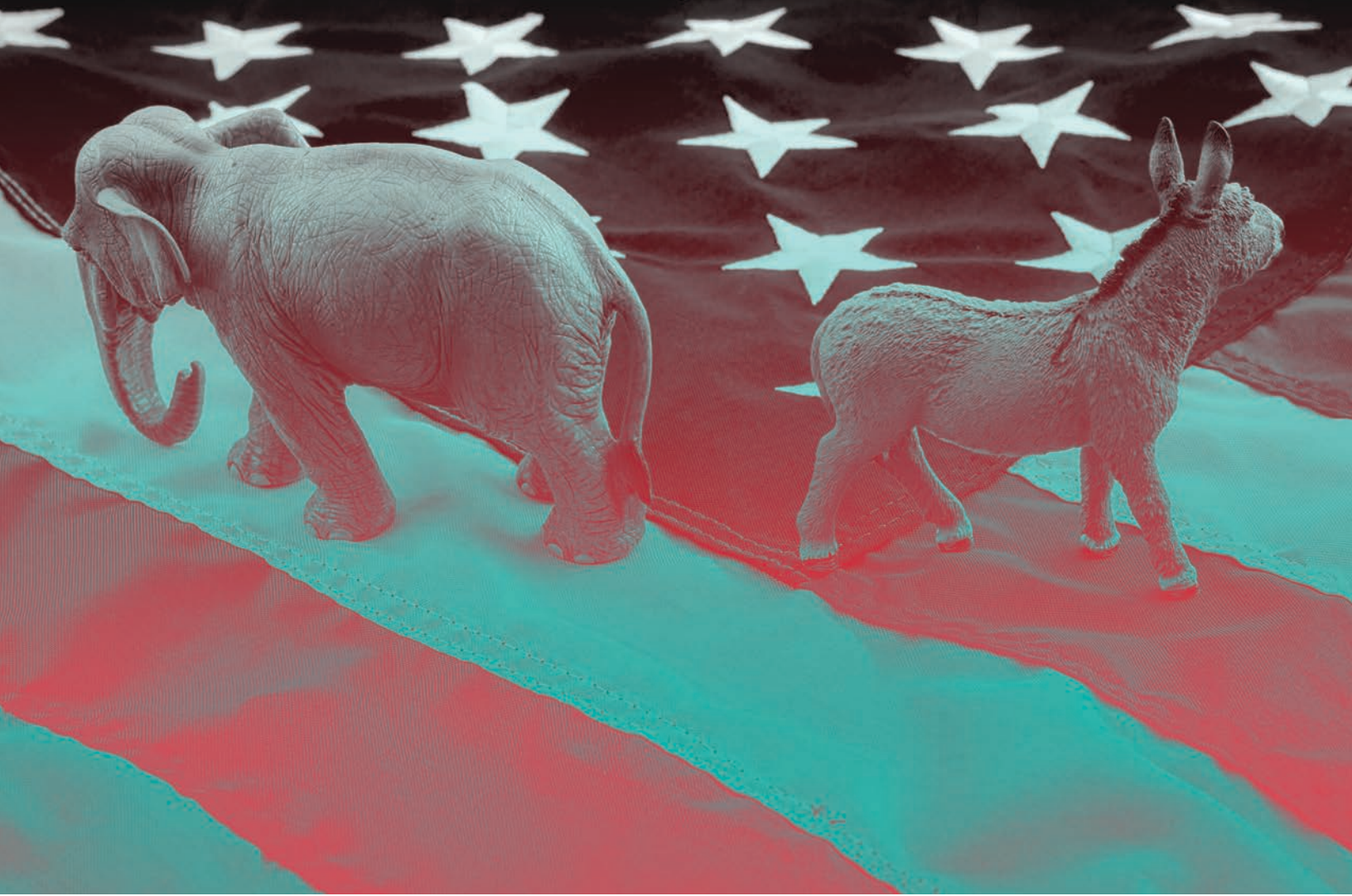


Annual Report 2016



PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT



Our issues aren't about choosing between left and right, they're about choosing between right and wrong.

— Danielle Brian, Executive Director



Dear Friend,

Everything has changed. The partisan battle lines are deeper and people on both sides of the line are more intransigent than at any time in our 36-year history. Just this year, we've seen many of the hard-won gains we've made in recent years in the areas of transparency and ethics get undone or weakened. The inability—or unwillingness—to work together is a very real threat to our democracy.



Yet, nothing has changed. We at the Project On Government Oversight continue to fight for a more effective and accountable government, whether it's standing up for whistleblowers, conducting hard-hitting investigations into waste and wrongdoing, or calling out President Trump for his potential conflicts of interest. We are hard at work making our voices heard over the din. And we are continuing to do what has made POGO one of the most well-regarded nonprofit organizations in Washington: Deep, thoughtful analyses and investigations that have earned us respect and praise from both sides of the aisle.

Not your usual Washington nonprofit, POGO works down in the gears of governing.

— *National Public Radio*

In the last year, we pushed for legislation that strengthened protections for military whistleblowers, proposed stronger ethics bans for political appointees leaving the Obama administration and for those joining the Trump administration, and exposed drug industry ties to

the FDA that garnered us a Sigma Delta Chi Award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

This year, our policy team is working hard to generate bipartisan support to force the Pentagon to comply with the law and pass an audit, something every other agency has done. We are also expanding the critical oversight training programs we offer Congressional staffers. Of course, we are continuing to fight for even greater whistleblower protections.

Our issues aren't about choosing between left and right, they're about choosing between right and wrong. We're going to continue doing that no matter who is in the White House or which party controls Congress. **In today's toxic political climate, our job has gotten tougher and more complicated—and therefore that much more essential.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Brian".

Danielle Brian
Executive Director

Training government to work better

POGO doesn't just call out government wrongdoing—we also work to make it more effective.



Former Congressional staffers who served on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Steven Groves (R) and Elise Bean (D), help lead a Boot Camp. (Photo courtesy of Pam Rutter, POGO)

HELD TWO INTENSIVE TWO-DAY BOOT CAMPS WITH BIPARTISAN PARTNERS

Jointly with the Levin Center at Wayne Law School and the Lugar Center, POGO held two **intensive two-day Boot Camps** for Congressional staff in 2016. The Boot Camps take staffers through the process of conducting an oversight investigation, from creating the investigative plan all the way through the vital step of follow-up.

>>>In 2017, we will expand our Congressional oversight work by adding Master Classes to the list of training opportunities. These classes will take an in-depth look at some of the more complicated investigative tools Congressional staffers have at their disposal.

TRAINED 386 CONGRESSIONAL STAFFERS ON CONDUCTING BETTER OVERSIGHT

For 11 years, POGO's **Congressional Oversight Initiative** has trained Congressional staff from both sides of the aisle on the art of conducting effective oversight. In 2016, the Initiative held nine trainings for 386 Congressional staffers, covering topics such as how to hold oversight hearings and how to ask the right questions during an investigation.

I have a lot of years on the Hill ... I rarely get a chance to learn something new—this was that chance.

Really glad to see this program happen. Knowledgeable speakers, wide-ranging discussion.

— Feedback from Congressional training attendees

Protecting American consumers

POGO investigations have highlighted the need for more careful oversight of the Food and Drug Administration, especially its drug approval process.



WON NATIONAL JOURNALISM AWARD FOR “DRUG PROBLEMS” INVESTIGATION

Our 2015 investigation into the potentially deadly weaknesses in the FDA’s oversight of prescription drugs **won a Sigma Delta Chi Award**. The report drew on thousands of pages of FDA documents and a decade of data from different sources to show how the FDA has set low standards and approved drugs based on flawed trials.

>>>In 2017, POGO will continue to build upon its work of ensuring the FDA is protecting consumers rather than industry, like how we opposed both President Obama and President Trump’s FDA nominees over their troubling connections to industry.

EXPOSED DRUG INDUSTRY TIES TO THE FDA AND PATIENT ADVOCACY GROUPS

Our “Drug Money” report documented the extent to which the FDA **depends upon pharmaceutical industry funding**—money that comes with extraordinary strings attached.

Fighting wasteful spending

You deserve to know how your tax dollars are being spent—or wasted—on Congressional pet projects.



PUSHED FOR CANCELLATION OF A PROJECT 41 YEARS BEHIND SCHEDULE, TEN TIMES OVER BUDGET

Covered in *The Hill* and *The Daily Caller*, POGO called attention to a little-known nuclear facility in South Carolina—the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MOX)—that is **astronomically behind schedule and over budget**, and is unlikely to be completed for years to come.

>>>In 2017, President Trump continued what President Obama did in 2016 by canceling the MOX program in his budget to Congress. POGO will continue to meet with Congressional offices to push them to follow the President's lead.

My biggest regret from my time in Congress is not finding a way to thwart this project 13 years ago.

— Former Rep. David Hobson (R-OH), writing on POGO's MOX work in *The Hill*



PRODUCED GROUNDBREAKING ANALYSIS ON CRITICAL PROBLEMS WITH THE MOST EXPENSIVE WEAPONS PROGRAM IN HISTORY

Featured in the *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *TIME*, and CNN, POGO's analysis has placed significant pressure on the troubled F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program, which has spent **more than \$100 billion of taxpayer dollars** already.

>>>In 2017, POGO is working to prevent increased F-35 production without proper review and testing by meeting with members of Congressional committees with approval authority for weapons purchases.

PUSHED BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR AUDITING THE PENTAGON

POGO has worked with Congress on the need for the Pentagon to comply with the law and pass an audit, which every other federal agency has done. For the first time both the Republican and the Democratic Party platforms included the belief that the Pentagon should be auditable.

>>>In 2017, POGO helped make the audit issue a key focus during the confirmation hearing of President Trump's nominee for Pentagon Comptroller. We will continue to meet with Congressional offices on restraining funding until the Pentagon is able to account for how it spends taxpayer dollars.

A recent analysis by the Project On Government Oversight notes that the Pentagon has so far spent roughly \$6 billion on 'fixing' the audit problem—with no solution in sight.

— *The American Conservative*,
"How Not to Audit the Pentagon"

Creating government transparency

Government oversight and accountability are difficult without transparency. POGO continued the fight in 2016 to keep government information public.



TESTIFIED BEFORE CONGRESS TO ENCOURAGE THE END OF UNJUSTIFIED SECRECY

The government frequently classifies and conceals far more information than is necessary, mostly for unjustified reasons. POGO General Counsel Scott Amey **testified before Congress** on how classification can and should be handled differently and how secrecy creates barriers to government efficiency and public debate.

BLOCKED THE PENTAGON FROM BEING ABLE TO WITHHOLD INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC

POGO led the effort to **oppose and overturn the Department of Defense's attempt** to get a special exemption from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The exemption was vague enough that it could have been used to hinder the public's ability to get records on almost any of the operations of the Department.

>>>In 2017, POGO is leading the charge to stop the Pentagon from receiving a new and unjustified exemption to the Freedom of Information Act.



POGO Executive Director Danielle Brian and OMB Watch Founder Dr. Gary Bass

EXPANDED WORK BY MERGING WITH THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT (CEG)

POGO joined forces with the **Center for Effective Government** (formerly OMB Watch) in the spring of 2016, broadening our work on new issues and bolstering our federal spending transparency efforts.

>>>In 2017, POGO will continue the important work done by CEG by launching a new data hub to track and evaluate government spending.

Opposing conflicts of interest

POGO has continued to advocate for a more ethical government that puts the common good ahead of special-interest money.



EXPOSED THE INSIDIOUS (AND LEGAL) WAY INDUSTRY INFILTRATES CONGRESS

The little-known **Congressional Fellowship Program** allows private companies and trade groups to pay for fellows in Congressional offices with little or no independence from the sponsoring entity. POGO detailed how some of these fellowships can be and are currently used by industries to influence Congressional priorities.

>>>In 2017, POGO is working with Congressional offices to fix this problem by creating rules that make the program more transparent and free of improper influence.

WORKED TO IMPROVE ETHICS IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

In 2016, POGO worked with other groups to **improve on previous presidential ethics pledges**. We proposed stronger bans for appointees coming into and leaving the next administration, and we urged the Trump and Clinton campaigns and transition teams to apply the pledge to appointees with a financial conflict of interest rather than limiting the bans to registered lobbyists. Since the election, POGO has worked with senior officials on both sides of the aisle to add teeth to the Office of Government Ethics.

>>>In 2017, POGO is working to turn the best practices from the Obama and Trump ethics pledges into law to keep ethics rules from changing from Administration to Administration.



‘We’re going to push the White House to do what’s right,’ said Scott Amey, general counsel for the nonpartisan Project On Government Oversight.

— *USA Today*, “Watchdogs push Trump to divest businesses, promise oversight”

Protecting government integrity

Fighting for whistleblower protections is core to POGO's mission, as whistleblowers are often the first to raise issues of fraud, waste, and abuse.



Phil Straus (top), a founding supporter of POGO's Center for Defense Information/Straus Military Reform Project, gives closing remarks at POGO's 35th Anniversary Celebration.



General Counsel Scott Amey tells his story.



Chief Operating Officer Keith Rutter, Board Chair David Hunter, and Executive Director Danielle Brian



Board member Anne Zill takes the stage.

CELEBRATED 35 YEARS WITH INSPIRING INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

Last May, nearly 200 POGO supporters joined us in **celebrating three and a half decades of holding the government accountable** with an anniversary event in Washington, DC. The event—a “Storytelling Soiree”—featured special guests who have been at the center of the organization’s activities over the years and their stories.

>>> Watch all of the stories from our 35th Anniversary on our YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/GovtOversight



Robert MacLean (left), a former Federal Air Marshal, shares the ordeal he experienced as a TSA whistleblower with Jim Wagstaffe (right), a former POGO attorney and prominent First Amendment litigator.



(Top) Lt. Col. Jason Amerine (ret.) relates his experience of raising grave concerns about the U.S. hostage recovery program, an act that ultimately fixed the legitimate problems he raised. It also resulted in a retaliatory investigation from the U.S. Army — until POGO and others fought in his defense. (Below) Amerine greets guests at POGO's 35th Anniversary Celebration.

STRENGTHENED PROTECTIONS FOR MILITARY WHISTLEBLOWERS

Military whistleblowers now have greatly expanded protections thanks to legislation fought for by POGO and our bipartisan allies. POGO also worked with Representatives to start a Whistleblower Protection Caucus in the House, modeled after the Senate Caucus POGO helped start in 2015.

>>>In 2017, POGO continues to fight for military whistleblower protections, and will add new trainings for federal employees on their whistleblower and First Amendment rights to disclose wrongdoing.

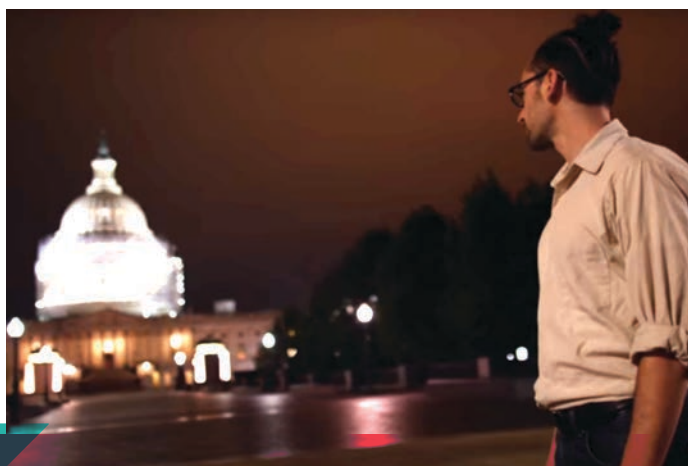


Media impact snapshot

POGO expanded our good government work through the audiences of several major print and online outlets in 2016:

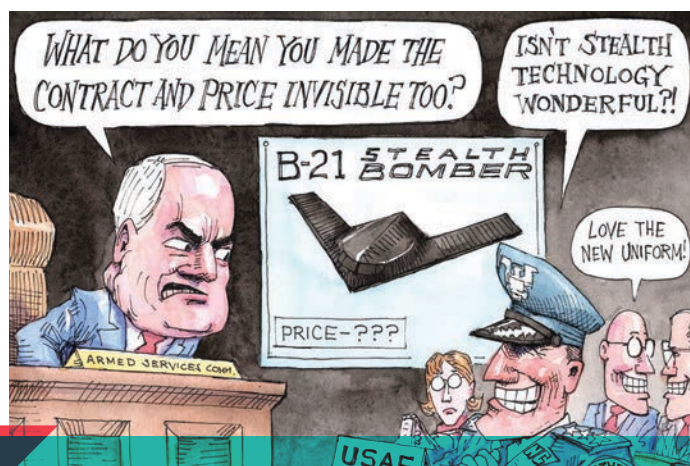


POGO also reached new audiences through visual storytelling:



**UNVEILED NEW POGO VIDEO:
THE PEOPLE'S WATCHDOG**

Unveiled at POGO's 35th Anniversary Celebration and featuring original spoken word poetry by DC poet Jonathan Tucker, our **People's Watchdog** video reached over 32,000 views across various online networks. Watch it at: www.pogo.org/about



**INSPIRED CARTOONS BY PULITZER
PRIZE-WINNING CARTOONIST**

Matt Wuerker, a founding staff member at *POLITICO* and a Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist, drew several cartoons based on POGO's work highlighting wasteful defense spending. See all of his work at: www.politico.com/wuerker

LARGE OVERRUN REPORTED ON SSC

Managers of the Superconducting Super Collider have allowed at least \$216 million in unreasonable subcontractor expenses, the Energy Department's inspector general said in a draft report a watchdog group made public yesterday.

An audit of \$508 million in contracts fiscal 1989 to 1992 found 40 percent - or \$216 million - on the spending represented unnecessary or excessive costs, the draft said. An additional \$174 million in planned spending on the Texas project also did not meet guidelines for justified expenditures.

The draft, released yesterday by the Project On Government Oversight, also took issue with \$764,000 spent by the SSC's overseers - including \$122,000 for employee morale, \$56,000 for tropical plants and \$35,000 for a Christmas party.

Edward J. Siskin, general manager of the collider, denounced the findings and denied any subcontractor overruns.

The House Thursday takes up debate on the collider, now estimated at \$10 billion or more to build, and critics are expected to mount the effort to kill it.

Credit: Associated Press



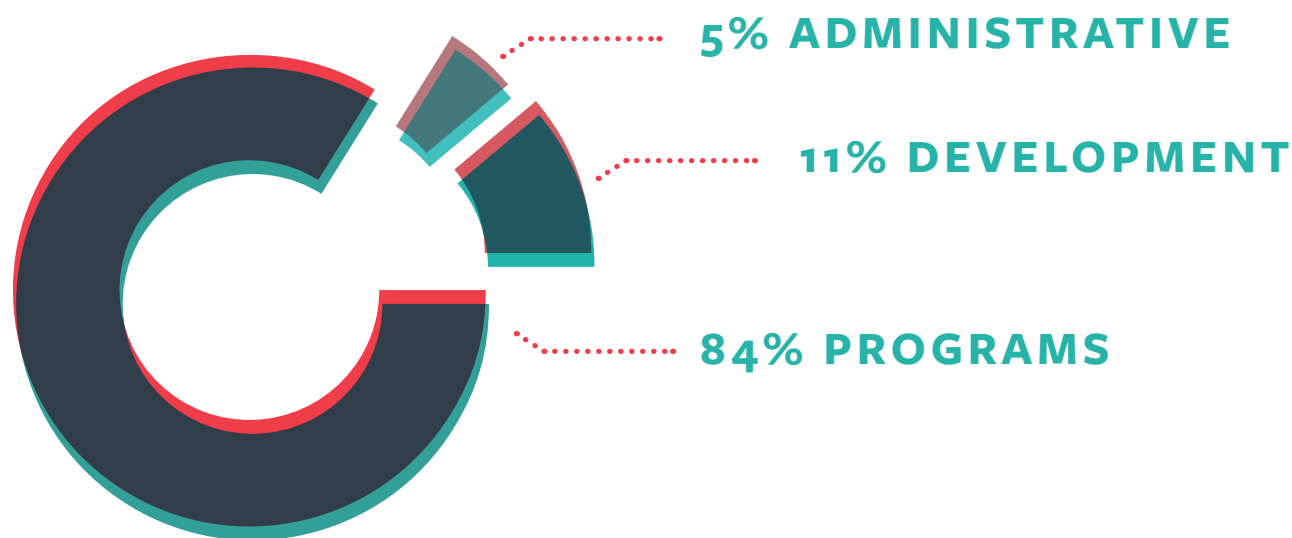
Executive Director Danielle Brian shares a story about one of POGO's earliest reports exposing wasteful government contractors at POGO's 35th Anniversary "Storytelling Soiree" Celebration.



**As Danielle Brian put it,
'We're researching things
that hadn't even been
considered before.'**

— *Business Insider*, "Conflict rules hardly the same for president, others"

Financial statement



PROGRAMS

Congressional Oversight Initiative	\$591,844
Government Accountability	\$544,565
CDI/Straus Military Reform Project	\$463,942
Inspectors General Project	\$242,348
Contract Oversight	\$186,074
Energy and Natural Resources	\$151,193
Whistleblower Protections	\$115,896
Nuclear Weapons Security Investigations	\$93,599
Effective Government	\$68,678
Private Prison Oversight	\$20,520
Open Contracting	\$10,531
Direct and Grassroots Lobbying	\$21,725

Total **\$2,510,915**

REVENUE

Grants	\$1,513,117
Contributions	\$607,977
Investment Income	\$201,593
Contributed Goods and Services	\$12,750
Publications and Other Income	\$388,664

Total **\$2,724,101**

SUPPORTING SERVICES

General and Administrative	\$147,155
Development	\$321,339

Total supporting services **\$468,494**

Total expenses **\$2,979,409**

OVERVIEW

Change in Net Assets	(\$255,308)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$3,158,119
Net Assets at End of Year	\$2,902,811

This statement of activities from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016, has been audited.

Donor spotlight

POGO's work is only made possible by donors like you.

GABE PAULSON AND NIAMH NOLAN



WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT POGO'S WORK AND MISSION?

Niamh: I was **impressed by the mission of oversight and ethics** and the quality of content and staff.

Gabe: As a small business owner that has executed several prime federal contracts, I have seen inefficiency first-hand. **I am motivated to see grassroots support for greater accountability** and policy advocacy for proposals like the "Baker's Dozen."

PETER AND BETTINA ROSENBLADT



HOW WERE YOU INTRODUCED TO POGO'S WORK?

When the Center for Defense Information (CDI) merged with POGO, as long-time CDI donors, we became exposed to what POGO is doing and **were very impressed.**

A citizen-oriented nonpartisan oversight process is badly needed, and POGO is doing a great job in playing that role. **We proudly support POGO in this effort.**

MARTY EISENMAN (AND FAMILY)



WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO ATTEND POGO'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY IN DC?

I've supported POGO for almost a decade, and I continue to be impressed with how the organization has grown over the years.

I didn't want to miss the opportunity, as a long-time donor, to celebrate with POGO — I even traveled from my home state of Kansas to do so. And I'm happy I did, I enjoyed the entire evening.

Thanks to all of our supporters

In addition to general support and sustaining donors, we are grateful for all of you who gave to our **Center for Defense Information's Straus Military Reform Project**, **Beth Daley Memorial Impact Fund**, and through the **Combined Federal Campaign** in 2016.

ESTATE GIFTS

Duckworth Family Trust
Sidney Hollander, Jr. Trust
Alexander and Grace Jablow Trust

Estate of Catherine Lynch
Lloyd C. Pray Trust
Rose Stein Family Trust

Please remember POGO in your estate planning.

\$100,000+

Laura and John Arnold Foundation
The Bauman Foundation
The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
Colombe Foundation

Democracy Fund
Foundation to Promote Open Society
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Philip A. Straus

\$50,000+

The Arca Foundation
Ben Cohen Charitable Trust
The Frederick and Julia Nonneman Foundation

Open Society Policy Center
Ploughshares Fund
Rockefeller Brothers Fund

\$25,000+

Francis Beidler Foundation
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\$10,000+

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William B. Wiener, Jr. Foundation
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Chris Smith
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Timothy Strinden
Taxpayers for Common Sense
The Fertel Foundation
Nithi and Jing Vivatrat
Corbin Walters
Warren Woo
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\$500+

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Hank and Caroline Banta
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Dr. Jonathan Bazeley
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Adam Price
Lisenne Rockefeller
Frances Seymour
David and Trish Shanahan
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Ashley Still
Gregory W. Swift
Carol Weinberg
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\$250+

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Charles Babcock
Richard A. Ball
Pamela Barnes
Joyce and Paul Barringer
Marvin L. Bellin
Robert Berg and
 Vivian Lowery Derryck
Stan and Ellen Brand
Delos Branning
Dr. Hamilton B. Brown
Richard Buckley and
 Prudence Bushnell
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Rebecca Damsen
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Ron Hamlen and Sue Fuhrmann

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Nicole Harkin and Brent Lattin
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Leonard Wilson
John W. Windhorst, Jr.
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Matt C. Wuerker
Adam Zagorin
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Our commitment to you:

POGO never shares, sells, or rents the names of our supporters to other groups.

POGO does not accept contributions from for-profit corporations, labor unions, any government, or anyone who stands to benefit financially from our work in order to preserve our independence. POGO reviews all contributions exceeding \$100 in order to maintain this standard. POGO accepts employee- and customer-directed contributions and matching funds and accepts contributions from law firms, which we limit to less than 1% of POGO's operating budget.

About



The Project On Government Oversight is a **nonpartisan independent watchdog** that fights the influence of money in policy and champions good government reforms.

POGO's investigations into corruption, misconduct, and conflicts of interest achieve a more effective, accountable, open, and ethical federal government.

POGO is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax-deductible, CFC #10785.

Project On Government Oversight

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