



March 28, 2017

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, DC 20510-6050

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

As you consider the nomination of Heather Wilson for Air Force Secretary, the Project On Government Oversight (POGO) hopes you will closely examine her post-government employment with several Department of Energy nuclear laboratories and any potential conflicts of interest that could arise due to that work.

In 2013, the Department of Energy Inspector General (DOE IG) conducted an investigation, at the request of the National Nuclear Security Administration, into Ms. Wilson's contracts with four Department-owned, contractor-operated sites.¹ The IG found that the four facility contractors paid Ms. Wilson's company \$450,000 even though they did not receive any evidence that work had been completed.

Additional documents related to the investigation, obtained by the Center for Public Integrity, indicate that Ms. Wilson refused to provide any details about her work for the labs. DOE IG investigators noted in their interview records that Ms. Wilson stated "she was not going to account for her time in any detail."² POGO believes that the findings of the DOE IG raise concerns about her willingness to provide information to the Committee and other oversight bodies.

¹ Department of Energy, Office of Inspector General, *Concerns with Consulting Contract Administration at Various Department Sites*, June 2013. <https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2013/06/f1/IG-0889.pdf> (Downloaded March 28, 2017)

² Patrick Malone and R. Jeffrey Smith, "Trump pick for Air Force boss frustrated auditors with lucrative, murky consulting for nuclear weapons labs," February 28, 2017. <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2017/02/28/20740/trump-pick-air-force-boss-frustrated-auditors-lucrative-murky-consulting-nuclear> (Downloaded March 28, 2017)

Although the contractors in charge of the nuclear the labs in question have since repaid the nearly half a million dollars spent on Ms. Wilson's alleged consulting services, Ms. Wilson's company, of which she is the sole employee, has kept the money she received for doing who knows what. This leads POGO to question how seriously Ms. Wilson will take her position as a steward of taxpayer dollars.

If confirmed, Ms. Wilson will oversee billions of dollars of contract work done by the Lockheed Martin Corporation, whose subsidiary managed the Sandia National Laboratory where she was employed from 2009-2011. While this relationship does not technically fall within the legal definition of a conflict of interest, POGO hopes Ms. Wilson will demonstrate to this Committee that she will work to ensure there will not be even the appearance of a conflict.

POGO believes Ms. Wilson should be questioned about her past employment and that the Committee should ensure she commits to an open and transparent relationship with oversight bodies. We have attached a list of suggested questions and believe the answers to these questions are key to protecting the integrity of the operations of the Air Force and to ensuring this Committee receives the information it needs to conduct its constitutional oversight duties. Ms. Wilson should not be confirmed until she has adequately provided the answers to these questions and proven that she does not have a conflict of interest.

Sincerely,

Danielle Brian
Executive Director