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Trump ousts director of Office of Government Ethics

By [Kathryn Watson](#)

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Legal blowback to Trump executive orders



[The legal blowback to Trump's executive orders 07:41](#)

Washington — President Trump on Monday removed the director of the Office of Government Ethics, the independent agency responsible for overseeing ethics rules and financial disclosures for the executive branch.

"OGE has been notified that the President is removing David Huitema as the director of OGE," the office said in a [notice](#) on its website. "OGE is reverting to an Acting Director."

Huitema was appointed to a five-year term by former President Biden. He was confirmed by the Senate in November 2024 and sworn in on December 16, 2024. The office's website initially listed Shelley Finlayson as its acting director. Finlayson has been at the agency since 2006, serving most recently as chief of staff. But Mr. Trump signed a document Monday evening tapping Doug Collins, a Republican former member of Congress and current Department of Veterans Affairs secretary, to be the acting director of OGE.

The move to oust Huitema comes two weeks after Mr. Trump [fired](#) at least 17 inspectors general from their roles as watchdogs without explanation, and as Mr. Trump and Elon Musk's [Department of Government Efficiency](#) task force have upended multiple government agencies.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

OGE collects both confidential and public financial disclosures, as well as ethics agreements and other forms from government officials, from the president and vice president to high-ranking appointees and Cabinet nominees. The office works to identify and prevent conflicts of interest.

"The primary mission of the executive branch ethics program is to prevent conflicts of interest on the part of executive branch employees, by working to ensure that they make impartial decisions based on the public interest, serve as good stewards of public resources, and loyally adhere to the Constitution and laws of the United States," OGE's [mission statement](#) reads.

Six months into Mr. Trump's first term in 2017, [Walter Shaub](#) resigned as the head of OGE, saying the Trump White House abandoned the "norms and ethical traditions of the executive branch that have made our ethics program the gold standard in the world until now."

Good government groups raised concerns about the removal of accountability officials at government agencies without explanation.

"The removal of David Huitema as the director of the Office of Government Ethics is the latest in a string of firings directly aimed at the accountability offices in the executive branch," said Caitlin MacNeal, communications director for the Project on Government Oversight. "The firings remove our systems of checks and balances at a time when the wealthiest man in the world is operating inside the government with vast and unprecedented financial conflicts of interest. So it's particularly alarming that the administration has fired the official in specifically charged with policing ethics."

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington executive director Donald K. Sherman said that by "firing the head of the Office of Government Ethics, President Trump is continuing his purge of any independent officials tasked with holding him and his administration accountable to the law and ethical standards."

"This follows his firing of the head of the Office of Special Counsel and 17 inspectors general," Sherman said. "Together, these actions will streamline any efforts he and his administration make to personally profit, install loyalists and avoid oversight of corruption and waste. By all indications, Trump is planning to run a lawless administration and these unprecedented moves are an alarming first step to put those plans into action."

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