From: Matt Stokes
To: USOGE
Subject: Proposed Rule: Legal Expense Fund Regulation (RIN 3209-AA50)
Date: Monday, June 20, 2022 3:27:56 PM

Hello!

I'm writing to let you know that I oppose OGE's proposed legal expense fund regulation as drafted. OGE should:

- Remove the exception that makes compliance with the regulation optional (note: without making this change, calling it a "rule" seems rather disingenuous, does it not? If it's optional, it's more of what you'd call a "guideline" than an actual rule.
- Replace the proposed recusal requirement with a 10-year recusal requirement that prevents donors of cash gifts from influencing decisions, policies, or regulations affecting them or the industries in which they have substantial interests. Corporations play a long game; I shouldn't need to explain this to the office of government ethics. 10 years, I think, should introduce a sufficient degree of uncertainty-about-the-future that deals "for future consideration" become significantly less attractive as a strategy.
- Remove the example involving an accused sexual harasser; there's no need to invoke a hotbutton issue unnecessarily.
- Place nonprofit charities (501(c)(3) organizations) on an equal footing with large law firms by allowing them to hire legal counsel for whistleblowers. This is such an oddly out-of-place double standard that I have hard time understanding the rationale for it, except to punish whistleblowing, which seems like an action inherently *against* the interests of a body that enforces ethical rules.

Thank you for your time,

-Matt Stokes