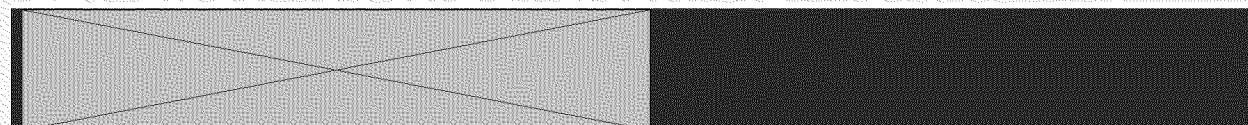


To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: The Washington Post
Sent: Mon 9/11/2017 4:00:44 PM
Subject: Federal Insider: Feds' charitable giving reflects worry; reciting oath on video reflects pride and Trump counterpoint



Feds' charitable giving reflects worry; reciting oath on video reflects pride and Trump counterpoint

By Joe Davidson

Greg Guthrie and other federal employees are uploading videos of themselves reciting their oath of office to the Uphold the Oath project, which is described as a "digital grassroots project that celebrates America's federal civil servants and encourages them to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the ideals listed in the oath of office." (Courtesy of Greg Guthrie)

"I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

Oath for Federal Employees

Federal workers have ways of making their feelings known, sometimes privately, sometimes for all to see.

Their charitable contributions provide insight into their anxieties. The oath of office some are now choosing to publicly repeat on videos demonstrates their fealty to the Constitution, not politicians, including the top one who considers them swamp dwellers. Repeating the oath is a simple act and a powerful counterpoint to President Trump's narcissistic notion of loyalty.

Let's start with a new report that shows some notable changes in federal employee giving, revealing their worries during a politically divisive 2016.

While their allegiance to the Constitution means federal employees serve taxpayers without partisan bias, what they do with their own money points to their apprehensions about the direction of the country that became more evident as Trump's candidacy grew.

An analysis of contributions to the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), an umbrella charitable effort for federal employees, demonstrates “federal donors clearly reacted to the election of Trump in 2016, providing several charities with a sizable Anti-Trump bounce in their pledge results,” Marshall Strauss, chief executive of the Workplace Giving Alliance, said in an email Friday to his board of directors. The Alliance is a coalition of CFC organizations and reports on federal employee giving.

“For example,” Strauss continued, “the American Civil Liberties Union [Foundation] was up almost 400 percent in comparison with its 2015 CFC results, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) saw its pledge number jump by 345 percent, and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) saw its pledge total jump 180 percent.”

Current and former feds do that by taking videos of themselves for posting on the project’s website, reciting their pledge to “support and defend the Constitution.”

ACLU says Trump wants to “Enshrine a Business Right to Discriminate Into the Constitution.” Note: That doesn’t say support and defend the president, an idea that seems to trouble the self-absorbed Trump and his minions.

SPLC President Richard Cohen wrote about “the malignant bigotry at the heart of President Trump’s agenda.” Recall what former FBI director James B. Comey said was Trump’s directive to him: “I need loyalty.”

NRDC tracks “Trump’s attacks on the environment.” Comey didn’t give it and was later fired.

Planned Parenthood, the Sierra Club and the National Park Foundation also received significantly more in donations, according to the report. It’s not just Trump. In February, Breitbart.com, previously and currently led by former White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, published a threatening list of “bureaucrats [who] are actively engaged in sabotaging President Trump’s agenda.” Organizations focused on civil rights and environmental protection saw some of the biggest increases in pledges in 2016,” it said, “presumably reflecting a perception that these topics would lack support from the new administration. In the current political environment, simply affirming the oath could be interpreted as an act of defiance against a Trump presidency that has disgraced the office — even if the project participants don’t see it that way.

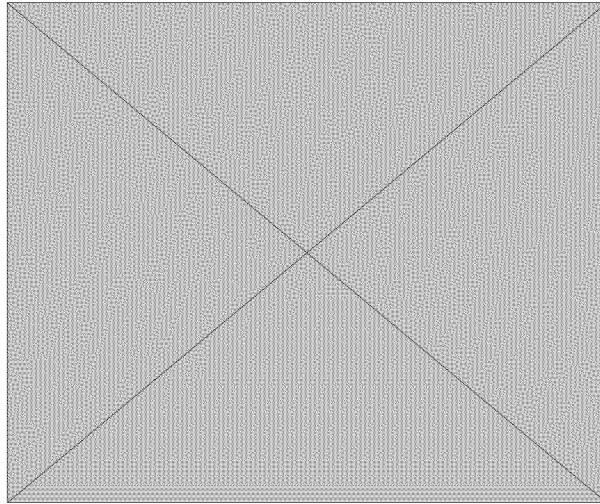
Uphold the Oath

It is important to note Trump is not mentioned on the website and there is nothing to indicate in conversations with the organizers or federal employees that he is the target of this effort. A private, charitable contribution is one form of patriotic expression. A video declaration is another.

Swearing to “well and faithfully discharge the duties” is a weighty moment when workers enter federal service. They are a dedicated bunch, whose federal employees in a “deep state” conspiracy against the president, lan

devotion to mission, sense of service to the American people and the Constitution is fused with passion.

Confirming that is a new effort to "Uphold the Oath," described as a "digital grassroots project that celebrates America's federal civil servants and encourages them to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the ideals listed in the oath of office."



Bassin, executive director of Project Democracy, the effort's organizer, said "this felt like a time when it was important for public workers to know they are not alone."

He quickly added, however, that this is not the only time, recalling President Ronald Reagan's comment during a 1986 news conference: "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help."

That's insulting to people like Greg Guthrie, a Commerce Department staffer who has been a federal employee for 25 years.

The District resident didn't mean his video as a message to Trump, but to his fellow employees, whom he encouraged "to stand up and be proud of who you are." Recording the video, he said, "made me feel sort of empowered, really, as a federal employee especially nowadays you kind of feel almost beaten down, with a lot of the negative rhetoric."

Former fed Terry Babcock-Lumish, who committed to a career of public service as a junior at Carnegie Mellon University and has worked for local,

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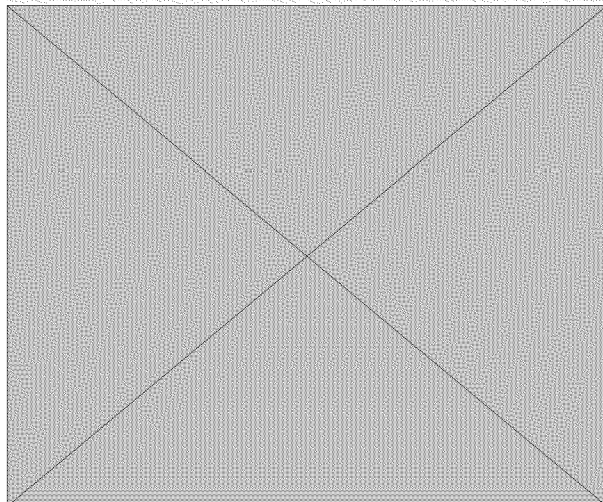
state and federal governments, said she did a video because she wanted “to convey pride in being a federal civil servant.” She is “very troubled by the idea that civil servants are being questioned or doubted when they are working across administrations.”

Her message: “I’m really proud of having served in the federal government as a federal civil servant.”

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