

Rick Dearborn, A Former Trump Administration Official And Now-Corporate Lobbyist Was A Key Figure In The Russia Investigation And He Has Outlined Extreme New Policies In Project 2025's White House Office Chapter.

SUMMARY: Rick Dearborn is a lifetime Hill staffer who served as the deputy chief of staff for Donald Trump in 2017 and is considered as a possible candidate for similar roles in the next Trump Administration. He is also the author of Project 2025's White House Office chapter in which he lays out a number of controversial policies remaking the way the presidency currently operates. Dearborn's severe recommendations for a conservative administration may stem from his brief but tumultuous time as Trump's deputy chief of staff in 2017 and appear to be aimed at maximizing power and exerting complete control over the executive branch.

For example, Dearborn's Project 2025 chapter puts an emphasis on the loyalty of political appointees, especially those in the White House Counsel's Office.

- Dearborn shockingly claims that WHC must be loyal to the president *and* the Constitution, appearing to put them on equal terms.
- Dearborn also writes that it is "[almost impossible](#)" to differentiate between the president's official duties and his personal interests.
- He also claims that a conservative administration needs a "supportive army of political appointees".

Dearborn worked in a Trump White House that was characterized by chaos, infighting and dysfunction. However, he was able to help President Trump pass his controversial tax cut bill and then left the administration shortly afterwards. Dearborn was also caught up in the Russia scandal and found himself in the middle of legal and political fights over the Trump campaign's interactions with Russian operatives:

- Despite trying to keep a [low profile](#), Dearborn, became the subject of congressional inquiry when investigators found he had forwarded information about a potential "Kremlin connection" to members of the Trump campaign staff.
- He claimed to have no knowledge of a meeting Sen. Jeff Sessions had with Russia's ambassador, despite the fact it took place in Sessions' Senate office and Dearborn was his chief of staff.
- The White House blocked Dearborn from testifying to the House Judiciary Committee about Trump's efforts to obstruct justice outlined in the Mueller Report.

Rick Dearborn, A Former Official In The Trump White House Who Authored The “White House Office” Chapter In Project 2025, Is A 25-Year Capitol Hill Veteran Having Worked With For Former Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) And He Is Now A Lobbyist Representing Powerful Corporate Special Interests.

Rick Dearborn Is A Partner At The Lobbying Firm Mindset, A Former Heritage Fellow And Acted As The Director Of Trump’s Transition Team In 2017 And Served As His Deputy Chief Of Staff For The First Year Of His Presidency.

Rick Dearborn Is Former Heritage Fellow Who Has Deep Connections To The Right-Wing Establishment As Well As Republican Policymakers On Capitol Hill. “Rick A. Dearborn, former White House Deputy Chief of Staff to President Donald Trump, returned to The Heritage Foundation as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow to support Project 2025, an initiative to prepare the next presidential administration. Dearborn is currently a Partner at Mindset, bringing three decades of experience that includes service under two U.S. presidents and six U.S. senators. He previously served as Deputy Chief of Staff in the White House. In that role, he was responsible for the day-to-day operations of approximately 100 staff in five separate Executive Offices of the President departments. He was Executive Director of the 2016 Presidential Transition Team and was responsible for the direction and management of the Transition Team’s 600-plus members. Dearborn previously served Senator Jeff Sessions (R-Alabama) for over two decades, both as his Chief of Staff and Legislative Director. He was appointed by President George W. Bush as Assistant Secretary of Energy for Congressional Affairs, where he worked with the Senate, House, and tribal governments on the President’s energy agenda. Earlier in his career, he worked for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the Senate Republican Conference, and the Senate Steering Committee. Dearborn graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor’s degree in Public Administration with a minor in Economics.” [Heritage.org, Accessed [8/27/24](#)]

Dearborn Is A Veteran Of Capitol Hill And Has Worked For Six U.S. Senators Over A Span Of 25 Years Which Also Included A Stint In The Department Of Energy During The George W. Bush Administration. “In addition to his public service in President Trump’s White House, Dearborn has served six U.S. senators over a span of more than 25 years on Capitol Hill, including chief of staff to former Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, the former U.S. attorney general. In 2003, Dearborn was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the U.S. Senate to become assistant secretary of energy for congressional affairs in the U.S. Department of Energy.” [Heritage Foundation, [11/16/18](#)]

- **After Leaving The Department Of Energy, Dearborn Returned To Sen. Jeff Sessions’ Office On Capitol Hill Where He Became Chief Of Staff, A Post In Which He Served Until Joining The Trump Administration In 2017.**

2017 - 2018	White House <i>Revolving Door Personnel: 818</i>	Deputy Chief of Staff, Legislative Aff	Agency lobbying profile Major Donor profile
2016 - 2017	Presidential Transition Team <i>Revolving Door Personnel: 271</i>	Executive Director (Trump)	Agency lobbying profile
2005 - 2017	Sessions, Jeff <i>Revolving Door Personnel: 29</i>	Chief of Staff	Member profile
2003 - 2004	Dept of Energy <i>Revolving Door Personnel: 257</i>	Assistant Secretary, Congressional Aff	Agency lobbying profile
1997 - 2003	Sessions, Jeff <i>Revolving Door Personnel: 29</i>	Legislative Director	Member profile

[Open Secrets, Accessed [08/27/24](#)]

As A Lobbyist, Dearborn Represents Some Of America's Most Powerful Companies Including Meta, Amazon, Invesco, Verizon And Shell USA.

Dearborn Is Now A Partner At Lobbying Firm Mindset Where He Focuses On Energy, Healthcare, Telecom And Other Issues. “Rick is a senior policy professional with three decades of experience ranging from service under two US Presidents and six US senators to postings at a premier think tank and a major DC trade association. Rick has special expertise in the trade, agriculture, defense, energy, healthcare, and telecom sectors.” [Mindset, Accessed [08/26/24](#)]

Dearborn’s 2024 Lobbying Clients At Mindset Include Some Of The Most Powerful Tech Companies In The World Such As Meta And Amazon, Wall Street Giants Like Invesco And A Massive Fossil Fuels Company, Shell USA Inc.

Client	Period	Amount	Issues
Commercial Metals Company	2Q 2024	\$60,000	“Leveling the Playing Field Act; general trade enforcement; energy and environment policy.” “Implementation of FY 2022 NDAA; Military specifications for steel products”
Commercial Metals Company	1Q 2024	\$60,000	“Leveling the Playing Field Act; general trade enforcement; energy and environment policy”; Implementation of FY 2022 NDAA; Military specifications for steel products”
Shell USA, Inc.	2Q 2024	\$60,000	“Energy infrastructure; Biden Administration pause on oil and gas leasing and permitting; Support for the OCS five-year plan and support for implementation

			of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; bonding and assurance (BOEM)”; Issues related to offshore wind and renewable energy. Offshore energy permitting issues (National Marine Fisheries Service); Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Issues related to renewable natural gas. Issues related to solar energy IRA/IIJA Climate Issues. Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS); Reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Hydrogen Tax Credit; Carbon Capture Tax Credit; General issues related to trade policy and trade agreements; Issues related to domestic content requirements; issues related to tariffs, including supply line issues, and issues related to Sections 232 and 301 of the US Trade Act. Issues related to US sanctions in the energy sector. Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022.”
Shell USA, Inc.	1Q 2024	\$60,000	“Energy infrastructure; Biden Administration pause on oil and gas leasing and permitting; Support for the OCS five-year plan and support for implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; bonding and assurance (BOEM); Issues related to offshore wind and renewable energy. Offshore energy permitting issues (National Marine Fisheries Service). Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Issues related to renewable natural gas; Issues related to solar energy; IRA/IIJA Climate Issues; Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS); Reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); Hydrogen Tax Credit; Carbon Capture Tax Credit; General issues related to trade policy and trade agreements; Issues related to domestic content requirements; issues related to tariffs, including supply line issues, and issues related to Sections 232 and 301 of the US Trade Act. Issues related to US sanctions in the energy sector. Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022.”
Amazon Web Services	2Q 2024	\$50,000	“Issues related to SAMOSA; Issues related to cloud services and cloud service providers.”
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Invesco Ltd	2Q 2024	\$50,000	“Issues related to investment management regulation, including exchange-traded funds, mutual funds, and money market funds; Retirement and savings reform”
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Manufactured Housing Institute	2Q 2024	\$50,000	“Manufactured Housing, Affordable Housing, Department of Energy Energy Conservation Standards, HUD Code.”
Manufactured Housing Institute	1Q 2024	\$50,000	“Manufactured Housing, Affordable Housing, Department of Energy Energy Conservation Standards, HUD Code.”
Meta Platforms, Inc.	2Q 2024	\$50,000	“Issues related to encryption; Issues related to EU/US data flow (Schrems II); India, Turkey, Bangladesh and other data localization issues; Intermediary

			<p>liability.”</p> <p>“Issues and discussions related to technology and the Internet including privacy, security, competition, research, trademark counterfeiting and copyright piracy issues; online advertising, content and platform transparency efforts; diversity and improving education in science, technology and engineering; protecting children, bullying prevention and online safety; human trafficking issues; data portability and interoperability; data breach; connectivity and network usage issues; platform integrity and cybersecurity; storage and access to electronic communications and encryption; manipulated media; continued conversations on Artificial Intelligence; Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act; S. 4258, Advertising Middlemen Endangering Rigorous Internet Competition Accountability Act; H. Res. 66, Expressing support for Congress to focus on artificial intelligence; S. 1080, Cooper Davis Act; S. 486, Honest Ads Act; S. 1409, Kids Online Safety Act; S. 1418, Children and Teens Online Privacy Protection Act; S. 1732, Know Your App Act; S. 1199, Strengthening Transparency and Obligations to Protect Children Suffering from Abuse and Mistreatment Act of 2023 (STOP CSAM); S. 1207, EARN IT of 2023; Open App Markets Act; S. 1291, Protecting Kids on Social Media Act; S. 61, Combating Cartels on Social Media Act of 2023; S. 2691, AI Labeling Act of 2023.”</p> <p>“Education regarding internet security policy and internet privacy issues, federal privacy legislation, and freedom of expression on the internet, including connectivity, spectrum and access issues, local media issues; S. 1094, Journalism Competition and Preservation Act.”</p>
Meta Platforms, Inc.	1Q 2024	\$50,000	<p>“Issues related to encryption; Issues related to EU/US data flow (Schrems II); India, Turkey, Bangladesh and other data localization issues; Intermediary liability.”</p> <p>“Issues and discussions related to technology and the Internet including privacy, security, competition, research, trademark counterfeiting and copyright piracy issues; online advertising, content and platform transparency efforts; diversity and improving education in science, technology and engineering; protecting children, bullying prevention and online safety; human trafficking issues; data portability and interoperability; data breach; connectivity and network usage issues; platform integrity and cybersecurity; storage and access to electronic communications and encryption; manipulated media; continued conversations on Artificial Intelligence; Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act; S. 4258, Advertising Middlemen Endangering Rigorous Internet Competition Accountability Act; H. Res. 66, Expressing support for Congress to focus on artificial intelligence; S. 1080, Cooper Davis Act; S. 486, Honest Ads Act; S. 1409, Kids Online Safety Act; S. 1418, Children and Teens Online Privacy Protection Act; S. 1732, Know Your App Act; S. 1199, Strengthening Transparency and Obligations to Protect Children Suffering from Abuse and Mistreatment Act of 2023 (STOP CSAM); S. 1207, EARN IT of 2023; Open App Markets Act; S. 1291, Protecting Kids on Social Media Act; S. 61, Combating Cartels on Social Media Act of 2023; S. 2691, AI Labeling Act of 2023.”</p> <p>“Education regarding internet security policy and internet privacy issues, federal privacy legislation, and freedom of expression on the internet, including connectivity, spectrum and access issues, local media issues; S. 1094, Journalism Competition and Preservation Act.”</p>
New York Life Insurance	2Q 2024	\$50,000	“DOL Fiduciary rule.”

Company			
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Sun Life Financial (U.S.) Services Company, Inc.	2Q 2024	\$50,000	"Issues relating to federal regulation of insurance; healthcare access; Insuring Access to Dental Insurance Act; Paid Family and Medical Leave Tax Credit and Extension Act." "Issues relating to federal regulation of insurance; healthcare access; Insuring Access to Dental Insurance Act; Paid Family and Medical Leave Tax Credit and Extension Act."
LPL Financial LLC	2Q 2024	\$40,000	"General interest in retirement issues. Issues related to independent contracting for financial advisors. Issues related to DOL fiduciary rule." "General interest in issues surrounding tax reform. General interest in maintaining tax incentives for retirement plans, maintaining the independent contracting status for our financial advisors. Issues related to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Section 199-A." "General interests in cybersecurity proposals. General interest in proposed Federal Data Breach Notification Standard. General interest in a best-interest standard for investment advice. General interest in enhancing Diversity and Inclusion best practices within the financial services industry. Electronic delivery."
LPL Financial LLC	1Q 2024	\$40,000	"General interest in retirement issues. Issues related to independent contracting. Issues related to DOL fiduciary rule." "General interest in issues surrounding tax reform. General interest in maintaining tax incentives for retirement plans, maintaining the independent contracting status for our financial advisors. Issues related to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, Section 199-A." "General interests in cybersecurity proposals. General interest in proposed Federal Data Breach Notification Standard. General interest in a best-interest standard for investment advice. General interest in enhancing Diversity and Inclusion best practices within the financial services industry. Electronic delivery."
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company	2Q 2024	\$40,000	"Issues related to federal involvement in insurance regulation."
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Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company	2Q 2024	\$40,000	"Issues related to federal involvement in insurance regulation; Medicare supplemental healthcare and Medigap plans."
Mutual of Omaha Insurance Company	1Q 2024	\$40,000	"Issues related to federal involvement in insurance regulation; Medicare supplemental healthcare and Medigap plans."
Climavision Operating, LLC	2Q 2024	\$30,000	"Securing additional federal funds for Gap filling radars under the NOAA and NWS budgets; also educating members on the need for gap filling radars."

Courier Plus, Inc. dba Dutchie	2Q 2024 (T)	\$30,000	"All matters affecting dispensary sales; Matters impacting passage SAFER Banking."
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Verizon Communications Inc.	2Q 2024	\$30,000	"National 5G network, 6G, spectrum authority issues/spectrum auctions, and C-band, Huawei, data privacy, NDAA (fiber optics, China, and cybersecurity), FirstNet, emergency broadband, digital divide, cybersecurity, semiconductor chips, antitrust, and tax rates (corporate income and minimum on book tax), ACP Program, USF, net neutrality, BEAD program, artificial intelligence." "Corporate Tax rate."
Verizon Communications Inc.	1Q 2024	\$30,000	"National 5G network, 6G, spectrum authority issues/spectrum auctions, and C-band, Huawei, data privacy, NDAA (fiber optics, China, and cybersecurity), FirstNet, emergency broadband, digital divide, cybersecurity, semiconductor chips, antitrust, and tax rates (corporate income and minimum on book tax), ACP Program, USF, net neutrality, BEAD program, artificial intelligence." "Corporate Tax rate."

Dearborn Is A Veteran Of Capitol Hill And Has Worked For Six U.S. Senators Over A Span Of 25 Years Which Also Included A Stint In The Department Of Energy During The George W. Bush Administration. "In addition to his public service in President Trump's White House, Dearborn has served six U.S. senators over a span of more than 25 years on Capitol Hill, including chief of staff to former Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, the former U.S. attorney general. In 2003, Dearborn was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the U.S. Senate to become assistant secretary of energy for congressional affairs in the U.S. Department of Energy."
[Heritage Foundation, [11/16/18](#)]

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[Open Secrets, Accessed [08/27/24](#)]

Dearborn's Brief Time In The Trump Administration Was Characterized By Dysfunction And His Recommendations For The White House Office In Project 2025 Appear Designed To Emphasize Loyalty To The President Over The Constitution And To Maximize Control Over The Executive Branch.

During The Election And Transition, Dearborn Coordinated Efforts With K Street Lobbyists And The GOP Establishment But Also Ran A Trump Campaign Policy Team Which Folded When Staffers Quit After Not Getting Paid.

During The 2016 Campaign, Dearborn, Still Sen. Sessions's Chief Of Staff Served As A Point Man Between The Trump Team And K Street And The Hill. "Miller is also in frequent touch with Sessions, and Rick Dearborn, Sessions' chief of staff, moonlights as an adviser to the Trump campaign, helping it smooth out relationships with K Street and the Washington establishment. Dearborn is one of a couple point men whom Speaker Ryan's staff contacts when they have questions about Trump policy. "I do a lot of interesting things when I'm on vacation," Dearborn explains. "When I'm on vacation, I do help when I can. But I don't want that to be in the paper." [Politico, [06/28/16](#)]

Dearborn Also Led An Ill-Fated "Policy Shop" For The Campaign Which Disbanded When Staffers Quit Because They Weren't Getting Paid As Promised And Trump Showed Little Interest In Policy. "It's a complete disaster," one disgruntled former adviser told me. "They use and abuse people. The policy office fell apart in August when the promised checks weren't delivered." Three former members, all of whom quit in August, told me that as early as April they were promised financial compensation but were later told that they would have to work as

volunteers. They say the leaders of the shop, Rick Dearborn and John Mashburn, told many staffers that money was on the way but then were unable to deliver. Dearborn is Sen. Jeff Sessions's (R-Ala.) chief of staff, while Mashburn is the former chief of staff for Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C)." [Washington Post, [09/18/16](#)]

- **The Policy Office Also Claimed Trump Had No Interest In Debate Prep.** "After months of laboring in obscurity and waiting on paychecks that did not arrive, most of Donald Trump's Washington policy shop quit, with some telling the Washington Post they decided to jump ship after realizing the GOP nominee wasn't interested in immersive debate prep. Some staffers said the last straw came following two marathon sessions in early August to plan how to prepare Trump for the upcoming presidential debates, but the campaign abruptly shifted strategies. One former staffer told the paper, 'The New York office realized that their candidate would not be receptive to that level of intense preparation.' The campaign's interest in policy details quickly waned when Trump secured the party's nomination after staffers had anticipated a long primary brawl to continue to the summer convention. Other former staffers, most of whom spoke with the paper anonymously, said that contrary to Trump's bluster about having legions of policy experts in his camp, the advisers had minimal roles in the campaign. 'The national security advisory board was total nonsense. They had absolutely no say in anything,' one former policy adviser said. 'Most of them are just names on paper.' Ex-staffers also said the policy shop's leaders, Sen. Jeff Sessions' (R-AL) chief of staff Rick Dearborn and John Mashburn, former chief of staff for Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), promised they would be paid for their efforts, but the promise was never put in writing. Another former adviser said Corey Lewandowski, the former campaign manager turned CNN contributor, also promised compensation. One staffer said, 'There were some people who were treating it as a full-time job. I suspect those people were quite astonished when the pay didn't come through.' Jason Miller, a spokesman for Trump's campaign, denied to the Post that any 'such oral agreements were made.' He said the policy shop was 'very successful,' but acknowledged the office has shrunk in recent months, which he attributed to the campaign's major operations gravitating toward Trump Tower in New York" [Washington Post, [09/18/16](#)]

In His Role As Deputy Chief Of Staff, Dearborn Took A Behind-The-Scenes Approach And Tried To Stay Out Of The Media, But Soon Fell Out Of Favor With Trump.

As Deputy Chief Of Staff, Dearborn Took On A More Behind-The-Scenes Role In The Chaotic Trump White House, Which Soon Put Him Out Of Favor With President Trump.

"But while Miller has rapidly accumulated power in the West Wing by personally advising the president on high-profile policy questions, such as immigration, and publicly defending Trump on television and in the briefing room, Dearborn has become increasingly marginalized, having struggled to form a close bond with the president, new chief of staff John Kelly and Trump's family. Their diverging stock in the administration offers a case study in how to thrive in Trump's

West Wing. Among the lessons: The president often responds to aides who mirror his big personality, while wallflowers tend to get ignored. And the president deeply values loyalty to himself, with little interest in the relationships top aides and other staffers bring into the West Wing. But getting close to the president has its risks, as the long list of former Trump White House aides shows.” [Politico, [09/10/17](#)]

- **Dearborn Sought To Stay Out Of The Headlines During His Time In The White House.** “Dearborn, who served as the top staffer in Sessions’ Senate office for more than a decade and is now one of three deputy chiefs of staff, chose early on to keep a low profile so as not to make enemies in the cutthroat West Wing. He rarely grants interviews and prefers to stay out of the headlines, according to aides and people close to him. He has told associates that he sees his longevity at the White House as connected to staying out of the press. That ensured that he would never outshine the president, a big no-no in this White House, but also renders him invisible to the president, who loves to see aides — including Miller — defending his policies on TV. That’s increasingly turned him into a bit player in the White House, leaving some administration officials to wonder how long he’ll stick around.” [Politico, [09/10/17](#)]
 - **Dearborn Also Temporarily Took Over Managing The President’s Schedule But Later Focused On “Interacting With Outside Groups.** “When Katie Walsh, who was also a deputy chief of staff, left the White House, Dearborn temporarily took over Trump’s schedule. But that job, which one White House aide said had “turned into a monster task,” has since been transferred to Joe Hagin, the other deputy chief of staff, according to two administration officials. Now, Dearborn largely focuses on interacting with outside groups.” [Politico, [09/10/17](#)]

Several Situations Put Dearborn In An “Awkward Position” Which Tested His Loyalties To President Trump Versus His Former Employer Jeff Sessions Who Had Become Attorney General. “Dearborn’s relationship with Attorney General Sessions, the former Alabama senator, has also sometimes put him in an awkward position. Advisers outside the White House urged Dearborn to try and help make peace between Sessions and Trump, but he didn’t get involved in directly mediating the disputes between the two, even as he was rattled by the president’s public attacks toward Sessions through the media and on Twitter, according to people familiar with the talks. Instead, he subtly tried to help Sessions by making sure the president was aware of everything that Sessions was doing at the Department of Justice to advance Trump’s agenda.” [Politico, [09/10/17](#)]

- **Dearborn Tried To Make Sure President Trump Heard Positive News About The Work The Attorney General’s Office Was Doing.** “He worked to make sure good news was getting to the president,” said a former Senate staffer who knows Dearborn. “If the AG was working hard to crack down on MS-13, Dearborn wanted to make sure that the president was hearing that. He kept saying ‘We’re making sure he is seeing the good news.’” Since joining the White House, Dearborn has acted as a key link between federal agencies and the West Wing. As a result, he has fielded a range of complaints

from Cabinet secretaries, according to two administration officials, who added that he does not have the kind of close personal relationship with Trump that Miller has.”
[Politico, [09/10/17](#)]

Dearborn Authored Project 2025’s Chapter On The White House Office, Including The White House Counsel, In Which He Suggested Sweeping Changes To How The Office Operates With A Focus On Presidential Loyalty.

Dearborn Also Blurred The Lines Between The President’s Official Duties And Personal Matters Saying “It Is Almost Impossible To Delineate Exactly Where An Issue Is Strictly Personal And Has No Bearing On The President’s Official Function” And That The WHC Needs To Provide “Proactive Counsel And Zealous Representation.” “While the White House Counsel does not serve as the President’s personal attorney in nonofficial matters, it is almost impossible to delineate exactly where an issue is strictly personal and has no bearing on the President’s official function. The White House Counsel needs to be deeply committed both to the President’s agenda and to affording the President proactive counsel and zealous representation. That individual directly advises the President as he performs the duties of the office, and this requires a relationship that is built on trust, confidentiality, and candor.” [Project 2025, Accessed, [08/27/24](#)]

- **Dearborn Also States That The White Counsel’s Loyalty Is More Important Than Credentials And It Shockingly Puts Loyalty To The President On Equal Footing With The Constitution.** “Moreover, while a candidate with elite credentials might seem ideal, the best one will be above all loyal to the President and the Constitution.” [Project 2025, Accessed, [08/27/24](#)]
- **Deaborn Recommends That Attorneys In The Next White House Counsel’s Office “Should Not Erect Roadblocks Out Of An Abundance Of Caution.”** “Attorneys working in the Office of White House Counsel serve as legal advisers to the White House policy operation by reviewing executive orders, agency regulations, and other policy-related functions. Here again, subordinates should be deeply committed to the President’s agenda and see their role as helping to accomplish the agenda through problem solving and advocacy. They should not erect roadblocks out of an abundance of caution; rather, they should offer practical legal advice on how to promote the President’s agenda within the bounds of the law.” [Project 2025, Accessed, [08/27/24](#)]
- **In Project 2025, Dearborn Writes That The WHC Should Function As An “Activist Yet Ethical Plaintiff’s Firm” In Advocating For The President’s Agenda.** “The White House Counsel’s office cannot serve as a finishing school to credential the next set of white-shoe law firm attorneys or federal judges in waiting who cabin their opinions for fear their elite credentials could be tarnished through a policy disagreement. Rather, it should function more as an activist yet ethical plaintiffs’ firm that advocates for its client—the Administration’s agenda—within the limits imposed by the Constitution and the duties of the legal profession.” [Project 2025, Accessed, [08/27/24](#)]

- **According To Dearborn's Chapter Of 2025, The WHC Should Also Work Quickly To Reverse Positions From The Previous Administration.** "To offer guidance, the White House Counsel must get up to speed as quickly as possible on all significant ongoing legal challenges across the executive branch that might affect the new Administration's policy agenda and must be prepared at the outset of the Administration to present recommendations to the President, including recommendations for reconsidering or reversing positions of the previous Administration in any significant litigation. This review will usually require consulting with the new political leadership at the Justice Department, including during the transition period." [Project 2025, Accessed, [08/27/24](#)]
- **Dearborn's Chapter Also Recommends "Confronting Wokeism Throughout The Federal Government."** "While other chapters will cover specific policy goals for each department or agency, incoming policy councils will need to move rapidly to lead policy processes around cross-cutting agency topics, including countering China, enforcing immigration laws, reversing regulatory policies in order to promote energy production, combating the Left's aggressive attacks on life and religious liberty, and confronting "wokeism" throughout the federal government." [Project 2025, Accessed, [08/27/24](#)]

Even Among Conservatives, Dearborn Was A Controversial Pick To Manage Personnel Issues And Many Thought He Contributed To The Dysfunction Of The Trump Administration's Failures And Dysfunction Early In His Term.

Some In Conservative Circles Have Expressed Reservations About Dearborn's Role In Project 2025's White House Office Chapter And Attribute Some Of The Turmoil Of The Early Trump Administration To Him. "To some of the people on the project's advisory board, though, the elevation of Dearborn — who served in the White House for just over a year during the chaotic early days of the Trump presidency, and who many in the administration thought was responsible for the failures of the first transition team — severely undercut the project's credibility." [...] "I thought this was a real thing, but Dearborn is drafting the section on [the White House Office]?" [Politico, [08/02/24](#)]

A 2023 Interview With The Oklahoma Council Of Public Affairs Gives Some Insight To Dearborn's Views On Governing, Including That Conservative Administrations Should Be "Entitled To A Supportive Army Of Political Appointees."

In A 2023 A Piece By The Oklahoma Council Of Public Affairs About Project 2025, Dearborn Is Quoted As Saying "Liberals Love Power" While "Conservatives Want To Give All The Power Back To The People". "Liberals love power. They put all the plumbing into government. They know where all the levers are. They know exactly how to manipulate our government to achieve their own agenda and their own ends," Dearborn said. "Conservatives want to give all the power back to the people. Conservatives want to live their lives. But if we go

on just living our lives and we're not engaged, then we're going to leave our government to liberals. And you get what you sow." [Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, [11/13/23](#)]

Dearborn Claimed That Because Many Government Employees “Lean Left Instead Of Right”, Conservative Administrations Have To Deal With “More Obstacles” And So The Right Needs To “Put Conservatives In That Can Also Figure Out How To Run Our Government And Advance A Conservative Agenda.” “Identifying and training conservatives to staff a future presidential administration will be key to that administration’s success, Dearborn said. He noted that the wrong kind of agency employees can issue regulations “that pervert the rules and laws that our country has passed” as well as “guidance documents” that are almost as impactful as a law even though the guidance document may not be based in law. Dearborn noted there are two million federal employees today, not counting the military, and that the “largest number of that two million lean more to the left than they do to the right.” “So what happens under a conservative president? More obstacles get placed in the way,” Dearborn said. “What happens under a liberal president? They advance the agenda as quickly as they can.” There are also 16 million federal contractors who are effectively controlled by the two million federal employees. There are only 3,000 to 4,000 political appointees in that system, making those leadership positions crucial to an administration’s success or failure. “We have to find a way to put conservatives in that can also figure out how to run our government and advance a conservative agenda,” Dearborn said.” [Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, [11/13/23](#)]

Dearborn Also Said That Conservative Presidents Should Be “Entitled To A Supportive Army Of Political Appointees.” “Conservative presidents are entitled to a supportive army of political appointees,” Dearborn said. “They shouldn’t have to battle their own people to get their agenda done; nothing about that strikes me as American. If the public elects a conservative president, they deserve a conservative agenda and they deserve a group of people that will help implement that agenda—full stop.” [Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, [11/13/23](#)]

Dearborn Ultimately Left The White House In Early 2018 Shortly After The Trump Tax Cuts Passed Congress In December 2017, And He Later Took Some Credit For The Accomplishment.

Soon After The Trump Administration’s Extreme Tax Cut Proposal Was Passed Congress, Dearborn Announced He Was Leaving The White House. “Deputy White House Chief of Staff Rick Dearborn will leave the administration early next year, CNN has learned, and is expected to pursue work in the private sector. His departure has been rumored for weeks, and sources familiar with the matter say he has been privately telling his West Wing colleagues that he would likely leave soon. Dearborn had a wide portfolio in the White House and oversaw its political operation, public outreach and legislative affairs. He saw the passage of the sweeping Republican tax bill as his time to leave, sources familiar with his move tell CNN.” [CNN, [12/23/17](#)]

A 2018 *Politico* Article Credited Dearborn’s Relationship With Jay Timmons - A Prominent Industry Power Player - With Helping The Tax Bill Get Over The Finish Line.

Relationship w Jay Timmons of NAM - “But as other executives and trade associations take a public stand against the president, the National Association of Manufacturers and its president, Jay Timmons, have struck a close — if still uneasy — partnership with Trump, betting it’s wiser to be on the inside than out as the administration wages a risky fight with the global business community. [...] It helped that Timmons had an early in. He was friends with Rick Dearborn from their days on the Hill, when Timmons worked for Sen. George Allen of Virginia and Dearborn was with Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama. Dearborn led the Trump transition and eventually would be named a White House deputy chief of staff. By March of last year, Timmons and his members were in the West Wing talking tax reform with the president.” [Politico, [09/11/18](#)]

- **Timmons Was Critical In Getting Vulnerable Republicans Onboard With The Tax Bill.** “The Timmons-Trump alliance was cemented during tax reform. Timmons was key to getting the legislation passed, according to former Senate aides, pushing tax breaks for mom-and-pop businesses and providing cover to Republican members who took politically risky votes. Timmons pitched the final bill as a fair deal for businesses, helping ensure its passage.” [Politico, [09/11/18](#)]

In A 2023 Panel Discussion Held By The Bipartisan Policy Center, Dearborn Appeared To Take Some Credit For The Passage Of The Tax Cut Bill. “I did have legislative affairs as one of the divisions that was under my supervision as deputy chief of staff. I had a great legislative affairs team. Early on it was really important for us to try to get- notch a lot of victories. I think it came in really handy, that legislative experience, the Senate experience, and the House experience that I got when I was in the Bush administration working with the House. I think that helped us with the Trump tax cut program in 2017. I was able I think really to use a lot of my experience and connectivity with folks on the Hill to try to help work with our legislative team to get that passed.” [YouTube, [06/28/23](#)]

During The 2016 Election, Dearborn Was Contacted By Russian Officials Trying To Gain Influence With Then-Candidate Donald Trump And In 2019 The Trump White House Blocked Him From Testifying To Congress About The Russia Investigation.

Dearborn Found Himself In The Middle Of A Russian Campaign To Influence Trump And The Republican Party Through The NRA When He Received An Email From A Trump Supporter Who Boasted Of A Backchannel To Putin And Moscow.

In May 2016, A National Rifle Association Member From West Virginia Contacted Dearborn Via Email Saying He Could Provide A “Back-Channel” To The Kremlin. “A conservative operative trumpeting his close ties to the National Rifle Association and Russia told a Trump campaign adviser last year that he could arrange a back-channel meeting between Donald J. Trump and Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian president, according to an email sent to the

Trump campaign. A May 2016 email to the campaign adviser, Rick Dearborn, bore the subject line "Kremlin Connection." In it, the N.R.A. member said he wanted the advice of Mr. Dearborn and Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama, then a foreign policy adviser to Mr. Trump and Mr. Dearborn's longtime boss, about how to proceed in connecting the two leaders." [New York Times, [12/03/17](#)]

- **While Dearborn Did Not Respond He Did Forward The Email To Officials Within The Trump Campaign, Piquing The Interest Of Congressional Investigators.**

"Congressional investigators have unearthed an email from a top Trump aide that referenced a previously unreported effort to arrange a meeting last year between Trump campaign officials and Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to sources with direct knowledge of the matter. [...] The aide, Rick Dearborn, who is now President Donald Trump's deputy chief of staff, sent a brief email to campaign officials last year relaying information about an individual who was seeking to connect top Trump officials with Putin, the sources said. The person was only identified in the email as being from "WV," which one source said was a reference to West Virginia. It's unclear who the individual is, what he or she was seeking, or whether Dearborn even acted on the request. One source said that the individual was believed to have had political connections in West Virginia, but details about the request and who initiated it remain vague." [CNN, [08/23/17](#)]

This Was Later Found To Be Part Of A Plot By Russian Operatives Alex Torshin And Maria Butina To Gain Influence With The Trump Campaign Through The NRA And Supposed "Shared Christian Values". "Mr. Torshin's proposal is explained in a May 2016 email from Rick Clay, an advocate for conservative Christian causes, to Rick Dearborn, a Trump campaign aide. Mr. Clay was organizing a dinner in Louisville, Ky., honoring wounded veterans, and Mr. Trump was scheduled to be in the city for the National Rifle Association's annual convention. In the email to Mr. Dearborn, Mr. Clay said he hoped that Mr. Trump would attend the dinner, and he also included details about the overture from Mr. Torshin. The email said that the dinner would be a chance for Mr. Trump to meet Mr. Torshin, who is a life member of the National Rifle Association in the United States and a vocal advocate for gun rights in Russia, according to three people who have seen the email. The email said that the Russians believed they had "shared Christian values" with the Trump campaign." [New York Times, [11/17/17](#)]

- **Russian Spy Maria Butina Later Pled Guilty To Her Role In The Scheme.** "Alleged Russian spy Maria Butina pleaded guilty in federal court Thursday morning to attempting to infiltrate Republican political circles and influence US relations with Russia before and after the 2016 presidential election. Butina, 30, attended conferences of groups such as the National Rifle Association and the National Prayer Breakfast, and orchestrated gatherings where influential Americans could meet with Russians. "Butina sought to establish unofficial lines of communication with Americans having power and influence over US politics," prosecutors said. Butina admitted to acting "under direction of" a Russian official whom CNN has identified as Alexander Torshin, the recently retired deputy governor of the Central Bank of Russia. While she was in the US, she pursued graduate studies at American University in Washington." [CNN, [12/13/18](#)]

In A Lengthy And Far-Ranging Interview With The Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence, Dearborn Faced Questions About The “Kremlin Connection” As Well As Other Contact Trump Campaign Officials Had With Russia.

Despite His Skepticism, Dearborn Sent Info From The Mysterious “Kremlin Connection” To Members Of The Trump Campaign Team. “According to CNN, Rick Dearborn, who is now Trump's deputy chief of staff, sent information to campaign officials last year about the effort, which was not previously reported. Dearborn was skeptical about the request, CNN's senior congressional reporter, Manu Raju, said in an interview on Wednesday evening. The person mentioned in the email was identified only with "WV." One of CNN's sources said it was a reference to a contact in West Virginia. The report said the email came around the same time as a June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower among Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son; Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law who's now a senior White House adviser; Paul Manafort, the campaign chairman; and a Russian lawyer with ties to the Kremlin.” [Business Insider, [08/23/17](#)]

Dearborn Told House Investigators That He Did Not Believe The Source Was Viable Or Legitimate.

<p>MR. STEWART OF UTAH: Never indicated any interest in pursuing conversations with him?</p> <p>MR. DEARBORN: No.</p> <p>MR. STEWART OF UTAH: Did you take seriously his proposition that he could facilitate some type of communication or back channel?</p> <p>MR. DEARBORN: I thought it was highly unlikely that, though a good man from West Virginia, that a fellow from West Virginia was going to be able to connect a Presidential candidate with the President of Russia.</p> <p>MR. STEWART OF UTAH: Is there any reason that you would've ever believed that he was capable of doing that?</p> <p>MR. DEARBORN: No.</p>

[Director of National Intelligence, p. 59, [01/17/18](#)]

Despite Still Serving As Jeff Sessions’ Chief Of Staff, Dearborn Told The Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence That He Had No Knowledge Of A 2016 Meeting Between Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak And Sen. Sessions That Took Place In Sessions’ U.S. Capitol Hill Office.

MR. SWALWELL: And Senator Sessions, you're aware, testified to multiple committees that in the fall prior to the election he met with Ambassador Kislyak at his Senate office?

MR. DEARBORN: Right.

MR. SWALWELL: Were you in the Senate office the day that Ambassador Kislyak came in?

MR. DEARBORN: The foreign policy would've been, not me.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. But you would've been in the office, right?

MR. DEARBORN: I may have been physically been there.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. And was it your practice to have a handle on the day-to-day schedule of the Senator?

MR. DEARBORN: Sure.

MR. SWALWELL: Okay. Do you recall reviewing that Ambassador Kislyak was coming to Senator Sessions' office that day?

MR. DEARBORN: I don't recall off the top of my head, but it happened.

[Director of National Intelligence, p. 71, [01/17/18](#)]

Sessions Himself Did Not Disclose His Meeting With The Russian Officials When Asked Under Oath During His Senate Confirmation. “Sessions, a former senator from Alabama who was among Trump’s early and most vocal surrogates on the campaign trail, did not disclose the conversations when asked under oath during his Senate confirmation hearing in early 2017 about possible contacts between Trump’s campaign and Moscow.” [The Guardian, [02/17/17](#)]

Dearborn Told Rep. Swalwell That Trump Was Hopeful That He Could “Find Ways To Work With Russia”.

MR. SWALWELL: What was your understanding of candidate Trump's views toward Russia prior to that first meeting?

MR. DEARBORN: I think he was -- the only thing I know is what I read and the things that he was saying, which was he was hopeful he could -- you know, as a

country, we could find ways to work with Russia.

MR. SWALWELL: And how would you characterize Senator Sessions' views on Russia prior to that first meeting?

MR. DEARBORN: I think Sessions was hopeful that that would be possible as well, but he was pretty much a realist about Russia.

[Director of National Intelligence, [01/17/18](#)]

Dearborn Said That The Decision To Work With A Foreign Country Would Be “Up To The Candidate”.

MR. STEWART OF UTAH: Would you have supported such a thing, were that -- you know, you look at this one and say, well, it's not necessarily viable. But if

there were a viable option for it, would that have been something that you would have thought was a good idea and would have supported?

MR. DEARBORN: Me, personally, no. But, I mean, it should have been the candidate's -- it's the candidate's decision if he wants to do that.

MR. STEWART OF UTAH: Yeah. And it's not something that you encouraged?

MR. DEARBORN: No.

[Director of National Intelligence, p. 61, [01/17/18](#)]

In An Interview, Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) Pressed Dearborn About A 2016 Trump Campaign Document He Compiled Which Discouraged The Use Of “Lethal Assistance” In Ukraine But Dearborn Claimed To Not Know Much Else About.

MR. SWALWELL: The third bullet states: “Based upon foreign policy discussions in D.C.” -- the third Monday, July 11 bullet states: “Based upon foreign

policy discussions in D.C. with the nominee in March regarding support to Ukraine, lethal assistance was a geopolitical concern raised in this discussion.”

Were you referring to the March 31st meeting that you had at Trump Hotel?

MR. DEARBORN: I didn't write this document. I did compile it, but I didn't write it.

[Director of National Intelligence, [01/17/18](#)]

Dearborn Also Told Lawmakers It Was A Policy That White House Counsel Don McGahn Deals Exclusively With The Attorney General. “Prior to rejoining Jones Day in 2019, Don served as Counsel to the President of the United States. As White House Counsel, Don advised Donald J. Trump on all legal issues concerning the President and his administration, including constitutional and statutory authority, administrative law, executive orders, international

agreements, tariffs, trade, CFIUS, and national security. Don also managed the judicial selection process for the President.” [Jones Day, Accessed [08/27/24](#)]

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MR. SWALWELL: Attorney General Sessions, if you recall, recused himself from the Russia investigation. Prior to Attorney General Sessions making that decision, did you talk with Attorney General Sessions about making that decision?

MR. DEARBORN: I don't -- so there's a Mukasey memo that we're told about up front. The answer is no, but it's because of the Mukasey memo. And Don McGhan was pretty clear, "I deal with the Attorney General," unless it was some policy on the Hill.

MR. SWALWELL: Wait, can you say that again? That Don McGhan deals with the Attorney General, not you?

MR. DEARBORN: Yeah, that's the details of the Mukasey memo, which kind of applies to all of us in the West Wing.

[Director of National Intelligence, [01/17/18](#)]

In A Controversial Move That Could Test The Limits Of Executive Branch Immunity, The White House Blocked Dearborn From Testifying Before A House Judiciary Committee Hearing In 2019 Relating To The Russia Probe.

In September 2019, The Trump White House Blocked Dearborn Along With Corey Lewandowski And Rob Porter From Testifying About President Trump's Attempts To Obstruct Justice In The Russia Investigation. “The White House is claiming immunity over two former aides subpoenaed by the House Judiciary Committee, blocking them from answering questions in a Tuesday hearing about what they told former special counsel Robert S. Mueller III. White House counsel Pat A. Cipollone directed Rick Dearborn, the former Trump campaign adviser and ex-White House deputy chief of staff, and Rob Porter, the former White House secretary, not to answer questions by the panel. The committee subpoenaed both ex-Trump officials — key witnesses in several instances of potential obstruction of justice laid out by Mueller — to testify Tuesday. “The President has directed Mr. Dearborn and Mr. Porter not to appear at the hearing scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, 2019,” Cipollone wrote to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) on Monday evening, later adding: “The Department of Justice has advised me that Mr. Dearborn and Mr. Porter are absolutely immune from compelled congressional testimony with respect to matters related to their service as senior advisers to the President.” [Washington Post, [09/16/19](#)]

Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) Said In A House Judiciary Committee Hearing That The White House Had No Legal Authority To Block Dearborn From Appearing. “We subpoenaed three witnesses to this hearing, Rick Dearborn, Rob Porter And Corey Lewandowski. Unfortunately we learned last night that the White House is blocking the first two from even showing up and tightly limiting the third. The White House has no authority, legal or otherwise to give these orders. We had wanted these three individuals to testify before the committee and the American people because they are critical witnesses to the incidents of obstruction of justice laid out in the Mueller report. In at least five of those episodes, evidence laid out in the special counsel’s report established that all the elements of obstruction of justice were met.” [YouTube, [09/17/19](#)]

Dearborn Also Played A “Key Role” In Parts Of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Election. “On Sept. 17, former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski testified before the House Judiciary Committee in an impeachment investigation hearing titled “Presidential Obstruction of Justice and Abuse of Power.” He had been subpoenaed by the committee to testify, along with Rick Dearborn (former White House deputy chief of staff) and Rob Porter (former White House staff secretary). All three play key roles in parts of Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s report, submitted to Congress last April, on Russian interference in the 2016 election and the president’s efforts to impede that investigation. Dearborn and Porter did not show up for the hearing. The day before, Chairman Jerrold Nadler received a letter from the current White House counsel, Pat Cippollone, including copies of memos from the Department of Justice to the president advising that the president could “lawfully direct” Dearborn and Porter not to appear based on a legal theory of “testimonial immunity.” [Lawfare Media, [09/23/19](#)].

- **The Decision To Block The Testimony Fits The Theory Of Executive Branch “Testimonial Immunity” Which Could Have “Far-Reaching Consequences.”** “The outcome of the McGahn case could thus have far-reaching consequences for the executive branch theory of testimonial immunity, and for Dearborn and Porter. The White House counsel is considered one of the closest advisers to the president. If a court finds McGahn does not enjoy testimonial immunity, it is virtually assured that neither Dearborn, nor Porter, nor Hicks would either. Even if the court held in favor of McGahn, however, the opinion’s reasoning would almost certainly be premised on his position as one of the president’s closest advisers. Its application to Porter, Dearborn, Hicks and others would likely remain quite tenuous, and that issue would probably still require litigation.” [Lawfare Media, [09/23/19](#)].

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