



Code of Ethics for U.S. Government Service Adopted July 11, 1958

Resolved by the House of Representatives {the Senate concurring}, That it is the sense of the Congress that the following Code of Ethics should be adhered to by all Government employees, including officeholders.

Any person in Government service should:

1. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to Government persons, party, or department.

2. Uphold the Constitution, laws, and legal regulations of the United States and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.

3. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay; giving to the performance of his duties his earnest effort and best thought.

4. Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.

5. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not; and never accept for himself or his family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his governmental duties.

6. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a Government employee has no private word which can be binding on public duty.

7. Engage in no business with the Government, either directly or indirectly which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his governmental duties.

8. Never use any information coming to him confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit.

9. Expose corruption wherever discovered.

10. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

The strength of any government system lies in the extent to which it earns and holds the

respect of its citizens. That respect comes from the confidence which people have in the integrity of government and the services it provides. Everyone employed in government has a part to play in earning public respect and maintaining confidence in the institutions of government.

The government has extensive influence over people's lives. Mismanagement or abuse can have serious and far reaching effects. As public servants, they work for the People. Citizens are entitled to high expectations of staff in government agencies, and expect them to be honest, fair, and loyal. These are absolute standards, there is no middle ground.

Citizens expect politicians and public servants to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law. They expect official decisions to be made fairly and impartially, that public money will be spent wisely and public assets will be used and cared for responsibly. They expect that public servants will always behave ethically, and be conscientious and competent in their work.

When expectations are not met, public criticism quickly follows. When people lose trust in government, and become increasingly resentful of government activities.

Any abuse of trust, abuse of resources, abuse of information, or personal opportunism corrodes the relationship between the people and their government. Standards of integrity and conduct should exist as the basic foundation upon which all government business is conducted. It is not only what they do, but how people perceive what they are doing, and they should always act with integrity.

What people expect and what they get however, are two very different things.

Finding Politicians with Integrity

[By Wilderness](#)

Is an honest politician an oxymoron?

The American politician. Leaders of the free world. Servant and employee of the American people. Hard working and much maligned.

The American politician. Liar extraordinaire. Scoundrel without a shred of personal integrity. Unwilling to follow the laws they themselves create.

Which one best describes the American Politician? Or do they both? If the first is true, we would seem to be in good shape, politically. If the second, we have a major problem that must be resolved.

Let's take a good hard look at our elected politicians as a group with an eye as to what might be wrong and how to put right what, if anything, we find wrong with the system.

Politicians as employees

In a very real sense, the politicians we elect to represent us are our employees, and indeed they have a difficult job to perform. Their job has many facets, all of which must be considered. First and foremost a politician must be able and willing to govern the country, state, city or other political entity for which they were elected according to the will of the people. Secondly (secondly!) they must represent the particular group which elected them. They must work with other politicians of widely different concepts of what is best. They must do this within the confines of current laws.

A good employee, one with integrity and honesty, will perform their task to the best of their ability. Their own desires and needs will be put aside when on the job. A good employee

will, if unsure how to proceed, ask for help or advice. Are our politicians good employees? Consider:

In the 2001 general election the people of Idaho voted to put term limits into effect in their state legislature with the limits to go into effect in 2004. The legislature went home for the holidays, came back to work and wasted no time (less than 30 days) in repealing the new law by a vote of 26-8 in the Senate and 50-20 in the house. The people spoke in a very clear and unambiguous voice as to what they wanted and required. Their legislature would not enact the desired law so the people did so themselves. It took real integrity and honesty for that same legislature to repeal the wishes of their employers. Not!

Article VI section 4 of the US Constitution requires that the government protect every state from invasion. Whether you, the reader, agree with current immigration policy or not, it is plain that the millions of illegal aliens pouring over our (primarily southern) border constitutes an invasion. The constitution does not require that the invasion be armed, dangerous, violent, or anything else; just that there not be an invasion. Our leaders pay lip service to the problem, but make absolutely no serious effort to stop it. They are not doing their job, presumably because they may lose ethnic votes, or business votes, or some other vote.

Our employees do not have the integrity or honesty to do the primary job they are paid for, nor even the secondary task (representing local constituents). They are far more interested in protecting their own job. They will perform their proper task only when it coincides with keeping their income and perks.

Politicians and Lying

Q: How do you tell when a politician is lying?

A: When their mouth is open. This tired old joke is all too true today.

Does anyone out there remember Monica Lewinsky and "I did not have sex with that woman!" Does anyone alive really believe that? Do the rest of us get to make our definitions for common words? The holder of the most prestigious office in the world, desperate to maintain a facade of morality, gave up his own integrity in the bold faced lie.

Our current president made many promises (as politicians are known to do) but some of the first words from his mouth after the election were that we would have to give him more than one election to complete them. A more subtle lie (one by omission), but still a plain lie.

State representative Phil Hart, Idaho, faces over \$600,000 in liens from the IRS, and another \$53,000 from Idaho income taxes and penalties. Mr Hart stopped paying taxes because they are unconstitutional. Right! There have only been about a bazillion similar lawsuits over the years - all shot down. Rep. Hart has also admitting logging state land for lumber to build his house; he claims he didn't know it was illegal. He probably has a bridge he would like to sell you, too, if you believe either story.

Politicians will spin it this way and spin it that way in an effort to convince voters that what they hear is what they want, but in the end it all boils down to the same thing. Say whatever they have to say in order to obtain votes. Honesty does not seem to pay in the political field.

Bread and Circuses

The American people have discovered, that they can vote themselves bread and circuses at the expense of someone else. If you are not familiar with that term, it means both necessities and luxuries. In political terms it might be called earmarks.

Remember the "Bridge to nowhere?" A \$398 million earmark to provide a bridge from Ketchikan, Alaska to Gravina Island (population 50) so that the population would not have to wait a few minutes for the ferry servicing the island.

Earmarks are a way for politicians to get "free" money for their constituents, thus buying votes for themselves, and have become monotonous in their epidemic usage. They buy votes, but at a huge cost for the country as a whole. An honest politician knows better (the money simply comes from somewhere else, hurting someone else), but our politicians don't care; they can buy votes with them!

Political Parties and Honesty

Our country is basically a two party system; it is nearly impossible to get elected as anything but a Democrat or Republican.

The result is that our politicians must follow the guide lines of their party. Step out of line too many times and they will not be re-elected. The party, not the people electing them, dictates that votes of our politicians.

This does not promote honesty and integrity from our politicians. As always, their jobs are more important than running our country or following our wishes and those jobs are always on the line if they don't follow party platforms.

Possible solutions

It would seem that the second description, at the beginning of this article, is more descriptive of our vaunted leaders. The question is what can we do about it?

- First of all, and most important, is to keep our own integrity and honesty. If we give our word, keep it! If we say something, keep it truthful and don't try to spin it. Don't demand that someone else provide what we want; earn it ourselves! Only if we keep our own personal integrity can we demand the same from our "servants".
- Term limits. It seems that the longer a person is in the political field the worse it gets. Time = power here, and power degrades. With power, lies and other dishonest acts are forgotten and ignored. Limit the time available to our employees lest they overcome us.
- Line item veto. If the politicians insist on spending your money to benefit a few others while leaving you in the cold, perhaps a president or governor will have the integrity to put a stop to it. Understanding that the veto infringes on the powers of congress, our politicians have shown themselves unwilling to do their job honestly and need an override.
- Public funds for re-election costs. While abhorrent to many people, the use of public funding, and only public funding would stop the buying of votes. It is worth consideration in one form or another. Coupled with this might be serious penalties for ethics violations such as taking gifts from companies or individuals in return for voting in such a way as to help the donor. Companies have strict laws, with severe penalties attached, concerning this; why not our politicians?

A wrist slap or public censure just isn't enough.

- Listen to your politician. If he/she lies, don't put your vote there. If they lie once they will lie again and again, to the point that you won't know what they stand for. Demand unspun truth and honesty from your representative.
- A website from each politician, updated daily or weekly, with a short description of how they voted on each issue and why that chose that vote might be invaluable. Easily accessible, one could keep frequent check on their representative and follow their actions instead of their words.
- Vote the person, not the party. If a Libertarian or an independent most closely follows what you believe to be best, vote that way! Ignore party affiliation and vote the person.
- Although different people have different moral concepts and it is not reasonable to demand that your representative have the identical moral structure you do, you can demand personal integrity from them. If they ignore laws they don't like, if they won't keep their word, if they are more interested in buying votes than running the country then don't listen and don't hire them! You wouldn't hire a worker for your business that pulled those stunts would you? Why hire a politician that does it?

The bottom line is that only the people can force honesty and integrity from our politicians. Make yourself part of the solution, not part of the problem. Demand an honest politician to represent you; never elect one that has proven dishonest or lacking in personal integrity.

It can be a little difficult to see through the lies and spin, the refusal to actually answer a question, and the enormous media influence on what we hear, but using our critical and analytical thinking skills we can work through this and find whether our politicians are showing honesty and integrity. Lets make an effort to do just that.

