

## Trump's Pick for Labor Secretary a Major Political Donor, Finds Support in Restaurant Industry

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**February 9, 2017** -- Fast-food executive Andrew Puzder, President Trump's nominee for labor secretary, [will soon](#) receive a hearing before the [Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#).

Puzder is the CEO of CKE Restaurants, the parent company of the Carl's Jr. and Hardee's fast-food chains and an active member of the National Restaurant Association, which publicly [endorsed](#) his nomination. He and his family are prolific donors to political candidates and causes. "I've become a one-issue voter," Mr. Puzder [has said](#). "My one issue is whether somebody is going to win."

Andrew Puzder and his wife, Deanna, CKE Restaurants, and the [National Restaurant Association](#) [have contributed over \\$1.2 million combined to 79 senators who will vote on his confirmation](#), with the largest contributions going to Roy Blunt of Missouri, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, and Ted Cruz of Texas. Nearly a quarter of this money was given by the National Restaurant Association to 18 of the 23 senators who sit on the committee presiding over Mr. Puzder's hearing.

The Puzders significantly stepped up their political contributions in the 2016 election cycle, contributing almost \$700,000 to candidates and outside groups, more than twice the amounts they contributed in 2012 or 2014 [according to data](#) from the Center for Responsive Politics. While a small portion of the Puzders' political contributions went to Democrats in previous cycles, their contributions in 2016 went exclusively to Republicans.

Mr. Puzder himself has given large amounts of money to committees and super PACs working to elect Republican candidates. The table below shows the top 5 recipients of contributions from Andrew Puzder since the 1996 election cycle.

Republican National Committee	\$324,000
Restore Our Future (Super PAC)	\$120,000
Trump Victory (Joint fundraising committee associated with Donald Trump)	\$75,000
National Republican Senatorial Committee	\$48,300
McCain Victory California (Joint fundraising committee associated with John McCain)	\$43,100

Organizations associated with Mr. Puzder have also heavily lobbied the federal government, often pertaining to issues that he would enforce as labor secretary. CKE Restaurant franchises have been repeatedly [accused](#) of violating wage and labor laws, and several of his restaurant employees [described](#) poor working conditions at a recent panel convened by Democratic senators.

CKE Restaurants spent \$40,000 to lobby the federal government in 2016. Since 2008, the company has spent \$940,000 on issues such as [union formation](#), displaying [nutrition information](#) on restaurant menus, and franchise regulations.

The National Restaurant Association spent \$3.93 million to lobby the federal government last year. Since 2008, the company has spent \$27 million. On [its website](#), the restaurant organization says it aims to “mitigate the negative impact” of the Affordable Care Act, support business-friendly tax provisions, and prevent lower-paid employees from being eligible for overtime.

Mr. Puzder's nomination has done little to abate criticism that the Trump administration is failing to keep its promise to "drain the swamp" in Washington, opting rather to appoint prominent Republican donors to its cabinet such as Betsy DeVos and Linda McMahon. His hearing is [scheduled](#) for February 16th.

## Methodology

MapLight analysis of campaign contributions from PACs and employees to the principal campaign committees of Senators in the 115th Congress through June 30, 2016. Contributions data source: OpenSecrets.org and the Federal Election Commission. Lobbying data analysis consists of federal lobbying disclosure filings since 2008 available from the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives as of February 6, 2017.

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