

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT

“First Things” Framework for The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government

The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government is a new 501(c)(4) organization designed to shed light for “We the People” on fraud, waste, abuse, and corruption within our government. In effect, it will serve as a permanent, private sector, not-for-profit, and nonpartisan resource for the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), which will expire on July 4, 2026,¹ and for others committed to exposing government corruption and improving government efficiency.

For the past three years, as part of the Heritage Foundation, The Oversight Project has been at the forefront of releasing information to the American public. According to its founding President, Mike Howell, the Heritage Foundation incubated The Oversight Project to meet the dramatic need urgent need to consistently deliver original information and honest investigations to the American People about failures of the Biden Administration. Now is the moment to evolve to win the next battle. We intend to obtain as much information and evidence as possible to directly inform Americans about the health of their country and the operations of their government.

The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government is joined by, and has aligned itself with, Distinguished Constitutional Fellow Joseph E. Schmitz, former Inspector General of the Department of Defense from 2002-2005, and author of “THE INSPECTOR GENERAL HANDBOOK: FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, AND OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL ‘ENEMIES, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC’.”

Two and a half centuries ago, the Chinese military philosopher Sun Tzu warned in THE ART OF WAR: “One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement.” The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government embraces the Principle of First and Second Things, “You can’t get second things by putting them first; you can get second things only by putting first things first.”² First things define who we are. In this light, The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government is designed and built upon the following five constitutional pillars, five American “First Things”:

- (1) “*One Nation Under God*” – in the July 6, 1775, “[Declaration on the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms](#),” our Continental Congress called for unity “before God and the world,” and found “nothing so dreadful as voluntary Slavery”;
- (2) “*Pursuit of Happiness*” – in the July 4, 1776, “[Declaration of Independence](#),” our forefathers proclaimed “these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”;
- (3) “*We the People*” – the first three words of our [Constitution](#), ratified in 1788, highlight that it is *our* national government, and *our* tax dollars being wasted by inefficiency;
- (4) “*Published*” Accountability -- Our Constitution mandates that, “a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time” ([U.S. Const., Art. I, §9](#)); and
- (5) *Limited Federal Government/Subsidiarity* -- the 1789 Preamble of the Bill of Rights explains its two purposes as “to prevent misconstructions or abuse of its powers,” *i.e.*, to prevent abuse of the “powers . . . delegated to the United States by the Constitution.” [U.S. Const., Amend. X](#).

¹ “DOGE will conclude their work by July 4, 2026.” Revell, “Musk and Ramaswamy's DOGE opens hiring on X,” FoxBusiness.com, Nov. 14, 2024 (<https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/musk-ramaswamys-doge-opens-hiring-x>).

² C.S. Lewis, “Time and Tide,” reprinted in GOD IN THE DOCK (1942); see Plato, *The Laws* 361b-d (360BC) (“[T]here are two different kinds of good things, the merely human and the divine; the former are consequential on the latter. Hence a city which accepts the greater goods acquires the lesser along with them, but one which refuses them misses both.”).

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In a world that has come to elevate “political narratives” above the truth, we desperately need The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government, committed to the “dogged pursuit of the truth.”³ Only the truth can restore the American people’s faith, trust, and confidence in *their* government. To defeat the enemies of truth, we need to know not only who those enemies are, but also who we are. Efficiency, like money, does not define who we are; it is a very important Second Thing: “the society that believes in nothing worth surviving for beyond mere survival will not survive.”⁴ In this light, following are more detailed explanations of First Things of The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government:

“*One Nation Under God*”: Our forefathers “with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves,” and declared: “We are reduced to the alternative of choosing [sic] an unconditional Submission to the tyranny of irritated Ministers, or resistance by Force. The latter is our choice. We have counted the cost of this contest and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary Slavery.” See J. Schmitz, “1775 Declaration Foreshadowed Current Need for Unity,” [Newsmax](#), July 2, 2020.

“*Pursuit of Happiness*”: The German language version of our July 4, 1776, Declaration of Independence, posted [online](#), provides insight into the original meaning of Thomas Jefferson’s phrase, “pursuit of Happiness.” In the simultaneously released German version, this same phrase is translated into German as, “*Bestreben nach Glückseligkeit*.” Based on contemporaneous dictionary definitions by America’s most famous expert on our American English language, Noah Webster, it is apparent that the three words in our Declaration of Independence, “pursuit of Happiness,” were synonymous with, “pursuit of Blessedness.” See J. Schmitz, “Independence Day, ‘The Pursuit of Happiness,’ and ‘Our Sacred Honor,’” [Newsmax](#), July 3, 2019.

“*We the People*”: The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government encourages the use of the term “our national government” instead of “the Government,” and supports personal accountability by discouraging attribution of animate features to inanimate objects, such as “the FBI decided,” often a sign of someone’s effort to avoid personal accountability. See J. Schmitz, “IG Report on Comey Obscures That Strzok, Page Behind Key Determinations,” [Newsmax](#), Sept. 13, 2019.

“*Published*” Accountability: The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government fully embraces what the late Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld described in a speech subtitled “[Bureaucracy to Battlefield](#),” the day before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001: “The technology revolution has transformed organizations across the private sector, but not ours, not fully, not yet. We are, as they say, tangled in our anchor chain. . . We have brought people on board who have driven similar change in the private sector. We intend to do so here. We will report publicly on our progress. The adage that “you get what you inspect,” not what you expect, or put differently, that “what you measure improves,” is true. It is powerful, and we will be measuring.”

Limited Federal Government/Subsidiarity: The Oversight Project: It’s Your Government supports a Bill of Rights-based policy for the entire Executive Branch that whenever, during the course of administering the programs of any Executive Branch department or agency, there appears to be a statutory ambiguity, such ambiguity shall be construed in favor of “powers . . . reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” ([U.S. Const., Amend. X](#)) in accordance with this guiding principle from the U.S. Supreme Court: “The question is not what power the Federal Government ought to have but what powers in fact have been given by the people.”⁵ We will also work tirelessly to expose any abuses of these powers by federal government officials.

³ See Charles Johnson, Ph.D., “Inspector General Investigations: ‘Dogged Pursuit of the Truth,’” promulgated by Inspector General Joseph E. Schmitz as Department of Defense Office of Inspector General Policy in 2003.

⁴ Peter Kreeft, *A Refutation Of Moral Relativism: Interviews With An Absolutists*, p. 133 (1999); THE INSPECTOR GENERAL HANDBOOK, *supra*, Dedication Page (“To our American ‘First Things,’ including those defining principles that underly the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Inspector General Act of 1978.”).

⁵ *New York v. United States*, 505 U.S. 144, 157 (1992) (internal citation omitted); cf. *United States v. Heth*, 7 U.S. (3 Cranch) 399, 413 (1806) (“words of a statute, if dubious, ought . . . to be taken most strongly against the law makers”); *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, 144 S. Ct. 2244, 2286 n.5 & 2293 (2024) (Gorsuch, J., concurring) (“*Chevron* deference sits in tension with many traditional legal presumptions and interpretive principles, representing nearly the *inverse* of . . . *contra proferentem*. . . . [I]t has proved unworkable and operated to undermine rather than advance reliance interests, often to the detriment of ordinary Americans.”).