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Heather Wilson Finalized Contract with Sandia Labs While in Congress; Payments Started the First Day She Left Congress; Wilson Should Resign from Council Determining Labs' Futures

Santa Fe, NM - Today, *The Albuquerque Journal* reported that former Congresswoman Heather Wilson (R. – New Mexico) finalized her first contract with the Sandia National Laboratories on December 19, 2008, while she was still representing the district that includes that nuclear weapons facility. Moreover, her first invoice documents that she began to be paid \$10,000 a month for “Consultant/Advisory Services” that had no written work requirements on January 4, 2009, her very first day out of office. A few months later she was also being paid \$10,000 a month by the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) for a similar contract.

The Albuquerque Journal article builds upon a Department of Energy (DOE) Inspector General investigation, which determined that the Sandia and Los Alamos Labs had made approximately \$450,000 in improper payments to Wilson up until March 2011, when she began to campaign for the Senate. The DOE IG report said that the facts indicate that federal funds were used for prohibited lobbying activities, which that office is still investigating. The Labs were forced to return that money to the government, but not Wilson.

The Albuquerque Journal received the new information concerning the dates of Wilson’s contract with Sandia from Nuclear Watch New Mexico. The watchdog organization obtained the documents by appealing an initially rejected federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

During her unsuccessful 2012 Senate campaign Wilson repeatedly attacked her opponent Martin Heinrich for not supporting the labs strongly enough. In particular, while invoking a jobs argument, she repeatedly criticized the Obama Administration for delaying a controversial facility at LANL for expanded production of plutonium pit cores for nuclear weapons. However, despite its estimated \$6 billion cost to the taxpayer, the government’s own documents clearly disclosed that the facility would not create a single new permanent job because it would merely relocate existing Lab jobs. In contrast, during her entire Senate campaign, Wilson did not disclose the full extent of her financial ties to the nuclear weapons labs.

In February 2013, House Speaker John Boehner appointed Wilson to a congressional advisory council that will recommend how the nuclear weapons laboratories should be managed and operated in the future. Jay Coghlan, Director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, commented, “Heather Wilson should resign from this advisory council immediately because of her clear conflict-of interest. If she does not step down voluntarily, congressional leaders must replace her.”

| “Other Members of Congress should take heed of Heather Wilson’s highly questionable ethical behavior,” Coghlan continued. “They should remember that they were elected to represent their constituents, not the for-profit corporations running the labs. Our politicians should avoid even the appearance of favoring the interests of the nuclear weapons labs above the public’s best interests, which Wilson so clearly failed to do.”

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Ex-Congresswoman Wilson’s contract with Sandia and invoices obtained through Nuclear Watch New Mexico’s Freedom of Information Act request are available at http://nukewatch.org/facts/nwd/HeatherWilson-Sandia_contract-invoices.pdf

| The Nov. 3, 2013 Albuquerque Journal article *From Congress to contract: Heather Wilson says 10K per month Sandia Labs deal met ethics rules* is available at <http://www.abqjournal.com/293472/news/from-congress-to-contract.html> (a paid subscription is necessary for the full article).

The June 2013 DOE IG Report *Concerns with Consulting Contract Administration at Various Department Sites* (DOE/IG-0889) that focuses on Heather Wilson’s contracts with the Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories is available at <http://energy.gov/ig/downloads/inspection-report-doeig-0889>

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