

Truss on Trump-style deregulation

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The UK's new trade secretary met last year with climate-sceptic think tanks that are behind Trump's programme of deregulation and tax cuts.

Liz Truss met with US pressure groups to discuss weakening regulations in 'off the record' meetings last September, according to official documents obtained by Greenpeace's investigative journalism arm *Unearthed*.

Truss, then chief secretary to the Treasury, discussed Trump's efforts to slash regulations with senior representatives of the Heritage Foundation and the Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI) to discuss "regulatory reform," the documents reveal.

The Heritage Foundation has an agenda of decreasing spending on social issues, while increasing that on the military, alongside deregulation. It is widely acknowledged to be the driving force behind Trump's deregulatory agenda. Truss sought to learn whether such policies could benefit the UK.

Deregulation

Last year, Unearthed revealed that the Heritage Foundation and CEI – together with the Cato Institute, which Truss also met with during her trip – were part of a transatlantic coalition of libertarian think tanks seeking to influence a US-UK trade deal. The IEA and the Adam Smith Institute were also part of the project.

Truss is now trade secretary and responsible for negotiating a trade deal with the US, and will visit Washington DC later this month to recommence talks.

Unearthed has previously revealed that US agricultural lobbyists want Trump to make any trade deal contingent on the UK ditching EU rules governing pesticides, genetically modified crops, and accepting imports of chlorinated chicken and hormone-reared beef.

The government under Theresa May repeatedly insisted that standards would not be lowered in a trade deal with the US, but new prime minister Boris Johnson has appointed a number of pro-deregulation Conservative MPs to senior cabinet positions.

A spokesperson for the Department for International Trade told *Unearthed* that the government was committed to negotiating an "ambitious" free trade agreement with the US that supports jobs throughout the UK. "Without exception, imports into the UK will meet our stringent food safety and animal welfare standards. That's not going to change," he added.