



**Department of Justice**

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 12, 2022

**Former U.S. Department of Homeland Security Official Agrees to Pay \$10,000 to Resolve Conflict-of-Interest and False Claims Act Allegations**

Kenneth J. Buck, Ph.D., the former Executive Director of the Office of Management Integration at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has agreed to pay \$10,000 to resolve allegations that he violated conflict-of-interest rules in connection with a DHS contract following his departure from the agency in 2016. The settlement, which is based on his ability to pay, also resolves allegations that Buck violated the False Claims Act by submitting, or causing others to submit, false invoices to DHS to conceal his involvement with the contract following his departure from DHS.

Among other things, the Ethics Reform Act of 1989 imposes post-employment restrictions on certain federal officials, including a mandatory one-year “cooling off period” during which former officials are prohibited from communicating directly with their former agency on behalf of another party with the intent to influence agency action. The settlement announced today resolves allegations that Buck violated this rule by communicating directly with a now-former DHS official with the intent to influence agency action regarding a DHS contract with Intelligent Fiscal Optimal Solutions LLC (iFOS), under which Buck was engaged as a subcontractor. According to the government’s allegations, Buck informed a now-former DHS official that he planned to leave DHS and accept an engagement with iFOS, and less than one week later that other DHS official selected iFOS for a no-bid contract. The government alleged that, during his one-year cooling off period, Buck had extensive communications with the DHS official on behalf of iFOS, which Buck and the other DHS official sought to conceal. Finally, the government alleged that Buck and iFOS violated the False Claims Act by submitting false invoices to DHS in which work performed by Buck was billed under the name of another iFOS employee, despite the fact that Buck had not completed a mandatory background investigation required for all personnel who worked on the DHS contract.

“The federal government’s conflict-of-interest rules are essential to ensuring that the federal government’s operations, including the award of contracts, are conducted fairly and free of undue influence,” said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brian M. Boynton, head of the Justice Department’s Civil Division. “The department will hold accountable those who violate these important safeguards, whether they are current or former federal government employees.”

“We appreciate our partnership with the Department of Justice,” said Inspector General Dr. Joseph V. Cuffari of DHS. “This settlement sends a clear message that corruption in the ranks at DHS will not be tolerated.”

The resolution obtained in this matter was the result of a coordinated effort between the Civil Division’s Commercial Litigation Branch, Fraud Section, and the DHS Office of Inspector General’s Major Fraud and Corruption Unit. The matter was handled by Senior Trial Counsel Alicia J. Bentley of the Civil Division, with substantial investigative assistance from Special Agent Asher Shapiro of DHS-OIG.

*The claims resolved by the settlement are allegations only and there has been no determination of liability.*

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**Attachment(s):**

[Download Buck Settlement Agreement.pdf](#)

**Topic(s):**

False Claims Act

**Component(s):**

[Civil Division](#)

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