

RAND Research

Problems Assessed: Inaccurate/Biased Polling, Data Reporting, Government Fraud, Waste, Abuse, Conflicts of Interest

Documented scandals, investigations, conflicts of interest, and research-integrity controversies involving the RAND Corporation.

Source: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA4334-3.html

→ The issue to be analyzed across the fields of “polls,” “data,” and “reporting” is the falsification of “metrics.”

→ An issue to be analyzed is abuse of taxpayer spending.

→ As well, at what point does a non profit stop being a non profit and a for profit? And should this regulation change, federally, in order to protect the American people from taxpayer exploitation, hybrid forms of war, and modern taxpayer slavery?

1. Alleged suppression of an energy study — 2001–03

This is probably one of the more interesting historical controversies.

RAND researcher **Robert Hirsch** was working on a Department of Energy-funded study, *Energy Technologies for 2050*. Hirsch was fired in 2002 and subsequently alleged that RAND was trying to suppress or alter his work because its preliminary conclusions were politically inconvenient to the DOE, RAND's client.

The dispute was reported by *The Washington Post* in 2003. RAND and Hirsch agreed that he had been terminated but disputed what had happened to the research. ([The Washington Post](#))

Important distinction: this was an allegation of interference with research, **not a proven corruption finding**.

2. RAND's government/defense relationships and conflicts of interest

This is a much broader, structural criticism.

RAND operates federally funded research and development centers and has historically received a very large proportion of its revenue from the U.S. government. A 2012 *Washington Post* report said about **83% of RAND's \$257 million in 2010 revenue came from the federal government**. These arrangements are supposed to include safeguards for objectivity and freedom from organizational conflicts of interest. ([The Washington Post](#))

There have also been concerns about **people simultaneously holding positions at RAND and defense contractors**. In 1991, for example, Congress was considering restrictions after RAND board member Frank Carlucci—then a former defense secretary—also served as a director of General Dynamics, a company involved in the F-22 program RAND was analyzing. ([The Washington Post](#))

That's a legitimate **conflict-of-interest concern**, although it isn't equivalent to proof that RAND manipulated a particular study.

RAND is a very large research organization. Its FY2024 Form 990 reports approximately:

- **\$461.5 million revenue**
- **\$449.0 million expenses**
- **\$743.9 million in assets**
- **Compensation above one million for multiple executives.**
- **This organization is considered a non-profit.**
- **The question of “profit,” vs. “non-profit” is raised.**

3. AI research, Open Philanthropy and the Biden AI executive order

This is a more recent controversy.

RAND received substantial funding connected to **Open Philanthropy**, which is backed by technology billionaire Dustin Moskovitz. RAND subsequently had involvement in developing policy around artificial intelligence, including work related to the Biden administration's 2023 AI executive order.

That relationship prompted criticism from some lawmakers and journalists who questioned whether the funding created an institutional conflict of interest. In September 2024, Sen. Ted Cruz's office formally questioned RAND about its AI work, funding relationships, and involvement with the administration. ([Senate Commerce Committee](#))

Again, **this is a conflict-of-interest/independence controversy, not an established corruption conviction.**

4. Research attribution controversy involving a RAND researcher

In 2021, *Retraction Watch* reported a dispute involving **Gregory Treverton**, a former RAND researcher and former chairman of the National Intelligence Council.

A former RAND graduate student, Tyler Lippert, alleged that Treverton used substantial material Lippert had supplied for a book without adequately crediting him. The dispute eventually resulted in Treverton acknowledging the contribution. ([Retraction Watch](#))

That's better characterized as an **academic attribution/credit dispute**, rather than institutional corruption.

5. RAND employee conflict-of-interest/lobbying lawsuit

There's also a recent legal case, **Piquado v. RAND Corporation**, involving a RAND scientist who worked part-time for another nonprofit where she was registered as a lobbyist.

RAND investigated whether her outside employment violated its conflict-of-interest rules and ultimately terminated her. She sued, alleging discrimination and other wrongdoing; RAND

maintained that the termination concerned its outside-employment/conflict policies. The California appellate litigation continued into 2025. ([Midpage](#))

This is noteworthy because it illustrates RAND **enforcing its own conflict-of-interest rules**, but the case itself does not establish that RAND was corrupt.