

Will Foundation Leader Head Office of Management and Budget?

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Based on her resume, if Sylvia Mathews Burwell is appointed to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), she would be the most nonprofit- and foundation-experienced person ever to do so. The position is open as Jack Lew takes over as Treasury secretary and Burwell's name has been floated for OMB. The potential hiring of Burwell is interesting given that she has a long and creditable track record in philanthropy (full disclosure: her sister, currently the executive vice president for communications at the American Bankers Association, was a colleague of this author's at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation in the 1990s). Most recently, Mathews has been the head of the Wal-Mart Foundation.

In a 2005 report, the National Committee of Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) lambasted the philanthropic giving of the Wal-Mart Foundation as "self-interested" (full disclosure: this author was NCRP's executive director at the time). However, NCRP's current executive director, Aaron Dorfman, says that the Foundation's giving has "improved substantially since 2005...especially since the arrival of Sylvia Mathews Burwell." Specifically, Dorfman notes that it has done better in serving people with the least wealth and opportunity.

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