

Written Testimony to the House Oversight and Government Reform

Subcommittee Delivering on Government Efficiency (DOGE)

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, chair

Hearing on “Public Funds, Private Agendas: NGOs Gone Wild”

Scott Walter

President, Capital Research Center

June 4, 2025

Congresswoman Greene, Ranking Member Stansbury, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the honor of testifying. I’m president of the Capital Research Center, where we study nonprofits every day.

Americans are proud of our nonprofit sector, which has long led the world, because they love real charities that actually help people here and abroad. They don’t think of the nonprofit sector as the plaything of billionaires and politicians.

Yet all too often, *that* is the reality of our Nongovernmental Organizations, or NGOs, for two reasons. First, many NGOs—over 35,000 according to one study—receive most of their money from government, not citizens.¹ Second, many NGOs serve the Big Government political agenda that fights to centralize power in Washington for the benefit of the Left’s preferred political party.

¹ <https://blog.candid.org/post/how-many-nonprofits-rely-on-government-grants-data/>.

The Solidarity Center

From countless egregious examples, consider the Solidarity Center.² This nonprofit child of the country's largest union federation, the AFL-CIO, is chaired by the AFL-CIO's president. Solidarity Center doesn't just boost unions, which are major allies of one U.S. political party. It also champions radical agendas in support of DEI and "climate justice."³ It's suing the current administration because DOGE recommended that Solidarity's federal funding end. It's received over \$86 million from the federal government since 2008; \$61 million of that \$86 million was given under President Biden, doubtless encouraged by three Solidarity employees who went into his Labor Department.⁴ Solidarity receives 99 percent of its total revenue from American taxpayers⁵ and serves the AFL-CIO, which gave 86% of its 2024 political donations to Democrats.⁶

Other Labor Department Grantees

The Solidarity Center is by no means the only Labor Department grantee that deserves scrutiny by this Subcommittee and the Department of Government Efficiency. My Capital Research Center colleague Robert Stilson surveyed recent grants by the Department for our website [TheDogeFiles.org](https://www.thedogefiles.org) and found other grantees of obvious political value to the Biden administration's policy agenda and re-election campaign.⁷ For instance, NextGen Climate America (aka, NextGen Policy) was awarded \$6 million in 2024 for apprenticeship programs. This 501(c)(3) "charity"⁸ is part of a network of nonprofits and PACs of similar name launched

² Officially, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity.

³ See <https://www.influencewatch.org/labor-union/american-center-for-international-labor-solidarity-solidarity-center/>.

⁴ Tyler O'Neil, "Labor Department Confirms Bureaucrat on Leave Amid Woke Conflict of Interest Questions," Daily Signal, June 2, 2025; <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/06/02/union-activist-group-got-millions-grants-after-former-employee-went-work-grant-making-agency/>.

⁵ See p. 9 of <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/521984713/202443189349306369/full>.

⁶ <https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/afl-cio/recipients?id=d000000088>.

⁷ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/doge-and-the-department-of-labor/>.

⁸ <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/nextgen-policy-nextgen-california/>.

by Democratic megadonor Tom Steyer.⁹ After the 2024 election, NextGen’s executive director put out a [statement](#) declaring that the group was “incredibly disheartened” by Trump’s victory and that “clearly, this was not the outcome we hoped for.” Instead, he pledged the group would “fight for progressive policy change to address environmental, social, racial, gender, and economic inequities in California through justice-centered legislative advocacy, grassroots partnerships, and democratic civic engagement.”¹⁰

Another Labor Department grantee of political value to the last administration is UnidosUS, which in 2024 alone was awarded \$4 million and has also received multimillion-dollar grants from several other departments. Calling itself “the nation’s largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy program,” UnidosUS insists American immigration laws are rooted in racism, advocates gun control and abortion, and opposes school resource officers. Its 501(c)(4) sister organization endorsed Joe Biden in 2020 and Kamala Harris in 2024.

One more Labor Department grantee worth noting is TransLatin@ Coalition, a transgender advocacy group awarded \$750,000 in 2024 (it was also awarded \$600,000 from the Justice Department and another \$600,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services in 2023). It hopes to achieve “a radical shift in the approach to Trans Liberation” and advocates ensuring youth access to puberty blockers, the decriminalization of various offenses it calls “survival crimes,” and expansive abortion access in part because “carrying a child creates bodily changes that can cause dysphoria and prohibit trans men from ‘passing.’” It also supports abolishing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and calls the abolition of police an “ideal” outcome.¹¹ Majorities of Americans, of course, would reject their tax dollars going to support this radical agenda.

Still more Labor Department political grantees include the National Day Laborer Organizing Network,¹² which was awarded \$807,624 in grants from 2021 through 2024.¹³ The Network

⁹ <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/steyer-network/>.

¹⁰ <https://www.nextgenpolicy.org/nextgen-california-issues-statement-on-2024-general-election/>.

¹¹ See TransLatin@ Coalition, “Trans Policy Agenda 2024”; https://www.translatinacoalition.org/s/TLC_Trans_Policy_Agenda_2024.pdf.

¹² <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/national-day-laborer-organizing-network/>.

¹³ <https://www.usaspending.gov/search/?hash=f3357f3ad15903504e2c3c5ce2d20ed5>.

regularly attacks Republican politicians in vicious terms. For instance, it helped its government paymasters when Donald Trump selected J.D. Vance as his running mate by having its general counsel write a blog post calling Vance “reprehensible,” a “menace,” and a “Trump-certified white nationalist.”¹⁴ Similarly, the National Urban League was awarded a remarkable \$80.3 million worth of grants between 2021 and 2024 by the Labor Department, in addition to monies from several other departments, and so in 2023 government grants accounted for 40 percent of its total revenues.¹⁵ As my colleague Robert Stilson reports, the League is a reliable ally of the radical left-wing agenda. It has characterized our criminal justice system as plagued by “brutality,” praised President Biden’s death row commutations, described voter ID laws—which are supported by every racial group¹⁶—as “racially-targeted voter suppression tactics,” attacked objections to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies as “white supremacist,” urged new gun control legislation such as a federal assault weapons ban, and called the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* “horrifying.”¹⁷ Naturally, the League’s president was rewarded with a featured speech to the 2024 Democratic National Convention, which the League boosted over its social media even though it is a 501(c)(3) charity forbidden to intervene in elections.¹⁸

Today’s Democratic Witness

Today’s Democratic witness, Diane Yentel, provides further examples of nonprofits serving Big Government. One of her typical tweets attacked DOGE and defended the radical Vera Institute of Justice,¹⁹ which in 2023 received \$207 million—or 79 percent—of its \$263 million total revenues from government. The Vera Institute is a hard-left, George Soros-backed group whose priorities—soft-on-crime policies and the legal defense of illegal aliens—are opposed to the

¹⁴ <https://web.archive.org/web/20250216115120/https://ndlon.org/ndlon-reaction-to-vance/>.

¹⁵ <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/131840489/202402999349302015/full>.

¹⁶ 82% of Black and 83% of Hispanic voters favor photo ID laws; https://honestelections.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/July_2023_HEP-Polling_Memo.pdf.

¹⁷ Citations for all quotations are in Robert Stilson, “DOGE and the Department of Labor,” Capital Research Center, January 9, 2025; <https://capitalresearch.org/article/doge-and-the-department-of-labor/>.

¹⁸ <https://x.com/NatUrbanLeague/status/1825669578451546573>.

¹⁹ <https://x.com/dianeyentel/status/1912628724656112011>.

views of America’s democratic majority.²⁰ Its biggest vendor in its last IRS filing was Blue State Digital,²¹ which began life as President Barack Obama’s digital campaign team and is now a for-profit serving the Left’s nonprofits. But Blue State still brags that its 2012 presidential campaign for Obama “mobilized tens of millions of voters, raised an unprecedented \$690 million online, and won 332 electoral votes on Election Day.”²² This answers the question of whether the Vera Institute, or its cheerleaders, have any shame about their politicized agenda.

Ms. Yentel was hired at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the Obama administration.²³ The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* calls her a “D.C. Insider” and reports President Biden considered her for a cabinet post.²⁴ Her previous job was leading the National Low Income Housing Coalition, an NGO that advocates for ever-more federal spending by HUD²⁵ and uses identity politics to justify its agenda.²⁶

In her current job leading the National Council of Nonprofits, Ms. Yentel quickly sued the Trump administration over budget cuts.²⁷ What lawyers did she turn to? The Democracy Forward Foundation, whose board includes President Biden’s notorious chief of staff Ron Klain and is chaired by Marc Elias, the Democratic “super-lawyer” whose partisanship is unrivaled.²⁸

Ms. Yentel claimed the Republican tax bill “would hand unchecked power to the Trump admin[istration] to punish nonprofit orgs that don’t fall in line with ... its ideology by labeling them as terrorist-supporting groups.”²⁹ That is false. As an honest, left-leaning law professor explained in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, “a despot seeking to silence nonprofits would be weakened, not empowered” by the legislation.³⁰ The professor carefully spelled out the many

²⁰ <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/vera-institute-of-justice/>.

²¹ See p. 8 of <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/131941627/202411369349319281/full>.

²² <https://www.bluestate.co/case-studies/obama-for-america-2012/>.

²³ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/diane-yentel-8221466/details/experience/>.

²⁴ <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/an-outspoken-ceo-rises-to-defend-nonprofit-sector-in-turbulent-times>.

²⁵ <https://nlihc.org/federal-budget-and-spending>.

²⁶ <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/policy-priorities/fair-housing>.

²⁷ <https://x.com/dianeyentel/status/1884284681115279821>.

²⁸ <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/democracy-forward-foundation/>.

²⁹ <https://x.com/dianeyentel/status/1922047204300321206>.

³⁰ The professor was discussing the 2024 version of the provisions, as found in HR 9495. See Darryl K. Jones, “The ‘Nonprofit Killer Bill’ Seems Scary — but Current Law Is Worse,” *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, January 23,

ways the legislation provides far more ways for nonprofits to resist the loss of their tax exemptions than exist under current law, but an honest assessment of this proposal would not help activists who want to pretend they're innocent lambs at the mercy of a cruel wolf of an administration. Politically speaking, it's much more savvy to tell the public the President is being mean to your group than to tell the public, "You taxpayers need to keep handing us large amounts of your taxes."

No wonder nonprofit expert Bill Schambra warned that Yentel's partisanship at a major nonprofit membership group may erode public support for nonprofits by suggesting "nonprofits are just like the other major institutions of American society, fighting fiercely to maintain the status quo against necessary reforms."³¹

Statistics to Scare Members of Congress

It's understandable, though not admirable, that status-quo nonprofit leaders are scared at the prospect of DOGE examining their government funding. Many leaders will use an Urban Institute study designed to scare Members of Congress with statistics like, "Government grants support nonprofits in every ... congressional district."³² No one explains why it's wonderful that so many nonprofits are addicted to government cash. The same study stresses how larger nonprofits are especially dependent on tax dollars. But while big nonprofits are often *less* effective at helping people compared to smaller neighborhood groups, they certainly *are* more powerful at lobbying government in the service of Big Government, Big Philanthropy, and their preferred political party.

2025; <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/the-nonprofit-killer-bill-seems-scary-but-current-law-is-worse?sra=true>.

³¹ Eden Stiffman, "An Outspoken CEO Rises to Defend Nonprofit Sector in Turbulent Times," *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, April 29, 2025; <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/an-outspoken-ceo-rises-to-defend-nonprofit-sector-in-turbulent-times>.

³² <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/government-funding-cuts-put-nonprofits-risk-across-nation>.

They are also good at suing government. My Capital Research Center colleagues found 15 government-funded nonprofits suing the Trump administration in just its first month. These groups had enjoyed at least 1.6 billion tax dollars from their political allies in the Biden Administration.

Funding Environmentalist Political Allies

Another witness today will dive deep into the morass of federal funding of politically active environmentalist groups, but I want to note an especially egregious example of an NGO benefiting from significant federal funds and pursuing a radical agenda: the Environmental Law Institute. The Institute has received awards from the Environmental Protection Agency and from the Department of Homeland Security.³³ It operates the controversial Climate Judiciary Project,³⁴ which seeks to “educate”—from a left-wing perspective—federal and state judges about climate change and related litigation designed to extract billions of dollars from oil and gas companies for alleged climate harms. These trainings attempt to influence the very judges who are hearing these cases, using a curriculum developed in part by individuals assisting with that litigation.³⁵

The last administration’s largest effort to subsidize its environmentalist allies came via the Inflation Reduction Act, whose centerpiece was the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The current administration is struggling to retrieve at least some of these monies, led by EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin,³⁶ and I await a forthcoming study of the Fund by my friends at the Foundation for Government Accountability, whose president, Peter Schweizer, declares, “The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund is the most corrupt slush fund in U.S. history.”

³³ <https://www.usaspending.gov/recipient/3413a724-2716-df59-d50e-32a1ab90cdd8-R/latest>.

³⁴ <https://cjp.eli.org/>; see also <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/judge-presiding-over-big-oil-climate-change-lawsuit-reveals-connection-plaintiffs-eco-lawyers>.

³⁵ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/climate-justice-group-deep-ties-judges-experts-involved-litigation-claims-impartiality>.

³⁶ <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/administrator-zeldin-terminates-biden-harris-20b-gold-bar-grants>.

Funding Immigration Activists

Still another of today's witnesses will focus on NGOs in the field of immigration that were the last administration's political allies and received extensive federal funds, but I want to commend recent testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability by my friend Mike Howell, executive director of the Oversight Project. Howell argues that what he calls the border invasion "could not have been accomplished without a colossal 'partnership' between the government and NGOs." The Biden administration drove "an estimated \$6 billion to a conglomerate of 15 UN agencies and 230 NGOs, as recently calculated by the Center for Immigration Studies." The Oversight Project in turn "purchased the ad tech cell phone data of approximately 30,000 devices found at border NGO facilities" and tracked those devices' movements during January 2022. The Project "found these devices traveled to 431 different congressional districts," proving that "every town is a border town." Howell urges Congress to audit "the over \$6 billion spent by our government to promote a border crisis" and to investigate as well the "continuing trend of NGOs working against the national interest to assist illegals in evading ICE."³⁷

Subsidizing the Ideological Capture of Professional Societies

Our friends at Open the Books have drawn attention to another series of federal grants driving a left-wing agenda: the subsidies delivered to professional societies. These groups "set the atmosphere and guidelines for practitioners in their fields, and they can have hundreds of thousands of members," which means that if they are ideologically captured, "the impact will be felt across society."³⁸

³⁷ <https://homeland.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025-03-11-HRG-OIA-Testimony-Howell37.pdf>.

³⁸ <https://openthebooks.substack.com/p/ideological-capture-at-professional>.

Examples that Open the Books gives include the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE), which represents over 200,000 physical education teachers and has received over \$2.5 million since 2020. It currently pushes sex education standards that many of the Americans supplying it with tax dollars would strenuously reject. Similarly, the North American Association for Environmental Education has received \$16 million from four different federal agencies since 2020. It urges teachers to use resources from the highly dishonest Southern Poverty Law Center, which guarantees children will learn ideology, not science, in environmental classes.

Another federal grantee promoting Southern Poverty Law Center propaganda is the National Council for History Education, which has received several million federal tax dollars from the Education Department, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Library of Congress, including a Library grant in April of this year.

Open the Books warns that all the professional societies profiled in its report “have ongoing grants that have not been cut by DOGE.”

The Long and Winding Funding Road

The problem of federal tax dollars propping up the Left’s radical agenda is so complex and sprawling that no one can even map it all out. A perfect example appears this past week in a *Daily Caller* news story, which used a public records request to unveil a classic funding stream. First the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) gave an HIV grant to the Philadelphia School District. The District then paid the NGO Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania nearly \$40,000 “to provide up to 70 trainings which decry biological sex as a ‘myth,’ support medical child sex-changes and normalize men in women’s sports.”³⁹ Those positions are at odds with large majorities of American taxpayers, but their tax dollars still

³⁹ <https://dailycaller.com/2025/05/30/exclusive-planned-parenthood-tax-dollars-train-educators-biological-sex-myth/>.

wound their way to a politicized NGO that works hard to keep its government paymasters in their jobs and able to keep the tax dollars coming.

The Long History of Politicized Pseudo-charity

All this politicized pseudo-charity, aimed at boosting government and seizing political power, goes back decades. In 2011, for instance, President Obama's political appointees at the Department of Health and Human Services outraged career staff by yanking grant dollars away from Catholic charities, which had provided valuable aid to victims of human trafficking, and giving the money to political allies at Planned Parenthood, who had never assisted such victims. The infuriated staffers leaked this to the *Washington Post* and took their case to the department's Inspector General.⁴⁰ No one even pretended the victims would be better served by the new grantee.

When these ugly stories of tax dollars, cronyism, and political scheming come under attack, the classic corrupt NGO response is to camouflage their misdeeds by invoking moving stories of the real heroes of America's charitable sector. Object to Planned Parenthood pushing boys into girls sports and you'll be told how you're imperiling food for orphans. Express doubt that tax dollars should go to radical nonprofits pushing abortion and gun control and you'll be called an opponent of lifesaving medical care.

No reasonable person should fall for these sob stories. Business-as-usual with federal tax dollars sent unaccountably to big nonprofits disserves both government and the nonprofit sector. The deficit-plagued federal government needs to waste a lot less of our money, and a nonprofit sector addicted to government funding needs to leave the political trenches and learn to refocus on real acts of charity.

⁴⁰ https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/health-abortion-issues-split-obama-administration-catholic-groups/2011/10/27/gIQAXV5xZM_story.html.