

Has the U.S. Government Funded George Soros' Activities?

Judicial Watch has documented in the past the U.S. Agency for International Development's funding of political activities by George Soros' Open Society Foundation in an effort to unseat the democratically elected government of Macedonia.

Now, it wants more transparency from the Department of State, which oversees USAID.

In a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the government watchdog group is seeking records and communications relating to the nearly \$5 million in funding Open Society Foundation-Macedonia received from USAID from 2012 to 2016.

Specifically, Judicial Watch is seeking:

- All records related to any grants, contracts or disbursements of funds by the Department of State to the Open Society Foundation – Macedonia and/or any of the foundation's subsidiaries. This request includes all related requests for funding, payment authorizations or similar records, as well as all related records of communication between any official, employee or representative of the Department of State and any official, employee, or representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).
- Any records of communication between any official, employee or representative of the Department of State and any officer, employee or representative of the Open Society Foundation -Macedonia and/or any of the foundation's affiliated organizations. This request includes responsive records of communication sent from

or directed to U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia Jess L. Baily.

- All analyses or similar records regarding the political activities of the Open Society Foundation – Macedonia and/or any of the foundation's affiliated organizations.
- All messages transmitted via the State Department's SMART system sent from any U.S. Government employee or contractor operating under the Chief of Mission's authority at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje that pertain to the Open Society Foundation – Macedonia and/or any of the foundation's affiliated organizations.

Judicial Watch has previously noted that the USAID website reports that between Feb. 27, 2012, and Aug. 31, 2016, the taxpayer-funded agency gave \$4,819,125 Open Society Foundation–Macedonia, in partnership with four local civil society organizations. It states the project trained hundreds of young Macedonians “on topics such as freedom of association, youth policies, citizen initiatives, persuasive argumentation and use of new media.”

This became the subject of a congressional inquiry in January when Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) demanded that Baily explain the State Department's relationship with Open Society Foundations. One month later, a group of congressmen led by Reps. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) and Louie Gohmert (R-Texas) requested the Government Accountability Office conduct an investigation and audit of the Department of State and USAID's activities in Macedonia, including funding of Open Society Foundation entities and potential interference in domestic Macedonian political affairs in potential violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

“The Obama administration seemed to bust taxpayer budgets in an effort to fund the Soros operation,” Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton said in announcing the lawsuit. “The Trump State Department and USAID should get their act together and disclose the details of the Obama-Soros spigot.” {eo}