

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

BUILT FOR THIS MOMENT

MID-YEAR IMPACT REPORT | 2025



In the first half of 2025, as attacks on transparency and democracy mounted, American Oversight went on offense — filing emergency lawsuits and driving hard-hitting investigations. When government officials tried to bury the truth behind encrypted apps, secret deals, and outright obstruction, we forced it into the open — **because the public deserves answers, democracy demands guardrails, and American Oversight is built for this moment.**

Swift Action, Concrete Results

Using Scandal in Real Time: Signalgate

Within 24 hours of *The Atlantic's* explosive report that senior Trump officials used Signal's auto deleting messages for sensitive and classified government business, American Oversight was the first organization to take action, filing an emergency lawsuit to prevent further destruction of records. We successfully secured a court order preserving critical communications. Within months, our sustained pressure:

- ▶ **Stopped evidence destruction:** Early preservation order prevented further deletion of government records
- ▶ **Forced admissions:** The Central Intelligence Agency acknowledged federal records had been deleted from Director John Ratcliffe's device
- ▶ **Triggered oversight:** Pentagon inspector general launched formal investigation into Defense Secretary Hegseth's Signal use
- ▶ **Prompted policy change:** The White House was forced to implement a new record-keeping policy for Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), while the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency added to its 'Known Exploited Vulnerabilities' list the very app we had warned was unsafe



Unmasking DOGE's Secrecy

American Oversight broke new ground by filing the first FOIA lawsuit against DOGE, confronting its sweeping assault on federal agencies while operating in complete secrecy. The court sided with us, ordering DOGE to preserve all records and rejecting arguments that the agency's last-minute efforts to preserve documents related to our litigation fulfilled its legal obligations. If records are not preserved, DOGE officials could dismantle programs affecting millions of lives without consequence. This interim victory helps ensure accountability remains possible.



American Oversight has been frequently featured, cited, and interviewed in the press in 2025, underscoring both the breadth of our work and the recognition of our expertise.

The New York Times

MSNBC

AP

INDEPENDENT

THE HILL

USA TODAY

npr

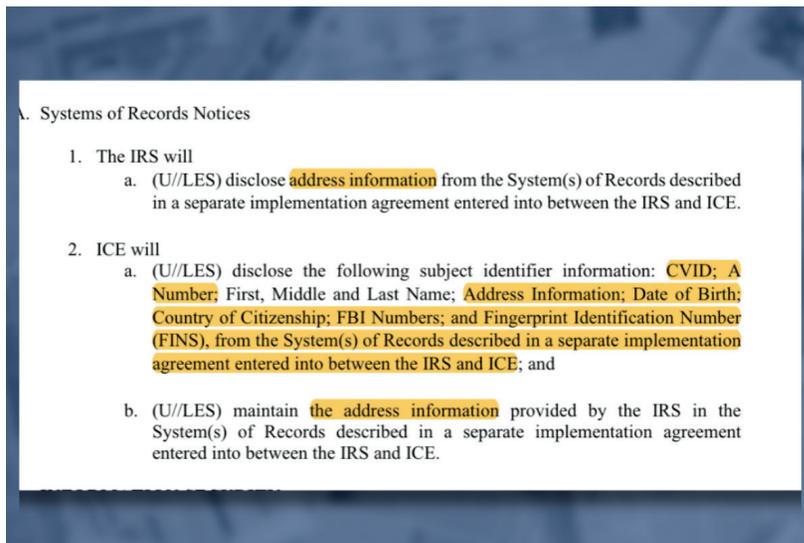
THE TEXAN*

Exposing Hidden Data Sharing That Threatens Millions

When the Trump administration tried to keep a secretive IRS-ICE agreement under seal, American Oversight intervened and won — forcing the near-complete public release of a memorandum that grants ICE sweeping access to sensitive taxpayer information with no independent oversight or accountability measures. Without disclosure, Americans would never have known that ICE has unprecedented access to their personal financial data with few safeguards — making it harder to challenge this overreach.

Unraveling the Mass Deportation Machine

In partnership with leading civil rights groups, American Oversight launched a nationwide investigation into federal-local law enforcement partnerships, uncovering how 287(g) agreements are supercharging mass deportations. Our findings reveal how the 287(g) program has been weaponized to bypass accountability by expanding direct coordination between local prosecutors and ICE, advancing the interests of the private prison lobby, and perpetuating troubling gaps in training standards — all in service of meeting partisan goals.





Scale & Impact

Leading the First National FOIA Coalition

Recognizing that the Trump administration was likely to launch unprecedented attacks on the federal transparency infrastructure, American Oversight saw that this moment called for a collective response from civil society. In turn, we launched the first national FOIA coalition, uniting more than 160 FOIA litigators, watchdogs, and advocates to coordinate in real time and challenge systematic patterns of obstruction that threatened accountability for years to come.

Confronting Attacks on Voting Rights

As election deniers embed themselves in federal agencies, American Oversight is tracking their efforts to weaponize citizenship verification systems and reshape election policy. Our investigations span multiple states and federal agencies, to expose coordination between officials and far-right groups pushing restrictive voting laws based on debunked fraud claims.

Scale and Strategic Impact

Our work addresses a broad range of threats to democracy. Below are highlights from January–June 2025.

- **12 new lawsuits filed**, including 9 motions for urgent relief that produced immediate results
- **1,645 records requests** across the federal government and 30+ states
- **Partnerships in 46 states** and participation in 25+ coalitions
- **600+ advocates trained** in transparency tools during our Sunshine Week programs

We are already advancing this work and growing these numbers as we move toward the close of 2025.

Preparing for 2026 and Beyond

The 2026 midterms will be among the most consequential elections in modern history. Coordinated efforts to undermine democratic processes are already underway. As a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) watchdog, American Oversight is expanding capacity and reach, deepening collaboration with partners, and fortifying our ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats.

We are not just exposing corruption — we are anticipating threats, disrupting obstruction, and empowering allies with evidence to confront abuses of power head-on. From federal courtrooms to state records battles, we are scaling our approach to meet unprecedented challenges with an unwavering commitment to transparency and accountability.

As government efforts to conceal misconduct grow more sophisticated, American Oversight will continue to adapt — forcing the truth into the light, holding the line against unchecked power, and ensuring the pro-democracy movement has the tools it needs to defend democratic institutions in 2026 and beyond.



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*American Oversight is
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.*