

## The International Program – Ukraine



July 18, 2006

**Guests:** Ukrainian Delegation—Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs in the Ministry of the Interior, Security Service, and Office of the Prosecutor General

The visiting Ukrainian officials were participating in the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program entitled "Organized Crime and Corruption: Effective Investigation and Prosecution." The program was arranged by the Academy for Educational Development.

The study tour commenced in Washington, D.C., with meetings scheduled in New York, Rhode Island, Arizona, and Michigan. Each location was selected to provide a unique opportunity in which to examine strategies on a range of security issues to include: the coordination of federal, state, and local agencies' efforts in the investigation and prosecution of organized crime; international cooperation in combating transnational crime and money laundering; southern border security and immigration; the prevention of public corruption, human trafficking and smuggling; and the examination of the media's role in exposing corruption.

Judicial Watch president, Tom Fitton, was asked to meet with the Ukrainian officials "to provide a valuable contrast for the visitors to learn how private, 'watchdog' groups implement media strategies and lobbying efforts to hold government and law enforcement agencies accountable" and to discuss JW's involvement in the current immigration debate.

Mr. Fitton began his presentation by stating that Judicial Watch believes sunshine to be the greatest disinfectant in the investigation and prosecution of government

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corruption. And towards that end, JW has honed and perfected one of its most effective weapons in keeping the sun shining over the federal bureaucracy: the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Since its inception in 1994, JW has uncovered, prosecuted, and exposed numerous instances of corruption in the federal government and the judiciary through use of the FOIA and other state sunshine laws.

It was through open records laws that Judicial Watch uncovered information detailing failed national, state, and local immigration policies—an issue that has taken on international significance since 9/11. In response to the concerns of JW's supporters, open records requests were sent to and proceedings subsequently initiated against the [Town of Herndon](#) and the [Los Angeles Police Department](#) for using taxpayer funding to implement policies that are in direct violation of federal immigration laws.

Mr. Fitton informed the guests that JW is a conservative organization, but fiercely non-partisan. Its mission is to educate and promote a return to ethics and morality in government, politics, and the law. Without accountability and openness in government, both liberals and conservatives alike have succumbed to the corrupting influences of big government.

Mr. Fitton then discussed the role of the media in exposing instances of corruption and abuse of the public trust. The American [public is educated](#) by way of newspaper articles, TV and radio interviews, newsletters, and public forums. The materials acquired by JW through research and investigation are also made available to the public on JW's Internet site. Negative exposure has proven to be a very effective weapon in holding government officials accountable and—it is hoped—in deterring future misconduct.

He emphasized Judicial Watch's unique role and how it has set itself apart from other similarly situated organizations which expose corruption in that it *pursues* offenders through [litigation](#) and holds them accountable in a court of law—often through years of relentless pursuit and bureaucratic hurdles. It is as a result of JW's tenacity to stay the course that it was named one of Washington, DC's most effective government watchdog organizations by *The Hill* newspaper.

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Mr. Fitton visited the Ukraine in 1990 and was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with the distinguished Ukrainian officials.