

## The International Program – Israel



At the invitation of Meridian International Center, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), a meeting between a representative of the Judicial Watch and a five-person delegation of NGO and community youth leaders in Israel went forward on June 21, 2012.

The delegates represented immigrants from communities as diverse as Ethiopian, Russian, and Uzbekistan, as well as one of the largest Bedouin communities in Israel. Among them, six languages were spoken, with the common interpreted language being Hebrew. They all were delegates in and represented the interests of youth and young adults in these various communities.

As part of the IVLP's objectives for the three-week study tour arranged by Meridian International, a representative of Judicial Watch was requested to meet with the Israeli delegation and discuss its "efforts to ensure government accountability in the area of immigration policy."

Judicial Watch's president, Tom Fitton, met with the Israeli delegation and provided a general overview of the organization's structure, mission, and philosophy of Judicial Watch. Emphasizing Judicial Watch's independence from government—both financially and politically—he stated that Judicial Watch adheres to conservative principles, such as the belief in individual freedom, economic liberty (less regulation), a strong national defense, and its embrace of traditional cultural values (pro-life). Importantly, he added, the mission of Judicial Watch is non-ideological. He said it is Judicial Watch's mission to find, expose, and stop government and public corruption. And, he stated, corruption is non-partisan. To illustrate, he briefly discussed investigations Judicial Watch has pursued over seventeen years, since its founding in 1994, involving each successive presidential administration—Democratic and Republican.

He told the visiting delegates that beginning in 1994, Judicial Watch learned through records obtained from the Commerce Department under the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

## The International Program—Israel

that the Clinton Administration was providing special access on Commerce Department trade missions to U.S. business interests in exchange for campaign donations to the Democratic Party in violation of federal campaign finance laws. Then in 2000, with a Republican administration in office, the Judicial Watch launched a FOIA investigation of alleged closed door meetings being held by the vice president (Cheney Energy Task Force) with exclusive outside groups (oil interests) in the development of energy policy in violation of the federal open meetings law. And Judicial Watch is now fully engaged with a Democratic administration in a number of FOIA investigations and over 80 lawsuits to enforce compliance by the Obama administration for the release of documents concerning violations of federal and state laws relating to [illegal immigration](#), [health care](#), and [election integrity](#).

The problem according to Mr. Fitton is “big government” and the inherent temptations that come with it. As illustrated, both Democratic and Republican presidents and their administrations have to one degree or another abused the power and privileges of their high office in an attempt to shape policy outcomes, grant special favors—and even to satisfy personal [base proclivities](#)—in violation of ethics and morality and the rule of law.

Mr. Fitton then spoke at length about Judicial Watch’s Election Integrity Project and how it is intrinsically linked with its other investigations into the Obama Justice Department’s refusal to enforce federal immigration laws. Simply put, Judicial Watch is seeking to make sure that states’ voter registration rolls are clean so that citizens can be assured that their vote counts. He told the delegates that when a presidential election can be decided by 537 votes, as happened in Florida in 2000—and with states that currently have more people on their [voter rolls](#) than are eligible to vote—it would be easy to fraudulently swing the next election. The Obama administration has, in fact, worked to increase the registration of [persons on public assistance](#) and even filed a lawsuit to stop Florida county from removing [illegal immigrants](#) from its voter rolls (both considered key Democratic votes). Even more telling, the Justice Department has chosen to selectively enforce one provision of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), while willfully ignoring its legal counterpart to clean rolls of voters who have died, moved, or are no longer eligible to vote.

Following the presentation, the Israeli delegates engaged Mr. Fitton in an informal Q&A session. The questions ranged from organizational to personal including Judicial Watch’s non-profit status, its means of support, staffing and offices, to how cases are selected, potential government retaliation—and which administration he considers to have been the most corrupt. And, most keenly, how does Judicial Watch maintain its independence from political considerations? As one

## The International Program—Israel

Isrgeli deleg te commented, in Isrgel the politicgl debgte hgs gone into the third sector (non-profitg organizations). So just how does Judicigl Wgtch remgin nonpgrtisan? And, is such gn organizgtion g reglly nesssrgy in aggovernment where there is agepgrgion of powers agd other megns of g oversight? g

Mr. Fitton g reed thgt there gre non-profit org nizgtions in the U.S. thgt clgim to be independent, g but age not. He sgid they only pursue the pgrty thgt is their ideologicgl opponent. Judicigl Wgtch g tgkes on both politicgl pgrties. The rule of lgw is the stgndgrd, not politics. And, althugh egch g brgnch of government hgs instituted rules agd regulgtions agd oversight mechgnisms, they remgin g highly politicized. As aggse in point, he told them thgt the chief lgw enforcement officer of our g ngtion, Attorney Genergl Eric Holder (gn Obgmg politicgl appointee), wgs recently found in g contempt of Congress for refusgl to turn over records subpoenaed by agHouse oversight committee g in its investig tion of one of the big est scgndgls of Obgmg's presidency: [Fgst gnd Furious](#)—ag Justice Depgrtment policy decision to allow guns to "wglk" (end up in the hgnds of Mexicgn drug g cgrtels). The scgndgl cgme to light when one of the guns turned up agcrime scene—the murder g of U.S. Border Pgtrol agent Brign Terry. After the contempt finding ag inst Attorney Genergl g Holder, President Obgmg agserted executive privilege, further denying the oversight committee g ccess to the documents needed to complete their investig tion. g

Mr. Fitton stated in closing thgt JudiciagWgtch, in contrgst, is free from government influence; is g financed in most part by the smgll donatjns of thousgnds of supporters natjnwide (gnd no one g donor hgs significnt influence); its "power is the result of the opergion of the law"—gnd its target g hgs abvgys been gnd will continue to be corruption in government. g

As set forth in its Mission Statgtement, "through its educgtiongl endegvors, JudiciagWgtch gdvocgtes g high stgndgrds of ethics agd morglity in the ngtion's public life agd seeks to ensure thgt politicgl g nd judicigl officgls do not abuse the powers entrusted to them by the Americgn people. Judicigl g Wgtch fulfills its educgtiongl mission through litig tion, investig tions, gnd public outregch." The g Interngtiongl Progrgm is gn integrgl part of its educationgl progrgm. g