

Opening Statement
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Hearing of the House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform Subcommittee On Government
Operations

“Oversight of Nonprofit Organizations: A Case Study on the
Clinton Foundation”

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2154 Rayburn House Office Building

Good afternoon, I am Tom Fitton, president of Judicial Watch. Judicial Watch is a conservative, non-partisan educational foundation dedicated to promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in government, politics and the law. We are the nation's largest and most effective government watchdog group.

Judicial Watch is, without a doubt, the most active Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requestor and litigator operating today. Thank you, Chairman Meadows and Congressman Connolly for allowing me to testify on this important topic.

It is no secret Judicial Watch has had longstanding concerns with the Clintons' ethics and respect for the rule of law. So, it was with some skepticism that we greeted Hillary Clinton's promises ten years ago to avoid conflicts of interest with her Foundation and her husband's business activities as Secretary of State.

At the time, even [CNN](#) reported that Bill Clinton's "complicated global business interests could present future conflicts of interest that result in unneeded headaches for the incoming commander-in-chief."

To reassure President Obama and Senators of both parties that she would be above reproach, Mrs. Clinton sent a January 5, 2009, [letter](#) to State Department Designated Agency Ethics Official James H. Thessin, stating:

For the duration of my appointment as Secretary if I am confirmed, I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter involving specific parties in which The William J. Clinton Foundation (or the Clinton Global Initiative) is a party or represents a party....

Additionally, the Clintons promised that President Clinton's speeches and business activities would undergo a State Department ethics review and that the Clinton Foundation would disclose its donors online and agree to significant restrictions on support from foreign governments.

Judicial Watch had zero confidence in these promises, so we began immediately monitoring the ethics process for the Clintons and submitted a Freedom of Information Act request in 2011.

The Clinton State Department leadership ignored our FOIA request and we sued after waiting for two years in 2013. The lawsuit produced documents showing the State Department

rubber-stamped President Clinton's and the Clinton Foundation's ethics review requests.

Judicial Watch detailed its findings [in a report](#) with the Washington Examiner in 2014:

A joint investigation by the *Washington Examiner* and the nonprofit watchdog group [Judicial Watch](#) found that former [President Clinton](#) gave 215 speeches and earned \$48 million while his wife presided over U.S. foreign policy, raising questions about whether the Clintons fulfilled ethics agreements related to the Clinton Foundation during [Hillary Clinton](#)'s tenure as secretary of state.

According to documents obtained by Judicial Watch and released Wednesday in an ongoing Freedom of Information Act case, State Department officials charged with reviewing Bill Clinton's proposed speeches did not object to a single one.

Some of the speeches were delivered in global hotspots and were paid for by entities with business or policy interests in the U.S.

The documents also show that in June 2011, the [State Department approved a consulting agreement](#) between Bill Clinton and a controversial Clinton Foundation adviser, Doug Band.

The consultancy with Band's Teneo Strategy ended eight months later following an uproar over Teneo's ties to the failed investment firm MF Global.

State Department legal advisers, serving as “designated agency ethics officials,” approved Bill Clinton’s speeches in China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Panama, Turkey, Taiwan, India, the Cayman Islands and other countries.

The memos approving Mr. Clinton’s speeches were routinely copied to Cheryl Mills, Hillary Clinton’s senior counsel and chief of staff.

Mills is a longtime Clinton troubleshooter who defended the president during his impeachment. In the Benghazi affair, Mills reportedly berated a high-ranking official at the U.S. embassy in Libya for talking to a Republican congressman.

Under State Department protocols, a “designated agency ethics official” is assigned to advise the secretary of state about “potential or actual conflicts of interest.”

In a [December 2008 memorandum of understanding](#), the protocols were expanded to Bill Clinton, the Clinton Foundation and related initiatives — specifically, to reviewing Bill Clinton’s proposed speeches and consulting deals.

In an [accompanying letter to the State Department legal adviser](#), Clinton lawyer David Kendall noted that Bill Clinton would disclose proposed consulting deals and, for speeches, provide “the identities of the host(s) (the entity that pay the speaker’s fee)” so that the State Department “in consultation with the White House as appropriate,

may conduct a review for any real or apparent conflicts of interest with the duties of the Secretary of State.”

But an inspection by the Examiner and Judicial Watch of donations to the Clinton Foundation, Hillary Clinton’s personal financial disclosure forms, and the State Department conflict-of-interest reviews show that at least \$48 million flowed to the Clintons’ personal coffers from many entities that clearly had interests in influencing the Obama administration — and perhaps currying favor with a future president as well.

Saudi Arabia, for example, was a key Clinton benefactor. The oil-producing giant has had a relationship with the Clintons dating back to Bill Clinton’s time as governor of Arkansas.

In 1992, while running for president, then-Gov. Clinton secured a \$3.5 million Saudi donation for a Middle East studies program at the University of Arkansas. A few weeks after Clinton was inaugurated president, the Saudis kicked in another \$20 million. Both deals were brokered by a close Clinton friend, David Edwards.

Overall, the Clinton Foundation has received staggering sums from Saudi benefactors — between \$18 million and \$50 million. (The foundation’s donations are reported in ranges, not specific numbers.)

While Hillary Clinton served as secretary of state, Bill Clinton gave two speeches in Saudi Arabia, earning a total of \$600,000.

In January 2011, for example, Bill Clinton [spoke at a global business forum in Riyadh](#) founded by the Saudi Investment Authority and sponsored by the Dabbagh Group, a commercial colossus with close ties to the Saudi royal family.

His fee for the speech: \$300,000.

During Hillary Clinton's time at the State Department, Bill Clinton also gave four speeches in the United Arab Emirates, earning \$1.1 million. For two speeches in Egypt, he earned \$425,000.

UAE-linked entities also have donated at least \$2.7 to \$11.5 million to the Clinton Foundation, and Egyptian entities have donated at least \$250,000 to \$750,000.

While the State Department did not object to Bill Clinton's speeches in the Arab world — or anywhere else — it did turn down a proposed consultancy with a longtime Clinton friend and supporter, the Israeli-American media mogul Haim Saban.

In turning down the consultancy, a [February 2009 State Department memo](#) noted that Saban “is actively involved in foreign affairs issues, particularly with regards to the Middle East, which is a priority area for the secretary.”

The consultancy with Teneo and Band, the longtime Clinton adviser, was outlined in a [June 2011 memo from Band](#) himself, writing “on behalf of President Clinton,” to a State Department legal adviser. Bill Clinton would

advise Teneo on “geopolitical, economic and social trends.”

Band requested a response within 10 business days. He got it in seven. “Please be advised that we have no objection,” the State Department wrote.

Bill Clinton also was active in China, as was Hillary Clinton, who championed the notion of a “pivot” toward Asia during her time as secretary of state.

In the period after Hillary Clinton signed the ethics agreement, Bill Clinton gave four speeches in China or to Chinese-sponsored entities in the U.S., earning \$1.7 million.

By comparison, between 2001 through 2007 — just after he left office, when a former president is normally most in demand — he gave seven speeches in China, earning \$1.4 million.

Groups with interests in China also donated between \$750,000 and \$1.75 million, at a minimum, to the Clinton Foundation.

Taiwan took an interest in Bill Clinton as well. In November 2010, he spoke on global warming and social inequality at a Taipei event sponsored by Singapore-based UNI Strategic. His fee? \$400,000.

The Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office donated close to \$1 million to the Clinton Foundation, and the Taiwan

Mobile Foundation and a semiconductor manufacturer also contributed.

Turkish sponsors paid Bill Clinton \$1 million for three speeches, including one to an Arab stock exchange.

In Russia, Bill Clinton gave two speeches for \$625,000. One was to the Russian investment bank, Renaissance Capital, at a 2010 event titled “Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Going Global.”

The [State Department background memo](#) described the bank as “focused on the emerging markets of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Sub-Saharan Africa.”

The Russian Standard Bank also donated to the foundation.

In India, Bill Clinton collected \$300,000 for two speeches. He also gave speeches to Indian companies and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce in Toronto, New Jersey and Disney World.

At one, a “conference on business process outsourcing/off-shoring,” hosted by an outsourcing firm, the discussion centered around “the benefits and disadvantages of outsourcing IT,” according to a State Department document.

In Panama, Bill Clinton earned \$325,000 for one speech. And in the Cayman Islands — a notorious offshore money haven — \$225,000 for a speech, [noted a State](#)

[Department document](#), “at a ticketed event that will target the business community in Grand Cayman.”

And then Judicial Watch FOIA litigation, in particular a key JW FOIA lawsuit about the Benghazi terrorist attack, uncovered the Clinton email system and tens of thousands of Clinton and top aide Huma Abedin emails that were hidden rather than searched as required under FOIA, congressional subpoenas, and federal investigators.

As a federal court noted last week in an [opinion](#) granting Judicial Watch additional discovery, this Clinton email issue was “one of the gravest modern offenses to government transparency.”

After its lawsuits forced the disclosure of the Clinton email server, another Judicial Watch lawsuit broke open what is now known as the Clinton Foundation “pay to play scandal.”

Emails uncovered by Judicial Watch demonstrate that Clinton Foundation donors and supporters received special favors and consideration from the Clinton State Department.

These headline-making disclosures began in August 2016 and include documents showing that in April 2009 controversial Clinton Foundation official [Doug Band](#) pushed for a job for an associate. In the email Band tells Hillary Clinton’s former aides at the State Department, Cheryl Mills and Huma Abedin, that it is “important to take care of [Redacted]. Band is reassured by Abedin that “Personnel has been sending him options.” Band was co-founder of [Teneo Strategy](#) with Bill Clinton and a top official of the Clinton Foundation, including its Clinton Global Initiative.

Included in that document production was a 2009 email in which Band directs Abedin and Mills to put Lebanese-Nigerian billionaire and Clinton Foundation donor [Gilbert Chagoury](#) in touch with the State Department's "substance person" on Lebanon. Band notes that Chagoury is "key guy there [Lebanon] and to us," and insists that Abedin call Amb. Jeffrey Feltman to connect him to Chagoury.

[Chagoury](#) is a close friend of former President Bill Clinton and a top donor to the Clinton Foundation. He has appeared near the top of the Foundation's donor list as a \$1 million to \$5 million contributor, according to foundation [documents](#). He also [pledged](#) \$1 billion to the [Clinton Global Initiative](#). According to a 2010 [investigation](#) by PBS *Frontline*, Chagoury [was convicted](#) in 2000 in Switzerland for laundering money from Nigeria, but agreed to a plea deal and repaid \$66 million to the Nigerian government.

You can see that the Clinton Foundation and the Clinton State Department almost immediately broke promises to President Obama and the Senate to maintain a wall of separation between the Foundation and State.

Judicial Watch has since uncovered many other [instances](#) of seeming [pay-to-play](#) and [favoritism](#) for the [Clinton Foundation](#) at the Clinton State Department.

- Steve Bing/Shangri-La Entertainment: On July 16, 2009 Shangri-La Entertainment executive Zachary Schwartz asked Clinton Foundation official Doug Band for help reversing the State Department's denial

of a travel visa to Cuba. Band sent the request to Huma Abedin, writing, “please call [Schwartz] asap on this ... Important.” Abedin responded that she would call him. Media reports indicate that two weeks later, Shangri-La owner Steve Bing’s team was in Cuba. Bing is a longtime Clinton friend and donor and is listed as having donated between \$10 and \$25 million to the foundation. His construction company, Shangri-La Industries, paid Bill Clinton \$2.5 million from 2009 to 2010 to serve as an advisor.¹

- Crown Prince Salman of Bahrain: A Judicial Watch-obtained Huma Abedin-Doug Band email exchange from 2009 revealed that Crown Prince Salman of Bahrain requested a meeting with Secretary of State Clinton, but was forced to go through the Clinton Foundation for an appointment. Abedin advised Band that when she went through “normal channels” at State, Clinton declined to meet. After Band intervened, however, the meeting was set up within forty-eight hours. According to the Clinton Foundation website, in 2005, Salman committed to establishing the Crown Prince’s International Scholarship Program (CPISP) for the Clinton Global Initiative. And by 2010, it had spent \$32 million in conjunction with CGI. The Kingdom of Bahrain reportedly gave between \$50,000 and \$100,000 to the Clinton Foundation. And Bahrain

¹ Judicial Watch press release, 9/14/17, available at: <https://www.judicialwatch.org/press-room/press-releases/judicial-watch-new-clinton-emails-uncovered-reveal-additional-mishandling-classified-information/>

Petroleum also gave an additional \$25,000 to \$50,000."²

- **Wolverhampton Football Club:** In another Judicial Watch-obtained Abedin-Band email exchange from May 2009, Band urged Abedin to get the Clinton State Department to intervene in order to obtain a visa for members of the Wolverhampton (UK) Football Club, one of whose members was apparently having difficulty because of a “criminal charge.” Band was acting at the behest of Casey Wasserman, a millionaire Hollywood sports entertainment executive and President of the Wasserman Foundation. Wasserman had donated between \$5 million and \$10 million to the Clinton Foundation through the Wasserman Foundation.³
- **Slimfast Founder Danny Abraham:** Another JW-obtained May 2009 Abedin-Band email reveals that Slimfast tycoon S. Daniel Abraham was granted almost immediate access to then-Secretary of State Clinton, with Abedin serving as the facilitator. According to the Clinton Foundation website, Abraham, like the Wasserman Foundation, has given between \$5 million and \$10 million to the Clinton Foundation. The emails indicate that Abraham was granted almost immediate access to Clinton upon request.⁴

² Judicial Watch press release, 8/22/16, <https://www.judicialwatch.org/press-room/press-releases/new-abedin-emails-reveal-hillary-clinton-state-department-gave-special-access-top-clinton-foundation-donors/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

- Coal industry lobbyist Joyce Abbousie: Another JW-obtained record reveals that in June 2009, prominent St. Louis political power broker Joyce Aboussie exchanged a series of insistent emails with Abedin concerning Aboussie's efforts to set up a meeting between Clinton and Peabody Energy VP Cartan Sumner. Aboussie wrote, "Huma, I need your help now to intervene please. We need this meeting with Secretary Clinton, who has been there now for nearly six months. This is, by the way, my first request. I really would appreciate your help on this. It should go without saying that the Peabody folks came to Dick [Gephardt] and I because of our relationship with the Clinton's. [sic]" After further notes from Aboussie, Abedin responded, "We are working on it and I hope we can make something work... we have to work through the beauracracy [sic] here." Aboussie donated between \$100,000 and \$250,000 to the Clinton Foundation.⁵

Many have noted that it was hard to tell, in light of this evidence, where the Clinton State Department ended and where the Clinton Foundation began.

As discussed, adding to the mix was the private entity Teneo, which include Bill Clinton as both an adviser and a client. Incredibly, Huma Abedin managed to finagle a special government employee job that allowed her to work at the State Department, Teneo, and the Clinton Foundation all at the same time. As my Judicial Watch colleague Micah Morrison [observed](#):

⁵ Ibid.

Partly a philanthropy (the Clinton Foundation), partly a platform for post-presidential private enterprise (Bill's speeches and consulting), at one time a presidential campaign-in-waiting (Hillary at the State Department and after), Clinton Inc. is everywhere and nowhere. It zooms across borders—Bill is in Africa! Hillary is teleconferencing in New York! Chelsea is speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations! —a creature of the digital age and global ambition, powered by celebrity, image and spin, relentlessly raking in money. It includes the Clinton Global Initiative, a glitzy stage for big money pledges to various Clinton endeavors presided over by the Big Dog himself, the Clinton Global Initiative University and the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock. Under the auspices of the foundation, there is the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative, the Clinton Climate Initiative, the Clinton Giustra Sustainable Growth Initiative, the Clinton Giustra Enterprise Partnership, the Clinton Development Initiative, the Clinton Economic Opportunity Initiative, and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. Just last week, Chelsea emailed me an update on the foundation's "No Ceilings" initiative. Chelsea urged me to "donate before midnight to help my family's foundation change lives."

Then there is Teneo Holdings, a global consulting firm with deep Clinton connections. Teneo serves as a kind of private-enterprise satellite to Clinton Inc. Doug Band, Mr. Clinton's right-hand man for many years, is a Teneo founder. Huma Abedin, Mrs. Clinton's right-hand woman for many years, was a senior advisor to Teneo at the same time she held a top position as part of Mrs. Clinton's

inner circle at the State Department. Bill Clinton was **both a paid adviser to Teneo and a client**. Secretary of State Clinton's former Economic Envoy to Northern Ireland, Declan Kelly, is a Teneo co-founder and CEO.

Then there is the Uranium One controversy. Judicial Watch's continuing investigation of the highly **controversial 2010** Uranium One deal. At the time, a Russia state-owned nuclear firm, Rosatom, sought to buy Uranium One, a Canadian mining company. Because Uranium One held licenses for 20 percent of America's uranium production capacity, the sale had to be approved by the nine members of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), including Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who assented to the transaction. Uranium One interests contributed more than **\$140 million to the Clinton Foundation**.

In January 2008, Judicial Watch **took special note** that Bill Clinton had helped Vancouver mining mogul Frank Giustra secure tens of millions of dollars' worth of uranium. Guistra built a company that became part of **Uranium One**. The Clinton Foundation later received a \$31.3 million donation, as well as a future pledge of \$100 million.

As discussed above, Judicial Watch released **more than 200** Clinton conflict-of interest documents in 2014, including a record of a speech in Moscow in June 2010 sponsored by the investment bank Renaissance Capital by Bill Clinton addressing the theme of "Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States: Going Global." The document notes that "Renaissance Capital is an investment bank focused on the emerging markets of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and sub-

Saharan Africa.” Renaissance Capital has also been linked to Russia efforts to gain control of Uranium One.

According to a 2013 [New York Times](#) report, the Clinton Foundation hid many of the beneficiaries of the Uranium One deal approved by CFIUS and Mrs. Clinton:

As the Russians gradually assumed control of Uranium One in three separate transactions from 2009 to 2013, Canadian records show, a flow of cash made its way to the Clinton Foundation.

Uranium One’s chairman used his family foundation to make four donations totaling \$2.35 million. Those contributions were not publicly disclosed by the Clintons, despite an agreement Mrs. Clinton struck with the Obama White House to publicly identify all donors. Other people with ties to the company made donations as well.

And shortly after the Russians announced their intention to acquire a majority stake in Uranium One, Mr. Clinton received \$500,000 for a Moscow speech from a Russian investment bank [Renaissance Capital] with links to the Kremlin that was promoting Uranium One stock.

At the time, both Rosatom and the United States government made promises intended to ease concerns about ceding control of the company’s assets to the Russians. Those promises have been repeatedly broken, records show.

Prior to the Uranium One deal, the FBI [reportedly](#) “had gathered substantial evidence that Russian nuclear industry

officials were engaged in bribery, kickbacks, extortion and money laundering designed to grow Vladimir Putin's atomic energy business inside the United States, according to government documents and interviews.”

Rather than bring immediate charges in 2010, however, the Department of Justice (DOJ) continued investigating the matter for nearly four more years, essentially leaving the American public and Congress in the dark about Russian nuclear corruption on U.S. soil during a period when the Obama administration made two major decisions benefiting Putin's commercial nuclear ambitions.

Then-Attorney General Eric Holder was among the Obama administration officials joining Hillary Clinton on the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States at the time the Uranium One deal was approved. Multiple current and former government officials told The Hill they did not know whether the FBI or DOJ ever alerted committee members to the criminal activity they uncovered.

The investigation was ultimately supervised by then-U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein, an Obama appointee who now serves as President Trump's deputy attorney general, and then-Assistant FBI Director Andrew McCabe ...”

Per usual, Judicial Watch has had to sue the State and Justice Departments in federal court for basic information about the shady Uranium One deal. It seems Judicial Watch has done

more to investigate the Clinton-Russia connections than the Justice Department, even as massive DOJ resources are spent on supporting Robert Mueller's massive investigation into the fanciful Clinton Dossier-inspired Trump-Russia conspiracy theory.

To be clear, the sale went through despite the fact that the FBI was conducting an investigation into Russian influence through the funneling of money to the Clinton Foundation via lobbyists in furtherance of the Uranium One transaction, according to a paid US informant, Douglas Campbell, working within the Russian operations, but the Uranium One sale was approved by CFIUS anyway.⁶

The evidence is ample to warrant serious investigation of the Clinton Foundation. And there is evidence serious investigation of the Clinton Foundation was suppressed by the Obama Justice Department.

In January 2016, the FBI reportedly [began](#) investigating the Clinton Foundation, as it expanded from the email probe. In October 2016, FBI agents were told they did not have “[enough evidence](#) to move forward” with their investigation of the Foundation.

Earlier this year, a DOJ Inspector General [report](#) detailed evidence that the Obama DOJ sought to shut down the FBI investigation of Clinton Foundation:

⁶ The Blaze, 1/24/18, <https://www.theblaze.com/video/glenn-through-uranium-one-deal-145-million-flowed-to-the-clinton-foundation-heres-how> and Fox News, 2/8/18, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/obama-era-russian-uranium-one-deal-what-to-know>

McCabe [fired former deputy director of the FBI] told the OIG that on August 12, 2016, he received a telephone call from PADAG [Principal Associate Deputy Attorney General, likely [Matthew Axelrod](#)] regarding the FBI's handling of the CF [Clinton Foundation] Investigation (the "PADAG call"). McCabe said that PADAG expressed concerns about FBI agents taking overt steps in the CF Investigation during the presidential campaign. According to McCabe, he pushed back, asking "are you telling me that I need to shut down a validly predicated investigation?" McCabe told us that the conversation was "very dramatic" and he never had a similar confrontation like the PADAG call with a high-level Department official in his entire FBI career.

[Reportedly](#), senior DOJ officials refused FBI requests to issue subpoenas on Clinton Foundation issues in 2016. In January 2018, reports surfaced that the FBI reportedly launched [a new investigation](#) into potential Clinton Foundation pay-to-play but there has been [no indication it is proceeding](#).

(Again, Judicial Watch is suing for records on the handling of the Clinton Foundation investigation.)

I've laid out for you a fact-based case for opening serious criminal and other inquiries into the operations of the Clinton Foundation and its affiliated entities.

In the meantime, Judicial Watch will continue its various independent lawsuits and investigations, on behalf of the public interest, into the Clinton Foundation and the related Clinton email scandal.

Because the Clinton Foundation issue is not a “private” scandal. It is a State Department scandal, it is an FBI scandal, it is a Justice Department scandal, it a foreign potentate scandal, it is a shady corporation scandal, and, for sure, it is a government transparency scandal.

I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.