

PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

2025 Impact Report



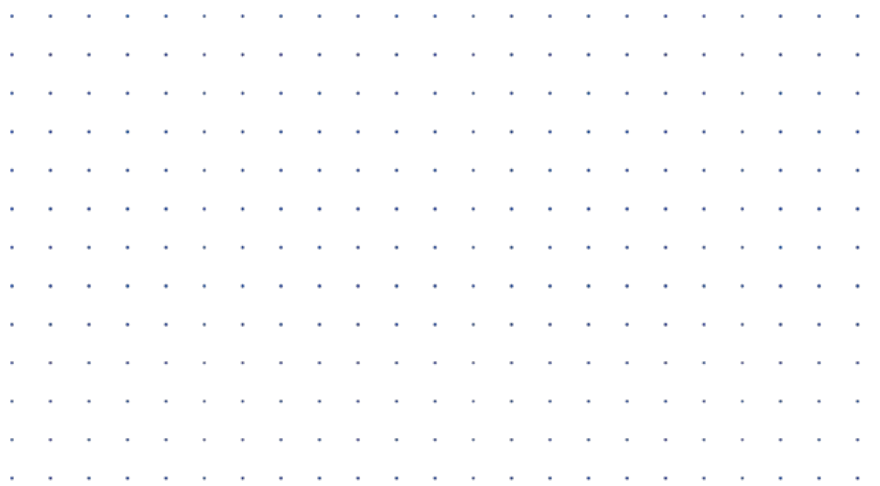


Dear friends,

The opening weeks of 2025 made one thing clear: **The guardrails that protect us from abuse of power are under direct attack.** More than 17 inspectors general were fired. A new office claiming to root out waste operated outside basic transparency rules. The military was deployed in ways that tested constitutional limits. These decisions weren't arbitrary. These were coordinated attacks on the systems that make accountability possible.

You wanted answers backed by evidence. We advanced accountability through litigation, advocacy, public pressure, and capacity building. We sued to enforce records laws on DOGE. We testified as the sole minority witness at the House DOGE Subcommittee's first hearing, naming the conflicts of interest the office was ignoring. We led a coalition spanning political divides to push senators to act on the firings of inspectors general. And we trained more than 500 congressional staffers in monthly seminars through our Congressional Oversight Initiative, a 40% increase over the previous year.

We also followed the money. POGO investigators revealed that White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller held more than \$100,000 of stock in Palantir, a company profiting from the immigration agenda he was driving. Within weeks, Miller sold over 1,000 shares of Palantir. Our DHS investigations – into contracting, detention conditions, and civil rights failures – contributed to the public pressure behind the removal of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in March 2026. While no single investigation creates accountability, ongoing scrutiny makes systemic failures almost impossible to ignore.



On a personal note, this year I stepped back from daily leadership to undergo treatment for an aggressive cancer diagnosis. It is not an announcement I ever expected to make. But I could not be more grateful for the POGO team, who carried this work forward without missing a beat. **My longtime ally, Isabel Munilla, was chosen as interim executive director and brings nearly three decades of work in transparency and good governance.** I remain active in the fight for accountability as POGO's president. In 36 years here, I have never been prouder of this team or more confident in the work ahead.

Today's threats are unprecedented in their scope and coordination, but decades of fighting government overreach have prepared us to meet this moment. And in 2025, you showed us what accountability looks like in action – more than 60,000 messages to Congress.

When you spot something wrong, we have the tools to investigate it. When you need reliable information, we have done the research. You bring the demand for accountability. We bring the evidence. Together, we hold the line.

Sincerely,



Danielle Brian, President

“
Decades of fighting government overreach have prepared us to meet this moment.”



*POGO President Danielle Brian (left),
Interim Executive Director Isabel Munilla (right)*

About POGO

For more than 40 years, the Project On Government Oversight has worked with supporters like you to build a federal government that is accountable to the people it serves.

POGO is nonpartisan by design. We do not measure abuse of power by who holds office or balance our work for political symmetry. We follow the evidence, evaluate conduct against clear principles, and ask whether government action strengthens or weakens transparency, accountability, and the public interest.

That independence is what makes this work effective. Our investigators uncover corruption, waste, abuse of power, and systems that fail the public. Our policy experts turn that evidence into practical reforms. Our government and external affairs teams help move those reforms through Congress and into public debate. And our capacity building initiatives strengthen one of democracy's most important safeguards: serious, fact-based congressional oversight.

Often, accountability work moves slowly. It can mean filing records requests, analyzing contracting data, training congressional staff, building coalitions with unusual allies, or staying with a story long after attention has moved elsewhere. Other times, accountability comes quickly once the facts are public. No matter how long it takes, lasting reform depends on evidence strong enough to withstand politics and time.

With your support, POGO helps make sure power is kept in check, public dollars are scrutinized, whistleblowers are heard – and our government serves the people, not the other way around.



Holding the Line Against Abuse of Power

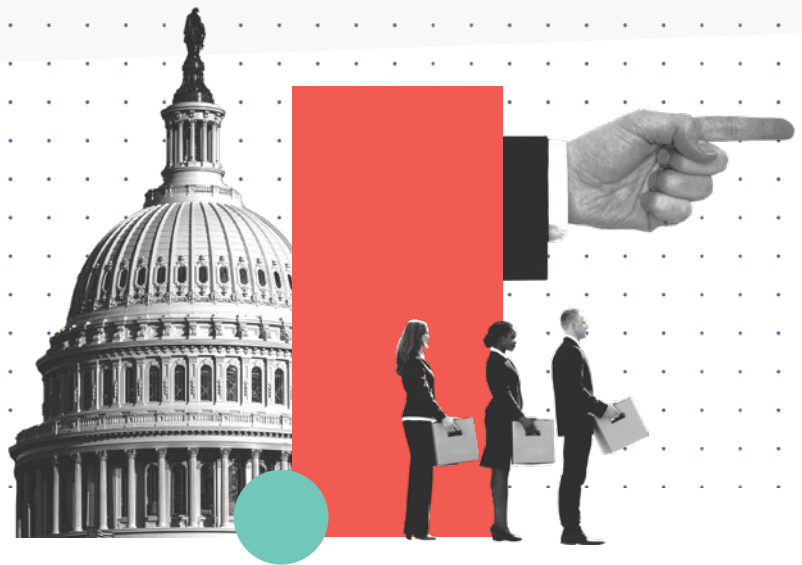
In the opening weeks of 2025, core safeguards against abuse of power came under direct attack.



Lawsuits in 2025

Our legal team pressed hard for accountability throughout the year. POGO sued to enforce federal records requirements for DOGE records and pursued litigation over document destruction within the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General.

We also filed Freedom of Information Act lawsuits seeking DOGE-related records, FBI political appointee ethics records, ICE death in custody records, and FBI records on extremism and domestic terrorism to make this information available to the public.



POGO met the moment with evidence, legal action, and public accountability.

When the administration fired more than 17 inspectors general, POGO pressed congressional offices to demand answers, published analysis explaining why the firings violated the law, and led a cross-ideological coalition letter urging key senators to act.

When DOGE claimed to be cutting waste while avoiding basic transparency, **POGO Acting Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs Dylan Hedtler-Gaudette testified as the sole minority witness** at the House DOGE Subcommittee's first hearing, laying out Musk's conflicts of interest, identifying workable anti-waste reforms, and naming the ethics rules DOGE should follow. POGO also sued the administration, challenging the claim that DOGE (under its many obfuscating names) operates under the Presidential Records Act.



Dylan Hedtler-Gaudette, Acting Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs, testifies before Congress on government waste and Elon Musk's conflicts of interest, February 12, 2025.

When the administration tested the limits of use of the military and immigration enforcement, POGO published constitutional analysis, provided expert commentary, and worked with partners on reforms to protect service members who refuse unlawful orders.

Turning Reporting Into Accountability

By the Numbers:

23	investigations
10	journalism and podcasting awards or acknowledgments, including 4 first-place wins
8	POGO investigations cited in congressional oversight letters

The administration moved quickly throughout 2025 – reshaping agencies, expanding immigration enforcement, and steering billions of dollars through opaque contracting systems. **POGO’s investigators focused on the places where power was less visible and accountability was weakest, tracking the money, the records, and the people caught in the middle.**

One of the clearest examples came in June, when **POGO revealed that White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller held a personal financial stake in Palantir**, a technology company deeply involved in immigration enforcement and Pentagon contracting. The investigation documented how one of the administration’s most influential immigration officials held over \$100,000 in stock in a brokerage account for one of his young children, and how he stood to benefit financially from the administration’s immigration crackdown and its dragnet approach to surveillance.

The story quickly spread across national media, appearing in outlets ranging from MSNBC and *Rolling Stone* to *Politico Playbook* and *The Marshall Project*. Representative Veronica Escobar (D-TX) cited the findings publicly, and within weeks Miller reportedly sold numerous individual stocks, including Palantir holdings.

POGO investigators kept following the money. Throughout the year, they documented the growing network of contractors, lobbyists, and politically connected firms positioned to profit from the administration’s immigration agenda. Investigations into deportation-flight contractor CSI Aviation, the revolving door between ICE and private prison contractor GEO Group, and Homeland Security contracting practices later became part of congressional oversight inquiries. Lawmakers cited POGO’s investigations in at least six oversight letters on ICE-related contracting last year, including a letter signed by both House and Senate members in December that referenced five investigative stories by POGO.

The work was not only about contracts and influence. It was also about what happened to people inside these systems.

In April, POGO was the first outlet to report that a 45-year-old man had died in ICE custody after months without adequate treatment for HIV. He also had tuberculosis at the time of his death, despite ICE protocols requiring special isolation procedures for highly infectious diseases.



Pressure That Didn’t Let Up

Throughout 2025, POGO investigators exposed contracting irregularities, detainee deaths, civil rights failures, and oversight breakdowns across the Department of Homeland Security and its subagencies. POGO teams carried that work forward through congressional engagement, litigation, public analysis, and oversight support for lawmakers examining DHS operations.

In early 2026, in the face of public and political pressure, the president removed Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem from her role. No single investigation creates accountability on its own. But sustained public scrutiny can make systemic failures impossible to ignore.

A few days earlier, POGO had revealed that an alleged assault on a shackled passenger during a 2022 deportation flight went unreported by ICE, even after DHS emails confirmed “sufficient evidence” of excessive force.

Those investigations became part of a broader effort by the media to expose how little public visibility exists around detention conditions and civil rights oversight.

When DHS removed more than 150 Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties investigative records from its website, POGO preserved and republished the archive so journalists, attorneys, and advocates could continue accessing records documenting alleged abuses inside detention facilities.

Lawmakers also cited POGO’s investigations into DHS practices in at least two oversight letters last year, including in a criminal referral for excessive use of force by the Border Patrol during Operation Midway Blitz.

POGO’s reporting also exposed what happened when basic health and safety needs for service members were allowed to deteriorate outside of public view.

In May, POGO investigators reported on dangerous conditions inside barracks at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, including mold, exposed wiring, corroded plumbing, and severe disrepair that service members said had gone unresolved for years. The reporting landed as the administration specifically defunded barracks repairs and shifted those funds toward operations at the U.S.-Mexico border, raising new questions about priorities inside the Defense Department.

The investigation drew national attention and prompted action. More troops were moved out of the barracks days after our reporting, and within months the Pentagon awarded a \$297 million contract to design and build replacement housing at Andersen. The investigations we published throughout the year covered different agencies, different abuses, and different communities. But they shared the same underlying truth: Accountability rarely begins inside the system itself. It begins when someone forces the facts into public view – and people decide those facts cannot be ignored.



Researcher Julienne McClure accepts one of two Gold Medals on behalf of the Bad Watchdog podcast team at the 4th Annual Signal Awards, November 10, 2025. (Photo: Brendan Burke)

The second season of POGO’s investigative podcast, *Bad Watchdog*, earned major recognition in 2025, including honors from the Signal Awards, New York Festivals Radio Awards, and National Headliner Awards for its reporting on immigration detention and oversight failures. Investigators and producers are already reporting the next season, planned for release in 2027.

Our exposé on Stephen Miller’s conflicts of interest was featured in:



The Marshall Project

POLITICO

Strengthening Congress

510

Number of congressional staffers that completed a COI Boot Camp by the end of 2025.



Danielle Brian Among DC’s “500 Most Influential”

POGO President Danielle Brian, pictured with board members Norman Ornstein, Virginia Kase Solomón, and Debra S. Katz, attends *Washingtonian*’s most influential people in Washington event, May 23, 2025.



Making Impact on Policy

Acting Vice President of Policy and Government Affairs Dylan Hedtler-Gaudette has been named a “Top Lobbyist” by *The Hill* for four years running.

Congress holds the authority and responsibility to check the executive and legal branches, but effective oversight does not happen just because it should. It happens when congressional staff know how to ask the right questions, build an evidentiary record, use nonpartisan investigative tools, and follow facts where they lead.

In 2025, POGO’s Congressional Oversight Initiative (COI) trained over 500 congressional staffers through its monthly seminar series – a 40% increase over the previous year. COI also conducted nine customized trainings for 124 staffers, up 44% over 2024, and it brought bipartisan House and Senate staff together for its 21st Oversight Boot Camp. By the end of 2025, a total of 510 staffers had completed a Boot Camp.



Congressional staffers from both parties and both chambers of Congress attend our Oversight Boot Camps, August 21, 2025.


POGO’s work strengthening government oversight doesn’t stop with staff trainings. In December, COI and The Constitution Project released a fully updated edition of *When Congress Comes Calling*, the foundational oversight handbook first published in 2017 by The Constitution Project. With pro bono support from Jenner & Block LLP, the new edition grew and incorporated major legal and institutional developments, including recent Supreme Court guidance in *Trump v. Mazars* on congressional subpoena powers. More than a dozen Democratic and Republican editors helped strengthen the guide.

The release event at the Capitol was attended by more than 100 people, including Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), with remarks from House Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH) and Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA). The celebration was a rare public reminder that serious oversight still depends on shared institutional ground.

In a polarized Congress, this is the necessary infrastructure for accountability.

How You Showed Up in 2025

When the moment demanded a rapid response, you moved quickly.



60,000

Number of emails generated from our call to actions with your help!

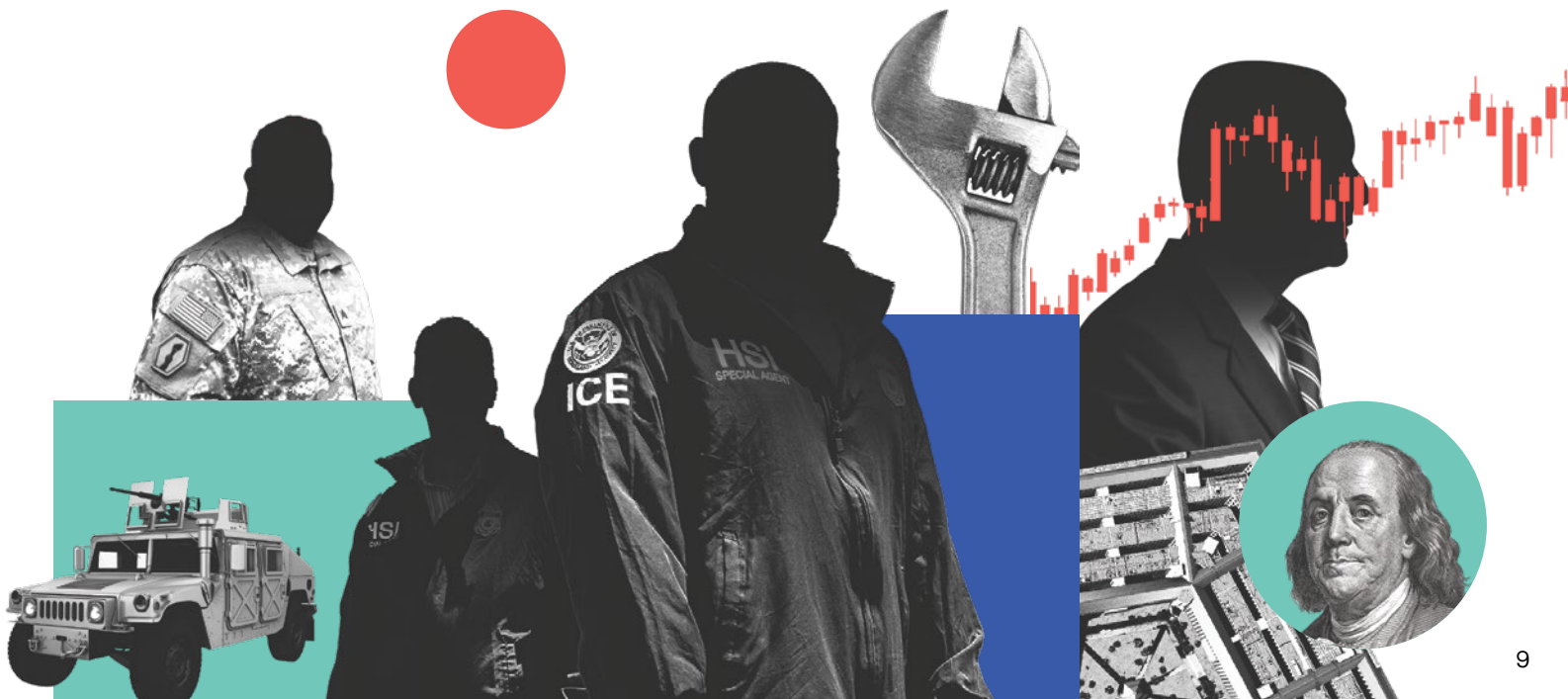
Within days of the Alien Enemies Act invocation and the deportation of more than 200 people without due process, **POGO helped supporters like you send more than 3,000 messages to Congress demanding action.**

That momentum carried through the year. Our calls to action generated more than 60,000 emails to members of Congress in 2025, including messages supporting military right-to-repair, calling for an end to congressional stock trading, stressing the importance of congressional war powers, and ending military deployments in U.S. cities.

Your engagement also helped push one of the year's most significant Pentagon accountability reforms. POGO partnered with The Chamberlain Network and veterans' advocates to support military right-to-repair legislation, which would have made it easier and cheaper for service members to repair their own equipment instead of relying on expensive contractor restrictions.

Veteran video testimonials helped build bipartisan momentum, and reform provisions advanced in both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. After a major lobbying push from Pentagon contractors, the effort was stripped during conference negotiations, but we're already heading into a new budget cycle and we're gearing up to build on the progress you fueled last year.

Accountability needs public pressure. In 2025, you supplied it.



Financials

Overview

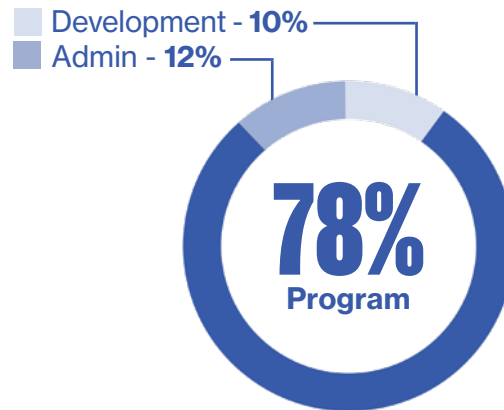
Change in net assets	(\$711,621)
Net assets at beginning of year	\$12,858,068
Net assets at end of year	\$12,146,447

Revenue

Foundation grants.....	\$2,527,962
Contributions.....	\$5,005,810
Net realized and unrealized gain on investments	\$195,607
Interest and dividend income.....	\$450,539
Contributed services.....	\$251,692
Other income	\$110,393
Total	\$8,542,003

Supporting Services

General & administrative	\$1,149,771
Development	\$922,305
Total supporting services.....	\$2,072,076



Program

General Program and Policy.....	\$2,544,958
The Constitution Project	\$1,010,761
POGO Investigates	\$924,033
Center for Defense Information.....	\$751,356
Pentagon Accountability	\$543,965
Congressional Oversight Initiative.....	\$417,152
Census Project.....	\$294,231
Legal.....	\$234,245
Lobbying.....	\$174,457
Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion.....	\$136,720
FOIA Litigation.....	\$96,311
Transparency in Federal Spending	\$53,359
Total	\$7,181,548

This statement of activities from January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025, has been audited.

POGO's full, audited financial statements and 990 forms are available at: pogo.org/financials

POGO's EIN #52-1739443

Under IRS guidelines, all donations are tax-deductible.

Honoring Our Individual Supporters



Democracy doesn't defend itself. This year, we are honoring our individual supporters without publishing their names – not out of hesitation, but out of protection. In a political climate where retaliation against those who support accountability work has become a real concern, POGO has made a deliberate choice: Our voice is loud enough to carry this fight.

You know who you are. And because of you, the people who need to be held accountable know we are watching. **Thank you for being our partners in this fight – visibly or not. Your support is the foundation everything else is built on.**

Thank You to Our Foundations

We are listing foundations because unlike private individuals, they are public-facing institutions who also share the lists of their grantees, and we are proud to be among them.

Apple Hill Fund

Arnold Ventures

Bernard and Anne Spitzer Charitable Trust

Cedar Tree Foundation

Colombe Peace Foundation

CS Fund

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Democracy Fund

Francis Beidler Foundation

Fund for Constitutional Government

The Klarman Family Foundation

The Lodestar Foundation

The Macatawa Foundation

The New-Land Foundation

New Venture Fund

Park Foundation

The Raymond Frankel Foundation

Rockefeller Family Fund

Sustainable Grantmaking Partners Fund

Ventus Charitable Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

William B. Wiener Jr. Fund for Democracy and the Environment at the Rockefeller Family Fund



POGO

Project On Government Oversight
1100 13th Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
pogo.org (202) 347-1122