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Contact: Edward Erikson, 202-420-9947, press@FreeSpeechForPeople.org

It's Time To Investigate Allegations of Corruption Involving President Trump and Trump Industries

Free Speech For People urges Acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York and New York Attorney General to begin investigations

(New York, NY) – [Free Speech for People \(FSFP\)](#), a non-partisan legal advocacy organization, today delivered letters to Joon Kim the Acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York (the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan) and to New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman calling on each of their offices to investigate serious allegations of potential corruption involving President Trump and the Trump Organization. These alleged activities potentially violate federal laws against [bribery](#), [use of official office for extortion](#), [bribing foreign government officials](#), and [doing business with the government of Iran](#).

“Now that President Trump has fired the top federal prosecutor in Manhattan, it’s more important than ever that tough-minded prosecutors take a hard look at new revelations about this potential corruption reaching from Trump Tower and the Oval Office to China, Azerbaijan, and Iran,” said Ron Fein, Legal Director for Free Speech For People.

“President Trump and his defenders have consistently sought to lower the bar on what is appropriate or lawful conduct by the president of a constitutional democracy,” said Ben Clements, Free Speech For People Board Chair, partner in the Boston law firm of Clements & Pineault, former federal prosecutor, and former Chief Legal Counsel to Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick.

“If we are to remain a country in which the law applies equally to everyone, even the president of the United States, it is essential that the Department of Justice do its job and thoroughly investigate these potential criminal violations arising out of the president’s far-flung financial dealings in China, Azerbaijan, and elsewhere,” said Clements.

The letters set forth serious allegations regarding the failed Trump Tower Baku project in Baku, Azerbaijan. As [reported](#) recently, the Trump Organization’s activities in this project may have included participating in bribery of Azerbaijani officials, and dealing with a construction company that is described as a front organization for Iran’s Revolutionary Guard.

The [letter](#) to Joon Kim, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York requests that the U.S. Attorney open criminal investigations into the Baku allegations, and into potential bribery and extortion violations arising from the suspicious timing of the Chinese government granting the Trump Organization certain trademarks. After many years of refusing to grant these trademarks, the Chinese Trademark Office was suddenly roused to grant them just as President Trump tested abandoning the United States’ “One China” policy. According to information described in the letter, President Trump reversed course and promised to honor the One China policy just a week before the Chinese Trademark Office granted final approval for the Trump Organization to register

a construction services trademark. The letter outlines specific questions that the federal investigation should aim to answer.

“Neither Donald Trump nor his affiliated businesses are above the law. The evidence suggesting possible misconduct and illegality is substantial and irrefutable,” said Jonathan Abady, co-counsel on Free Speech For People’s letters issued today and a founding partner of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady. “Not to conduct a thorough investigation into these circumstances would constitute a disturbing abdication of law enforcement responsibility. The integrity of our democracy and institutions is in play and dependent on those in positions of authority to act responsibly and, if necessary, with courage,” said Abady.

The [letter](#) to Eric Schneiderman, Attorney General of New York, follows up on a [letter](#) that was sent in February, in which Free Speech For People set forth the long history of alleged illegal conduct by the Trump Organization, both before and after President Trump’s inauguration.

In that letter, Free Speech For People urged the attorney general to open an investigation into whether to revoke the corporate charter of the Trump Organization under a [New York law](#) that authorizes him to dissolve a corporation for persistently illegal conduct or abuse of its powers contrary to the public policy of the state. **This new letter provides yet more fuel for that investigation.** (As a New York state court held in a [previous case](#), violations of federal law can be grounds for corporate charter revocation because “[f]ederal law is as much a law of [New York] State as any specific law enacted by the State Legislature.”).

"Facts continue to emerge that demonstrate that the President 's private business interests are undermining our constitutional values. This is about the Constitution and the rule of law; Mr. Trump must be held accountable,” said Andrew G. Celli, Jr., co-counsel on Free Speech For People’s letters and a founding partner of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady.

Both letters are publicly available on FSFP’s website. FSFP is encouraging members of the public to sign a petition urging the Attorney General to pursue this investigation, and to contact his office to voice support: <https://freespeechforpeople.org/revoke-trump-charter/>

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Free Speech For People is a non-profit, non-partisan legal advocacy organization that works to renew our democracy and our United States Constitution for we the people, not big money and corporate interests. For more information, visit: www.freespeechforpeople.org.