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Government Watchdogs Call on the New York Attorney General to Dissolve Trump's Company and Revoke Its Corporate Charter

(NEW YORK, NY) – [Free Speech For People \(FSFP\)](#), a non-partisan legal advocacy organization, announced today that it delivered a letter to New York State Attorney General Barbara D. Underwood on August 24, 2018, calling for an investigation into whether to revoke the corporate charter of the Trump Organization under a [New York law](#) that authorizes her to dissolve a corporation for persistently illegal conduct or abuse of its powers contrary to the public policy of the state. These alleged activities, detailed in the letter and in previous correspondence, include [money laundering](#), [tax evasion](#), [fraud](#), [facilitating unconstitutional foreign government payments \(emoluments\) to the president](#), [helping Iran's Revolutionary Guard evade international sanctions](#), and [concealing a political slush fund by invoicing bogus "legal services."](#)

The letter sets forth new charges drawn from the federal criminal charges against Michael Cohen, an executive vice president of the Trump Organization, Inc. until 2017, who pleaded guilty on August 21, 2018. The prosecution's filing (called a criminal information) [details](#) how the Trump Organization conspired with Cohen to violate federal campaign finance law and evade regulatory scrutiny through a fraudulent scheme of concealing "hush money" payments and campaign expenses.

"Cohen's guilty plea is just the latest evidence piled on top of a mountain of alleged violations by the Trump Organization," said Ron Fein, Legal Director for Free Speech For People. **"The New York attorney general should use her legal authority to file a lawsuit to dissolve the company and revoke its corporate charter."**

"Never in our nation's history, until now, has a business corporation been effectively merged with the presidency of the United States to enable the president and his family to use the presidency to enrich themselves. We now know from the sworn statements and guilty plea of Michael Cohen that Donald Trump also used the Trump Organization to carry out and conceal campaign finance violations to help him win the election. The use of the Trump Organization to facilitate this criminality and corruption is contrary to New York law and it is incumbent on the Attorney General to investigate and take appropriate action," 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.

“The integrity of our democracy and public institutions are at risk,” said Jonathan Abady, co-counsel on Free Speech For People’s letters issued today and a founding partner of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady. **“The overwhelming evidence of criminal conduct involving the Trump Organization demands an immediate and thorough investigation by the New York attorney general.”**

“The New York Business Corporation Law is quite clear,” said Jennifer Taub, Professor of Law at Vermont Law School, Board Member of Free Speech For People, and co-counsel on the letter to the New York attorney general. **“The attorney general can dissolve any New York corporation that conducts its business in a persistently fraudulent or illegal manner. We now have a guilty plea by former Trump Organization, Inc. Vice President, Michael Cohen, implicating the corporation in a criminal conspiracy to violate federal campaign laws. This is just the latest in a long list of allegations of illegality by the Trump Organization. A corporate charter is a right, not a privilege. It's time to explore dissolution.”**

“New York gives its Attorney General special powers for special cases of rampant fraud. Those powers go back centuries in England, but they are especially appropriate for this case. We have more and more evidence that the Trump Organization is built on a foundation of fraud. The question is just how far that fraud goes, and we need the New York Attorney General to help the public find out through civil investigation,” said Jed Shugerman, Professor of Law at Fordham University School of Law and co-counsel on the letter.

Free Speech For People had sent three previous [letters](#) to Eric Schneiderman, the former Attorney General of New York, detailing the long history of alleged illegal conduct by the Trump Organization, both before and after President Trump’s inauguration. **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.”).

The [letter](#) is publicly available on Free Speech For People’s website. It is signed by Ron Fein, Shanna Cleveland, and John Bonifaz of Free Speech For People, Ben Clements of Clements & Pineault LLP, Jonathan Abady and Andrew Celli, Jr. of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP, Jed Shugerman, Professor of Law at Fordham University School of Law, and Jennifer Taub, Professor Law at Vermont Law School.

Free Speech For People is encouraging members of the public to sign a petition urging the Attorney General to pursue this investigation, and to contact her office to voice support:
<https://www.impeachmentproject.org/dissolvetrumpinc/>

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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.