

Written Statement of Seamus Bruner
Vice President, Government Accountability Institute

Introduction

Chairman Hawley, Ranking Member Kim, and Members of the Subcommittee — thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Seamus Bruner. I am Vice President of the Government Accountability Institute, a nonprofit investigative research organization that specializes in tracing complex financial, nonprofit, and political influence networks — including foreign influence operations — within the United States.

My testimony today focuses on coordinated efforts to disrupt federal immigration enforcement, particularly U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and how those efforts are financed, organized, and deployed through layered nonprofit structures that obscure their true sponsors and objectives.

What We Are Seeing Is Not Organic Protest

Americans watching the chaotic scenes unfold in various cities across America are seeing organized disruption of ICE operations including the use of lookouts, encrypted messaging platforms such as Signal, coordinated mobilization guides, and tactical manuals instructing participants on how to impede federal agents.

Based on our research, these activities are not spontaneous or grassroots in nature. In Minnesota specifically, organizations such as Defend the 612 and States at the Core (STAC) have been active on the ground. While they present themselves publicly as local community groups, our analysis shows they function as deployment nodes within a broader national network of left-wing nonprofit organizations.

These networks provide:

- Pre-printed signage and standardized slogans
- Travel logistics and stipends
- Training materials and protest “playbooks”
- Communications infrastructure
- Legal support and bail coordination

This level of coordination does not arise organically.

How We Know: Following the Money

At the Government Accountability Institute, we specialize in financial forensics.

We maintain a proprietary database — increasingly assisted by AI-enhanced analysis — that aggregates and cross-references nonprofit disclosure forms, foundation grants, fiscal sponsorship arrangements, and pass-through entities.

What we consistently observe is a deliberate pattern:

1. National NGOs and donor-advised funds route money through intermediary nonprofits
2. Those intermediaries create or fund short-lived “front” organizations
3. These fronts appear suddenly around flashpoint issues — immigration enforcement, policing, campus protests — and disappear once the objective is achieved

This structure is designed to:

- Conceal the identity of funders
- Avoid donor scrutiny
- Evade accountability
- Create the illusion of spontaneous public outrage

In several cases, these funding streams trace back to foreign-connected actors, including individuals with documented ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

Foreign Influence and First Amendment Concerns

Let me be clear: peaceful protest is a fundamental American right.

But foreign nationals and foreign adversaries do not possess First Amendment protections — and the Committee should be deeply concerned when foreign-linked funding and coordination intersect with domestic political disruption.

More importantly, what we are witnessing goes far beyond protest.

These groups employ insurgency-style tactics commonly observed in foreign destabilization campaigns:

- Continuous surveillance and harassment of ICE agents
- Following agents to hotels and private locations
- Use of whistles and noise amplification to elevate stress responses
- Crowd-control tactics designed to provoke confrontation

The objective is not expression — it is disruption of government operations.

The results speak for themselves:

- Dozens of protests devolving into riots
- Federal buildings vandalized
- ICE agents assaulted
- Repeated obstruction of lawful enforcement actions

A Pattern We Have Seen Before

Has similar activity occurred previously?

The answer is emphatically *yes*.

The same organizational networks were involved in:

- The George Floyd riots
- Anti-ICE actions in California and Oregon
- Antisemitic disruptions on college campuses
- The “Stop Cop City” riots in Atlanta

I refer to this phenomenon as “Riot, Inc.” — a professionalized protest-industrial complex that mobilizes instability as a political tool.

This activity is not episodic. It is strategic.

Why Enforcement Has Lagged

Some individuals have been arrested — particularly in Atlanta — but enforcement has historically lagged because these networks are intentionally opaque.

Layered nonprofits, fiscal sponsorships, and shell organizations make it difficult to identify:

- Who is directing activity
- Who is financing it
- Who bears legal responsibility

That is beginning to change.

Recent announcements by federal law enforcement leadership and Treasury officials signal a renewed focus on nonprofit abuse and foreign influence operations.

Transparency is increasing, and accountability is becoming possible.

Why Domestic Actors Participate

Why would domestic left-wing organizations participate in activity that also benefits foreign adversaries?

The answer is that they have shared objectives which include gaining political leverage.

Manufactured instability creates public pressure. It erodes trust in institutions. And it drives demands for political change that would otherwise lack public support.

Instability is not a byproduct — it is the strategy.

Conclusion

What we are witnessing is not grassroots activism. It is organized political disruption, financed through opaque nonprofit structures, and in some cases amplified by foreign-connected actors.

The United States cannot afford to treat this as coincidence or chaos.

The tools to expose and disrupt these networks already exist. What is required now is sustained oversight, transparency, and enforcement.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.