

**Open Government Partnership**

1100 13th St NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20005  
United States  
Phone: +1 202-609-7859  
Email: [info@opengovpartnership.org](mailto:info@opengovpartnership.org)

August 13, 2025

The Honorable Michael J. Rigas  
Acting Administrator  
U.S. General Services Administration and  
Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources

Dear Acting Administrator Rigas,

I am writing in your capacity as Acting Administrator of the U.S. General Services Administration, which oversees U.S. participation in the Open Government Partnership (OGP).

On March 21, 2025, the OGP Support Unit received a [Letter of Concern](#) from eleven U.S. civil society organizations, followed by an addendum on July 1, 2025, submitted under [OGP's Policy on Upholding the Values and Principles of OGP](#) (commonly referred to as the Response Policy).

Following an initial review under section Section III.A.2 of the Response Policy, the Support Unit has determined that it meets the eligibility criteria to trigger a Response Policy inquiry. This initial review did not assess the merits of the concern itself, or lack thereof. That substantive review will be conducted in the next phase, as described in Section III.B, and will be led by the Co-Chairs of the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee of OGP's Steering Committee, in coordination with the Support Unit. This process includes securing external expert assistance for conducting the review of the concerns raised.

In line with the Response Policy procedures, we formally invite the Government of the United States to provide a written response to the issues raised in the Letter of Concern. This response will serve as a key input for the review report. We kindly request that any response be submitted to the OGP Support Unit no later than December 1, 2025.

Please note that, under OGP's Disclosure Policy, this and all relevant documents related to the case will be published on the OGP website. Please don't hesitate to contact the Support Unit should any questions regarding this process arise.

Sincerely,



Aidan Eyakuze  
Chief Executive Officer  
Open Government Partnership

**Enclosure:** Letter of Concern



July 1, 2025

The Honorable Aidan Eyakuze  
Chief Executive Officer  
Open Government Partnership  
1100 13th Street NW, Suite 800  
Washington, D.C. 20005

VIA Email

Dear Chief Executive Officer Eyakuze, members of the Open Government Partnership Secretariat, and members of the OGP Steering Committee:

We write today to submit an addendum to our March 21, 2025 letter calling on the Open Government Partnership to "immediately place the United States government under review for actions contrary to the principles and policies of the partnership."<sup>1</sup>

Since our letter, the Trump administration has accelerated its attacks on the principles embodied in the Partnership. The principles under unrelenting attack range from anti-corruption and civic space to fiscal openness, gender & inclusion, justice, and the foundation of open government. Furthermore, journalists report that civil society organizations are in the Trump administration's crosshairs.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, many journalists themselves are in danger as well, denied entry or deported for informing citizens and the world of repression or corruption.

Cataloging the many ways the Trump administration is violating the principles of the Open Government Partnership is challenging, as new affronts to transparency, accountability, participation, and collaboration are published in newspapers daily while records and government websites are censored.

Nonetheless, we respectfully draw your attention to a CIVICUS March 2025 watchlist<sup>3</sup> and a June 2025 GovTrack.Us compilation of litigation against the Trump

---

<sup>1</sup> US Orgs Ask Open Government Partnership to Place US Government Under Review (March 21, 2025) <https://americalabs.org/2025/03/21/us-civil-society-asks-open-government-partnership-to-place-us-government-under-review/>

<sup>2</sup> Law firms, universities and now civil society groups are in Trump's sights for punitive action, Associated Press (April 18, 2025) <https://apnews.com/article/trump-tax-exempt-crew-environmental-groups-harvard-5e1e0ffacfa040ccdeaf4e43fb72b5fe>

<sup>3</sup> March 2025 Watchlist, Civicus (March 10, 2025) <https://monitor.civicus.org/watchlist-march-2025/>

administration.<sup>4</sup> These reports provide credible, independent evidence of systemic threats to civic space in the United States under the Trump administration.

The CIVICUS Monitor report, “*Civic Space at Risk: Donald Trump's First 100 Days*,” offers a comprehensive, well-documented account of how core freedoms — including freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly — were systematically undermined during that period and continue to be at risk.<sup>5</sup>

On March 10, 2025, the United States was added to the CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist due to these threats.

The Civicus report highlights illiberal practices that include:

- Retaliation against peaceful protesters;
- Hostility toward independent media and dissenting voices;
- Marginalization of civil society input in policymaking processes; and
- Rampant disinformation campaigns by public officials.

We assess that these trends represent a clear violation of the values and principles of the Open Government Partnership, specifically members’ commitment to protecting civic space enshrined in the Open Government Declaration. Member nations also commit to uphold “robust anti-corruption policies, mechanisms and practices, ensuring transparency in the management of public finances and government purchasing, and strengthening the rule of law.” The United States government is doing the opposite on every count.

This independent assessment, and the ample resources embedded in it, reinforce the evidence we provided in March regarding the rollback of transparency safeguards, firing of ethics officials, and the accelerating erosion of accountability institutions in the U.S. government.

We anticipate the United States government will not co-create an action plan with the American people in 2025. We have found that the administration has either fired or reassigned the staff of the Open Government Secretariat who would support that work. Certainly, there is no ideation, co-creation, or collaboration with civil society happening now.

---

<sup>4</sup> Five more ways to track litigation against the Trump Administration, Govtrack (June 8, 2025) <https://substack.govtrack.us/p/five-more-ways-to-track-litigation>

<sup>5</sup> Civic space at risk: Donald Trump’s first 100 days and the growing crackdown on dissent, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/civic-space-at-risk-donald-trumps-first-100-days/>

We expect the Trump administration will continue to repeal past commitments, censor scientists, take down public data, fire watchdogs, dissolve public integrity agencies, chill free speech and participation, target journalists, undermine Congress, attack civil society, threaten the public, and gut anti-corruption units and enforcement.

OGP must not remain silent or inactive as events accelerate.

We share our concerns based upon our experiences and expertise. We coordinate the Open Government Roundtable, a transpartisan gathering of 50+ non profit organizations focused on open government at the federal level. Schuman served as inaugural chair of the Federal Open Government Federal Advisory Committee – the closest thing we had to a multi-stakeholder forum – until it was disbanded.<sup>6</sup> Howard's work at O'Reilly, Harvard, Columbia, and across many publications and conferences helped lay the foundations for the field today.<sup>7</sup> Together, we coordinate the Congressional Transparency Caucus Advisory Committee.<sup>8</sup>

In light of this additional documentation, we respectfully request the OGP Steering Committee formally *trigger a response policy case* regarding the United States government's ongoing departure from OGP values. As outlined in the Response Policy guidelines, this step is necessary to preserve the credibility of the Partnership and to uphold the commitments made by all participating governments — including founding members.

Civil society organizations in the United States and globally are looking to the Steering Committee for principled and timely action. The ongoing failure of the United States government to not only uphold the Open Government Declaration but to overtly undermine and reject the values and principles poses an existential risk to the legitimacy and consistency of OGP's mission.

The Trump administration's actions are an explicit repudiation of open government. They are a rejection of the principles in the open government declaration that every member nation must pledge to uphold.

Open government is a foundational principle in every democratic society. We urge you to speak out in defense of ours.

---

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Schuman biography, American Governance Institute (accessed June 14, 2025) <https://americalabs.org/daniel-schuman/>

<sup>7</sup> Alex Howard biography, Digiphile website (accessed June 14, 2025) <https://digiphile.info/about/>

<sup>8</sup> Advisory Committee on Transparency (accessed June 14, 2025) <https://transparencycaucus.info/>

We thank you for your consideration and remain available for any further clarification or evidence you may require.

Respectfully yours,  
Alexander B. Howard  
and Daniel Schuman

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Aidan Eyakuze  
Chief Executive Officer  
Open Government Partnership  
1100 13th Street NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20005

Via Email

Dear Chief Executive Officer Eyakuze, members of the Open Government Partnership Secretariat, and members of the OGP Steering Committee:

Today, the undersigned organizations and individuals who work on government transparency and accountability in the United States respectfully request the Open Government Partnership (OGP) immediately place the United States government under review for actions contrary to the principles and policies of the partnership.

In its first fifty days in office, the Trump administration rolled back existing flagship commitments to the Open Government Partnership, from a [national police misconduct database](#)<sup>1</sup> to [enforcement of the Corporate Transparency Act](#)<sup>2</sup> or [Foreign Corrupt Practices Act](#).<sup>3</sup> These are signature reforms widely recognized by OGP and participating nations as crucial to fighting systemic corruption in every nation.

The White House stopped disclosing visitors to the White House, tax returns for senior officers, and ethics waivers. It directed the purge of public data from government websites, censored data regarding minority groups, and shuttered some websites entirely. It is attacking the free press by blocking journalistic access on the basis of their reporting, ordering inquiries into public media, and chilling investigative journalism. A free press is an essential ingredient to make governments transparent and accountable to the publics they serve.

Moreover, the Trump administration now has fired 18 inspectors general, the directors of the Office of Special Counsel and Office of Government Ethics, the Archivist and Deputy Archivist of the United States, the director of the Office of Information Policy at the Department of Justice, along with an unknown number of Freedom of Information Act officers.

Removing public records officials, ethics watchdogs, and whistleblower guardians strikes at the heart of the United States government's capacity to fight fraud, waste, and corruption and subverts each American's capacity to know public business and access public information.

Specific to the Open Government Partnership, the Trump administration ended the Open Government Federal Advisory Committee, which provided expert advice to the United States government as it worked to co-create with civil society the sixth national action plan for open government.

The Trump administration has stopped enforcing anticorruption laws or prosecution of officials indicted for corruption, including a cessation of efforts to build the beneficial ownership registry that is a shared priority across OGP members — despite the express intent of Congress. It has illegally cut USAID grants that support open government and democracy globally. And it is working to undermine its accountability to the U.S. Congress.

**These are the actions of an administration opposed to open government at home and abroad. The Open Government Partnership should place the United States government under review now.<sup>4</sup> The Partnership must suspend the United States at the end of 2025 should the federal government once again fail to co-create a meaningful plan with the American people.**

The Open Government Partnership must not take years to respond to the authoritarian takeover of a democratic government. Such a timeline is too slow to be meaningful to civil society organizations on the ground. Moreover, authoritarian regimes are weakest while they consolidate power. Action now is more meaningful than years down the line. In any partnership, commitments to shared principles should entail solidarity when those principles are threatened.

It is the time for OGP to speak out as an organization and as a collective group of dozens of participating nations. We ask you to collectively call upon the United States to recommit to the Open Government Declaration that all founding members sign.

Ask our government "of the people" to recommit to co-creating a more open government with the American people. Ask them to make meaningful commitments on government transparency and accountability. Ask them to work with us to build upon a decade of recommendations and civil society priorities, like those presented in the [Blueprint for Accountability](#) developed by a diverse and broad coalition.<sup>5</sup>

During Sunshine Week, the time when the United States traditionally has celebrated efforts to make the government more transparent, accountable, and participatory, we urge the OGP Steering Committee to take immediate actions to repudiate the anti-transparency actions of the United States government.

No government, not even a co-founder of the OGP, should be above censure nor removal should it renege on its transparency commitments. The world is watching whether the Open Government Partnership will hold the United States to its stated transparency principles.

Please contact Daniel Schuman ([daniel@americallabs.org](mailto:daniel@americallabs.org)) and Alexander B. Howard ([alex@governing.digital](mailto:alex@governing.digital)) with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours,

American Governance Institute  
American Oversight  
Center for Media and Democracy  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)  
Civic Texts  
Free Government Information (FGI)  
Government Information Watch  
GovTrack.us  
Project On Government Oversight  
Public Citizen  
Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations

1. "Justice Department deletes database tracking federal police misconduct," Washington Post (Feb. 21, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/02/20/trump-justice-lead-database-deleted/>
2. "Treasury Department won't enforce beneficial ownership rule under the Corporate Transparency Act," International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (Mar. 5, 2025), <https://www.icij.org/inside-icij/2025/03/treasury-department-wont-enforce-beneficial-ownership-rule-under-the-corporate-transparency-act/>
3. "Takeaways from the Pause on Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Enforcement," Kyle Clark, Brendan F. Quigley, and Bridget Moore (Feb. 24, 2025) <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2025/02/24/takeaways-from-the-pause-on-foreign-corrupt-practices-act-enforcement/>
4. It is plausible that U.S. cities or states could stay in OGP, even if the national government left or was suspended. But there are real questions about whether OGP is effective at the local level that need to be addressed to justify local communities engaging through it.
5. <https://blueprintforaccountability.us/recommendations/>