

Grantee: Hudson Institute

Program Area: Public Affairs/Society Benefit

Headquarters: Washington D.C.

Total funding: \$466,000 since 1991

Most recent grant: \$20,000 in 2018

As January 25, 2019 marked the end of the 35-day government shutdown (the longest in history and surpassing the previous record of 21 days set under President Bill Clinton in 1995), we felt it relevant to focus this month's spotlight on the Hudson Institute, a policy research organization that produces a great number of papers on border security and immigration issues, among several other policy categories. Our grants to this think tank have historically been designated toward Dr. John Fonte's work at the Center for American Common Culture and his research on "patriotic assimilation," a concept extremely relevant to today's immigration debate.

The Hudson Institute was founded in 1961 by military strategist Herman Kahn and his colleagues at the RAND Corporation, a global, security policy think tank. The Institute's initial research projects were largely restricted to policy options regarding domestic and military use of nuclear power, the most notable of which being its use of scenario-planning techniques to forecast long-term developments, also known as "future studies." The focus eventually expanded to incorporate its current ten policy categories: economics, health care, human rights, national security, culture and social policy, energy and environmental policy, government and politics, international relations, legal affairs and criminal justice, and technology and applied science. Today, the Institute has a mission of "promoting American leadership and global engagement for a secure, free, and prosperous future and guiding global leaders in government and business through publications, conferences and policy recommendations."

Our grants support the Center for American Common Culture, directed by Dr. John Fonte. Dr. Fonte, previously a teacher at both the high school and college levels, also serves on the governing board of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) and has been a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), both FMKF grantees. Throughout 2018, he has been extremely involved with Congressional staff and Trump administration officials regarding the federal budget and immigration enforcement, and he has had much success in adapting questions on the forthcoming 2020 census that will directly affect identity and citizenship issues. As mentioned before, a great deal of Dr. Fonte and his Center's research has less to do with border security or specific changes to the current immigration system (policies advocated for by other grantees, such as previously-spotlighted Center for Immigration Studies), and more to do with cultural acclimatization within the border. Dr. Fonte primarily writes about "patriotic assimilation," or the notion that integration of prospective citizens into the American way of life must include provisions that introduce civics, history, English, and the meaning of the Oath of Allegiance and goes beyond the current naturalization requirements for citizenship. The Center for American Common Culture is by no means a large-scale operation within the Hudson Institute. For context, the Center's operating budget is \$187K, while the

Institute's annual budget as a whole is \$16M. Be careful not to equate the size of the Center to its research output and impact; Dr. Fonte's papers are internationally renowned and his insight to the nuances of cultural assimilation appears to be highly valued by a number of current Presidential and Congressional representatives.

As is the case with the majority of our public policy grantees, we are mindful of the fact that it is much more difficult to gauge the impact of the Hudson Institute than it is with, say, a human services or direct service organization which has concrete deliverables. Typically, we'd hope to find evidence that Dr. Fonte has reached the engaged grassroots populace who can, in turn, "pressure" legislators; while this does not appear to have been the case throughout the Obama administration, we cannot dismiss the value of the aforementioned connections to Capitol Hill and global reach that has only grown over the last three years. Overall, the Center for American Common Culture and the Hudson Institute continues to garner respect on both sides of the aisle because its researchers strive for impartiality. In a particularly turbulent political environment, this organization has consistently provided relatively objective analyses on a number of issues that often evoke subjective responses, all in an effort to foster a more productive debate and, ultimately, promote positive change.

Prepared by Erin Clifford
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