

Grantee: Federation for American Immigration Reform, Inc.

Program Area: Public Affairs/Society Benefit

Most Recent Grant: \$65,000 in 2019 for research, analysis, and educational activities (non-lobbying) that provide statistical and practical impacts of legislative remedies

Total Funding: \$1,795,200 since 1986

With our Board focus on immigration this year and in anticipation of Dan Stein's presentation at our upcoming September meeting, we felt it appropriate and quite timely to examine our grantee, Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which has often appeared at the forefront of this debate with its staff and immigration research consistently referenced in several news publications and by the current administration. Moreover, this spotlight contains a brief comparison to a similar organization and FMKF grantee, Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), which was established as a spin-off of FAIR in 1985.

FAIR was founded in 1979 by John Tanton, often cited as the founder of the modern immigration reform movement, and has a mission today of reducing overall immigration "to a more normal level" by evaluating policies and seeking out solutions that help reduce the impact of immigration on the nation's security, economy, workforce, education, healthcare and environment. FAIR views illegal immigration as a drain on public funds, working conditions, and public services, a strain on natural resources and communities due to population growth, and a threat to national security. Alternatively, it believes that legal immigration, as is, threatens "virtually every social cause" and must be reformed to manage population growth, address environmental needs, and maintain a high quality of American life. Through these contexts, FAIR's primary objectives are to reduce overall immigration to "a more normal level" and legal immigration levels "from well over one million at present to... 300,000 a year over a sustained period to allow America to manage growth, address environmental concerns, and maintain a high quality of life." Specifically, programs to achieve this objective include the development of digital marketing techniques and media content to provide a steady stream of outreach videos to target audiences on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. Similarly, FAIR has a strong relationship with a number of radio hosts who attend the annual radio row event, "Hold Their Feet to the Fire," though FAIR admits in its most recent President's Report that television visibility has been reduced due to an alignment with the current administration and minimized need for a FAIR presence on cable news. In addition to outreach efforts, FAIR's Government Relations team and staff lobbyists stay abreast of developments both on Capital Hill and within the administration in order to offer input to immigration legislation and quickly engage the digital platform to amplify the key messages of policymakers. Beyond the federal level, this team engages state and local legislators, activists, and volunteers in a full range of pro-enforcement and educational efforts. Finally, FAIR's research programs produce reports that are often referenced in national news and by the current administration.

These efforts are led by Dan Stein, President of FAIR and our upcoming speaker, who has been in his present position since January 2003 after holding the role of Executive Director since 1988. Mr. Stein is an attorney who has worked for more than 35 years in the field of immigration law and law reform and was previously the Executive Director of the Immigration Reform Law Institute, a public interest litigation group that has represented a variety of

organizations in immigration and administrative law matters and with which FAIR is legally affiliated. According to his website biography, his interest in immigration began as a professional staff member of the U. S. House of Representatives' Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, where he studied U.S.-Mexico border issues and international crop substitution efforts. He has published hundreds of articles on immigration policy, has a strong television and speaking engagement presence, and has been asked to testify before Congress on immigration-related issues over 50 times.

It's helpful to draw a brief comparison to the Center for Immigration Studies, to which FMKF has granted \$312,500 since 2005 with recent grant levels hovering around \$25,000. Founded in 1985 by the aforementioned John Tanton as a more research-oriented spin-off of FAIR, the Center for Immigration Studies is an independent and non-partisan research organization with a mission of providing immigration policymakers, the academic community, news media, and citizens with reliable information about the social, economic, environmental, fiscal, and safety/security consequences of legal and illegal immigration into the United States. CIS strives to contribute to debates of immigration policy well-informed research grounded in objective data through reports, blog posts, and op-eds. With an operating budget of \$3.4M, compared to FAIR's \$12.6M, CIS is a much smaller operation, though with significant impact and influence on Capitol Hill, with a strategic focus on research development and dissemination of that research, as opposed to FAIR's expanded efforts in outreach and media campaigns. It is relevant to note that both organizations have been identified as "hate groups" by some outside watchdog organizations, such as the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). SPLC cited, among other things, FAIR's acceptance of funding from the Pioneer Fund, established in 1937 "to advance the scientific study of heredity and human differences" and has been accused of ties to eugenics due to its research regarding racial differences in intelligence, as well as the well-publicized beliefs of its founder, John Tanton, who has been referred to as a white supremacist in a number of national publications. Dan Stein has made efforts to distance FAIR from the reputation of its founder, highlighting in a 2011 *New York Times* interview that Tanton has "had no significant control over FAIR for years." (It's advisable to point out that in 2013, after a deep dive into our public policy docket and to address some of these concerns, we cut our support of FAIR from a high of \$105K to an eventual range of \$65K and began restricting designations, as opposed to granting the previous general operating support.) CIS, too, was cited by SPLC as a xenophobic and extreme right-wing organization. According to Mark Krikorian, Executive Director of CIS, "the wickedness of the SPLC's blacklist lies in the fact that it conflates groups that really do preach hatred, such as the Ku Klux Klan and Nation of Islam, with ones that simply do not share the SPLC's political preferences...to marginalize the organizations in this second category" and, thus, shut down public debate.

Overall, in a particularly turbulent political environment, this organization has consistently provided influential programming to both the general public, as well as all levels of government and policymaking. FAIR is an undeniable leader in fostering debate and promoting changes to legal immigration, a system that has been left unaffected for over 30 years.

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