

## Moving the Needle - The Trump Foundation



Just before busting out of NYC for a vacation, I got involved in promoting a cause on MoveOn. I'm back and wanted to recount the positive experience and hail a few important people and one impressive organization: MoveOn. I had not had much traffic with these folks before, but am now fully prepared to attest to their effectiveness. They are thorough, smart, responsive to questions and equipped to provide good, timely answers.

Here's the background: The New York State Attorney General filed [a civil suit against the Trump Foundation](#) in June, citing numerous egregious violations of state law. Even though it is clear that there are a number of criminal violations, the Attorney General cannot initiate a criminal investigation unless asked to do so by the Governor. The Pulitzer Prize winning reporter, David Cay Johnston, made the bulletproof case for this referral in a [NY Times op-ed](#) early in July. Strangely, there was hardly a whisper about the revelation that Trump could be liable for NY State criminal violations. Big news, it struck me, in that any convictions would be immune from the power of any presidential pardon. (That the President of the US has this power to begin with strikes me as being absurd. It, for all intents and purposes, puts that person above the law. But that's another story.) In any event, here is a terrific analysis of the AG's existing suit: [What Makes the Lawsuit against Trump's Foundation Very Different](#).

Not hearing any hue and cry after Johnston's op-ed, I tried to beat the bushes a bit, contacting some reporters and news organizations. Not a peep from them. But Johnston himself was pushing at [his website](#) and Twitter feed and another key voice, Zephyr Teachout, chimed in, calling for Governor Andrew Cuomo to make the necessary referral. (Full disclosure: I have been enthusiastically supporting the candidacy of [Teachout for NY State Attorney General](#).)

And then I said, what the heck, let me try a [MoveOn petition](#). I got it up and running in a few hours, sent it out to some people, then Johnston noted it at his website and it took off. To make a long story short, on July 18, the Governor's office issued [a statement](#): "At Governor Cuomo's direction, the state stands ready to provide the Attorney General with the appropriate criminal referral on this matter if and when she asks for it." [Yeah, baby!](#) News stories from the [NY Times](#) and [Newsday](#) mention our petition, as well as highlighting the pressure from Teachout.

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We have to use every possible non-violent, legal mechanism available to express our unwillingness to accept the criminality of the Trump regime and their supporters and enablers. I am grateful for the smart, timely reporting of David Cay Johnston, the tenaciousness of Zephyr Teachout, and MoveOn for providing us with some superb tools of democracy.