

## New York Sues Trump Family for Alleged Misuse of Charity Funds

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Eric Trump, Donald Trump Jr, Ivanka Trump, and Donald Trump. Photo courtesy of The Daily Beast.[/caption]

*Summary: The New York attorney general's office claims the Trump family uses their charity as a personal "checkbook."*

This week, the New York attorney general sued President Donald Trump and his children for allegedly using their nonprofit foundation as a personal "checkbook." This illegal activity prompted the AG to ask for the foundation to be dissolved and for the Trump family to never be allowed to run a charity in the state.

"Mr. Trump ran the Foundation according to his whim, rather than the law," the lawsuit stated.

According to [Reuters](#), New York AG Barbara Underwood said that the Trump family used money from their charity to pay for Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, to settle Trump's business lawsuits, and to redecorate Trump's properties. For instance, the Trump family used \$100,000 from the charity to settle a legal claim in 2007 and spent \$10,000 on a portrait of Trump.

The Trump family has been accused of "repeated and willful self-dealing transactions to benefit Mr. Trump's personal and business interests."

The New York AG has been conducting an investigation into the Trump Foundation for 21 months, and it began its probe under predecessor Eric Schneiderman, who was fired after he was accused by multiple women of domestic abuse. The AG said that the Trump family used the charity's money to benefit Trump's personal, business, and political interests.

The lawsuit is seeking \$2.8 million plus penalties, and it wants to ban Trump from running a charity for 10 years. The lawsuit wants to ban his children, Eric Trump, Donald Trump Jr., and Ivanka Trump from leading a charity for one year.

"As our investigation reveals, the Trump Foundation was little more than a checkbook for payments from Mr. Trump or his businesses to nonprofits, regardless of their purpose or legality," Underwood said in a statement. "That is not how private foundations should function."

President Trump has responded to the lawsuit on Twitter, blaming Democrats for his woes.

"The sleazy New York Democrats, and their now disgraced (and run out of town) A.G. Eric Schneiderman are doing everything they can to sue me on a foundation that took in \$18,800,000 and gave out to charity more money than it took in, \$19,200,000," Trump wrote. "I won't settle this case!"

The Trump Foundation also criticized the lawsuit and blamed politics for its current legal troubles. It stated that Trump had donated millions of dollars of his own money to the foundation and that the family had planned to dissolve the charity in 2016.

"This is politics at its very worst," a Trump Foundation representative said. "The Foundation has donated over \$19 million to worthy charitable causes -- more than it even received. The President himself -- or through his companies -- has contributed more than \$8 million. The reason the Foundation was able to donate more than it took in is because it had little to no expenses. This is unheard of for a charitable foundation. The Foundation currently has \$1.7 million remaining which the NYAG has been holding hostage for political gain. This is unconscionable -- particularly because the Foundation previously announced its intention to dissolve more than a year and a half ago. The prior NYAG, who was recently forced to resign from office in disgrace, made it his stated mission to use this matter to not only advance his own political goals, but also for his own political fundraising. The acting NYAG's recent statement that battling the White House is 'the most important work (she) have ever done' shows that such political attacks will continue unabated."

Paul S. Ryan, head of litigation at Common Cause, said that the details in the lawsuit could show that the Trump family violated campaign finance law by funneling money to his campaign through the nonprofit.

"This involvement of the Trump campaign in the foundation's disbursements right before the Iowa caucuses may very well violate the campaign finance law soft money ban," Ryan told Reuters.

In her statement, AG Underwood said that she has already notified the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Committee about possible law violations.

- [Trump Tower Transcripts Reveal Donald Trump Jr. Received No Dirt on Hillary Clinton](#)
- [Campaign Finance Limits Reinstated by Court](#)

**What do you think about Donald Trump and his charity? Let us know in the comments below.**

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