

Summer 2025

Impact Report



Accountability

At a time when corporate and billionaire-owned media—from Paramount/CBS and Disney/ABC to the *Washington Post* and *LA Times*—is increasingly bending the knee to those in power, independent reporting is becoming even more important. Audiences are hungry for journalism they can trust. They rely on it to understand the transformation of our government, and to inspire action for change. And while government accountability can seem difficult to achieve right now, sunlight still has a disinfecting effect—and can even cause agencies to backtrack. The *Mother Jones* and *Reveal* newsroom has been fearless in documenting the abuses of power playing out across the country, while also helping readers, listeners, and viewers connect the dots, find context, and even discover hope.

“The Throughline”

We follow the longer arc of a story across time, stitching together the throughlines other newsrooms fail to see.

The Supreme Court’s 6-3 decision in *U.S. v. Skrametti* upheld a Tennessee law banning transgender children from accessing puberty blockers and hormone therapy, and followed the court’s prior practice in overturning *Roe v. Wade* by leaving the issue to the states—a major loss for the transgender community. *Mother Jones* reporter Madison Pauly has followed the Skrametti case and its implications, and her reporting was cited in a brief filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the plaintiffs challenging the Tennessee law. The 2023 investigation, co-authored with Emma Rindlisbacher, focused on the influence of a small, extremist anti-trans medical group.



Using leaked documents and firsthand reporting, we’ve been able to track the coordination among anti-LGBTQ groups—fringe doctors, conversion therapists, religious-right lawyers—to turn the public against transgender people, including by pushing misinformation about gender-affirming health care. The Skrametti ruling is their crowning success so far, but it’s not the end of this story.

Madison Pauly, *Mother Jones* reporter



ILLUSTRATION BY MOTHER JONES; VALERIE PLESCH/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY

POLITICS

Exposing Ed Martin

It's clear that Congress and the courts won't reliably rein in the excesses of the Trump administration. That means the media's responsibility to call them out—from corruption and graft to the reckless slashing of federal programs and the nomination of unqualified cronies into key government positions—is more vital than ever.

In March and April, *Mother Jones* senior reporter Dan Friedman published a series of articles about Ed Martin, Trump's nominee for US attorney for the District of Columbia. Friedman's reporting with Amanda Moore included an exclusive about how Martin attended a fundraiser with January 6 rioters and another story about Martin distancing himself from past praise of a Nazi sympathizer. Friedman's reporting found its way into the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman's written questions posed to Martin on April 7, and a May 7 complaint letter submitted by two advocacy groups to US senators and the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. Ultimately, on May 8, President Trump withdrew Martin's name from consideration, only two days after Republican Sen. Thom Tillis said he would oppose Martin's confirmation (all but sealing his fate). Friedman's reporting was cited widely, including in *The Forward*, *Washingtonian*, *Semafor*, and NPR.

PODCAST

Providing Depth to the Public Discourse

With intimate discussions capturing the pulse of the national conversation, CIR's weekly podcast *More To The Story* has featured key newsmakers and influential voices since debuting in March. From Nikole Hannah-Jones discussing Trump's attempts at erasing Black history to David Hogg's timely critique of the Democratic Party and student activist Mohsen Mahdawi's first-person account of his arrest at his immigration hearing, *MTTS* has been instrumental in an 80% increase in downloads for the entire *Reveal* podcast feed.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Survivors of Domestic Abuse Buried in Debt by Their Abusers

Katie Herchenroeder's reporting in *Mother Jones* chronicled how domestic abuse survivors find themselves buried in debt built up by their abusers. The Urban Resource Institute later shared the story with members of the New York State Assembly, which said the concept of "coerced debt" was difficult to understand until her piece was published. In June 2025, the legislature passed a bill to address the issue, and it is expected to be signed into law.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Criminalizing Care in Alabama

Reveal reporter and editor Nina Martin traveled to Alabama to tell the story of how providing support and advice to those seeking an abortion—which is outlawed in the state—has itself become a criminal offense. Martin's episode of *Reveal* demonstrated how certain freedoms, such as the right to travel, the right to free speech, and the right to give and receive help, are now caught up in the push to criminalize all aspects of abortion care. Following her reporting, Martin appeared on the podcasts *Alabama Politics This Week* and *The Daily Beans*, as well as on WLRH (NPR Huntsville).



PHOTOGRAPH BY BUTCH DILL/ AP



ILLUSTRATION BY VARTIKA SHARMA; EVAN VUCCI/AP; GETTY (2)

POLITICS

Weaponizing Surveillance Technology

As Luke O'Brien described in his *Mother Jones* investigation into Clearview AI, the firm's co-founder Hoan Ton-That sought to integrate the company's face-recognition software with border surveillance cameras, providing the government a powerful tool in its growing arsenal of anti-immigration measures. O'Brien's story describes how Ton-That fell in with Silicon Valley neoreactionaries, attracted funding from Peter Thiel, and signed up hundreds of law enforcement clients in his quest to weaponize surveillance technology against those deemed undesirable.

Within a day of our April 7 story, Clearview AI's board voted to remove Ton-That from the board, effectively severing ties with him. O'Brien's work was picked up in additional reporting by *The Verge*, *The Trace*, the *Washington Post*, *Inc.*, *Salon*, and the *Dallas Observer*, with Anonymous promoting the investigation on social media.

Awards Roundup

CIR Studios' documentary film *The Grab* earned four Emmy nominations, and took home the Emmy Award for Outstanding Research in a Documentary.

The American Society of Magazine Editors awarded both *Mother Jones* and *Reveal* the prestigious National Magazine Award. *Mother Jones* won the "General Excellence" award based on two issues: "American Oligarchy" and "Lessons From a Mass Shooter's Mother." *Reveal's* three-part series "40 Acres and a Lie," about the legacy of slavery, land ownership, and reparations, made in partnership with the Center for Public Integrity and *Mother Jones*, won for podcasting.

"40 Acres and a Lie" was recognized by the Sigma Awards, which celebrate the best in data journalism, and in the Investigative Reporters and Editors best audio category.

Mother Jones reporters Noah Lanard and Isabela Dias's reporting on the detention of Venezuelan immigrants was recognized with the Sidney Award.

Mother Jones video correspondent Garrison Hayes earned his second Webby Award for Best Creator (News & Politics).

CIR received multiple 2025 Telly Awards for video production, including the highest honors for a News & Information Series for the package "Welcome to the American Oligarchy."

The **Reveal** episode "A Baby Adopted, A Family Divided" won the 2025 Indigenous Journalists Association First Place Award for Best Coverage of Indigenous Communities.

CIR's collaboration with the Food and Environment Reporting Network about the farm bill earned the James Beard Media Award in the Columns and Newsletters category.

APRIL 1–JUNE 30

By the Numbers:

8 million

video views across platforms

176%

increase from summer 2024

3.4 million

engagements

140%

increase from summer 2024

47 million

impressions

47%

increase from summer 2024

TOP SOCIAL STORIES

It Can Happen Here: The Forcible Removal of Sen. Alex Padilla by David Corn (June 2025) | 1.6M

The Real Reason El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele Cozied Up to Trump by Michael Montgomery (April 2025) | 411K

Trump's Tariffs Give Him a New Way to Dole Out Reward and Punishment by Pema Levy (April 2025) | 753K

Inside the Scrappy Network of Volunteers Protecting Their Neighbors From ICE by Julia Lurie (June 2025) | 353K

Mother Jones on the Frontline of America's Protests by Mother Jones Staff (April 2025) | 1.4M



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PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN VUCCI/AP

POLITICS

Restoring Federal Programs Supporting Women

In April, *Mother Jones* reporter Julianne McShane reported on Attorney General Pam Bondi's funding cuts to "wasteful" programs. Among those were funding to groups supporting victims of violent crime such as the Victim Advocacy Corps, a pilot program from the National Organization of Victim Assistance to train victim advocates who staff domestic violence shelters, hotlines, and rape crisis centers.

The day after McShane's reporting on the loss of federal funding, the Department of Justice restored some of the key grant funding involved. As the National Network to End Domestic Violence noted in promoting McShane's work on X: "Concerns and heartache remain, as this highlights the vulnerable state of services for survivors."

McShane was also the first to report on the Trump administration calling for the elimination of the Women's Bureau, which helps women secure employment in construction and manufacturing. Following McShane's reporting, 34 members of the US House Democratic Women's Caucus sent the labor secretary a letter on June 16, 2025, urging the agency to restore full funding to the program.

HEALTH CARE

Private Equity's Impact on Health Care

Mother Jones reporter Hannah Levintova has closely followed the story of Steward Health Care, the private equity giant that declared bankruptcy in 2024 after gutting patient care and enriching its top executives—and provoking a heated hearing in the Senate last fall. Levintova's reporting, appearing in *Mother Jones* and through an evocative short documentary produced in partnership with *Al Jazeera*, gave voice to those who paid dearly because of Steward's callous adherence to maximizing profits. Levintova appeared on WWNO (NPR New Orleans), WRKF (NPR Baton Rouge), WKSU (NPR Cleveland), KJZZ (NPR Phoenix), and KUAR (NPR Little Rock) to discuss her reporting.