

The Lie About AIPAC and FARA Registration

The Lie: AIPAC should have to register as a foreign agent under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

The Truth: AIPAC does not need to register under FARA because it is funded and run by American citizens, not the Israeli government.

Background:

- The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is an American lobbying organization that advocates for U.S. policies supportive of Israel.
- On September 18, 2025, Buckley Carlson, brother of Tucker Carlson, repeated the claim that AIPAC is undermining the U.S. by not registering under FARA. He also demanded that pro-Israel American influencers register as foreign agents. ([X](#))
- Anti-Israel voices who argue that AIPAC should register under FARA often also suggest that AIPAC's failure to do so proves Israel is exploiting the United States.

Truth Explained:

- Under FARA, any “foreign principal” (including foreign governments, political parties, government-controlled entities, and certain foreign corporations or individuals) that pays someone to influence U.S. policy or public opinion generally triggers a registration requirement. ([FARA](#))
- AIPAC is funded and controlled entirely by American citizens, making it a domestic organization to which FARA does not apply. ([AIPAC](#))
- AIPAC is not unique; many domestic organizations lobby on behalf of foreign countries, such as the National Iranian American Council, the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights, the American Coalition for Ukraine, the American Hellenic Institute, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Turkish Heritage Organization, and the U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC. These organizations are not required to register under FARA. ([Quincy Institute](#))
- Israel does conduct lobbying activities in the United States, and these are properly registered under FARA. In 2023, about \$3.32 million in FARA-registered lobbying came from the Israeli government and roughly \$10 million from non-government Israeli entities. ([OpenSecrets](#))
- By comparison, other countries spent far more on FARA-registered lobbying in 2023: Saudi Arabia \$101 million, UAE \$41.7 million, China \$85.4 million, and Liberia \$235 million. ([OpenSecrets](#))
- These countries also invest heavily in soft power initiatives. Qatar alone spends billions on influencing operations in American universities and purchasing American media companies. ([ISGAP](#))
- In 2022 and 2023, the countries with the most FARA-registered political activity were **Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UAE, and Bangladesh. Israel did not rank in the top 20.** ([Quincy Institute](#))
- Since Trump's re-election in November 2024, foreign agents from countries including Ukraine, South Africa, Taiwan, Armenia, UAE, Turkey, South Korea, Somaliland, France, Switzerland, Togo, India, and Serbia have been engaging with conservative think tanks like the Heritage Foundation to influence U.S. policy. Israel was **not** among them. ([Washington Examiner](#))
- Between February and August 2025, Middle Eastern governments such as Qatar, UAE, Egypt, Bahrain, and the Kurdistan Regional Government reported multiple direct contacts regarding the National Defense Authorization Act. Israel was **not involved** in these lobbying efforts. ([Washington Examiner](#))

Takeaway:

AIPAC does not qualify as a foreign agent under U.S. law because it is an American-funded and American-run organization. Claims that Israel is “taking advantage” of the U.S. via AIPAC misunderstand both the legal framework of FARA and the actual landscape of foreign lobbying, where Israel's registered expenditures are modest compared to other countries' activities.