



May 17, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

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Re: Public Records Request

Dear Public Records Officer:

Pursuant to the Florida's public records law, as codified at Fla. Stat. Chapter 119, American Oversight makes the following request for public records.

The report issued by the Office of Special Counsel Robert Mueller III confirmed that the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Army (GRU) was able to "gain access to the network of at least one Florida county government" in 2016, as part of a Russian effort to influence American elections that year.¹ However, the report does not identify the affected county.

American Oversight seeks records with the potential to increase the public's understanding of the effects of Russian hacking efforts on the 2016 elections and the implications of those efforts for the integrity and security of future elections.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that Hardee County promptly produce the following:

¹ SPECIAL COUNSEL ROBERT S. MUELLER, III REPORT ON THE INVESTIGATION INTO RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 51 (Mar. 2019).



All communications related to cybersecurity or election security between any Hardee County office and any official with the United States federal government, including but not limited to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), or the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA).

American Oversight seeks all responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. In conducting your search, please understand the term “record” in its broadest sense, to include any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind. We seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs, as well as letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions. Our request includes any attachments to these records. **No category of material should be omitted from search, collection, and production.**

In addition, American Oversight insists that your office use the most up-to-date technologies to search for responsive information and take steps to ensure that the most complete repositories of information are searched. American Oversight is available to work with you to craft appropriate search terms. **However, custodian searches are still required; governmental authorities may not have direct access to files stored in .PST files, outside of network drives, in paper format, or in personal email accounts.**

Please search all records regarding official business, **including files or emails in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts.**

In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically that it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

Please take appropriate steps to ensure that records responsive to this request are not deleted by your office before the completion of processing for this request. If records potentially responsive to this request are likely to be located on systems where they are subject to potential deletion, including on a scheduled basis, please take steps to prevent that deletion, including, as appropriate, by instituting a litigation hold on those records.

To ensure that this request is properly construed, that searches are conducted in an adequate but efficient manner, and that extraneous costs are not incurred, American Oversight welcomes an opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, American Oversight and Hardee County can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in electronic format by email or in PDF or TIF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records to American Oversight, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

Conclusion

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with your office on this request. If you do not understand any part of this request, have any questions, or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please contact Beth France at records@american.oversight.org or 202.897.2465.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Austin R. Evers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Austin R. Evers
Executive Director
American Oversight