



April 24, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Open Records Custodian
Office of the Secretary of State
214 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334
openrecords@sos.ga.gov

Re: Open Records Request

Dear Records Custodian:

Pursuant to the Georgia Open Records Law (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq.), American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that the Secretary of State produce the following within three business days, or provide a written description of any responsive records with a timetable for their production within three business days:

All records reflecting any instructions—including formal or informal guidance documents, decision memoranda, directives, policies, procedures, or policy interpretations, whether or not attached to email or other communications—created, maintained, utilized, distributed or recommended by the Secretary of State’s Elections Division regarding absentee voter signature matching or verification, or the handling of missing or mismatched signatures, including, but not limited to, any instructions created pursuant to the March 6, 2020 settlement agreement between the Democratic Party of Georgia et al. and Brad Raffensperger et al.¹

American Oversight believes that records containing the terms listed below are likely to be responsive, and requests that your office, at a minimum, employ these search terms to identify responsive records:

Search Terms:

- Mismatch
- Mismatches
- Mismatched

¹ See Compromise Settlement Agreement & Release, *Democratic Party of Ga., Inc. et al. v. Raffensperger et al.*, No. 1:19-cv-05028-WMR (N.D. Ga. filed Mar. 6, 2020).



- Match
- Matching
- Signature
- Signatures
- Sign
- Signed
- Signing
- Absentee
- Handwriting
- Pre-rejection
- Prerejection

Please provide all responsive records from March 29, 2019, to the date the search is conducted.

In addition, American Oversight insists that the Secretary of State 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; your office may not have direct access to files stored in .PST files, outside of network drives, in paper format, or in 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 the Secretary of State 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

American Oversight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to promote transparency in government, to educate the public about government activities, and to ensure the accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media. American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.²

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with you 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 Khahilia Shaw at records@americanoversight.org or 202.539.6507.

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

² American Oversight currently has approximately 15,400 page likes on Facebook and 102,200 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, FACEBOOK, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Apr. 8, 2020); American Oversight (@weareoversight), TWITTER, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Apr. 8, 2020).