



June 11, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Office of the South Carolina Attorney General
Rembert Dennis Building
1000 Assembly Street
Room 519
Columbia, SC 29201
foia@scag.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Freedom of Information Officer:

Pursuant to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act, S.C. Code Ann. §§ 30-4-10 et seq., American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that the Office of the Attorney General promptly produce the following records:¹

1. All calendar entries and telephone call logs, reflecting any meetings, calls, or conferences with the Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA) or the Rule of Law Defense Fund (RLDF).
2. Any agendas, handouts, presentation materials, or programs, received by or created for RAGA or RLDF, in the possession of Attorney General Alan Wilson or the South Carolina Attorney General's office.
3. Any handwritten or electronic notes taken during any oral communications or summaries of any oral communications between (a) Attorney General Wilson or the South Dakota Attorney General's office, and (b) RAGA or RLDF.
4. All email communications (including complete email threads, email attachments, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments, whether in government or personal email accounts) between (a) Attorney General Wilson, or anyone communicating on the Attorney General's

¹ Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-30(C), please notify American Oversight of your final determination as to the public availability of the requested records within ten business days and produce the records within thirty calendar days after issuing your final determination.



behalf (such as a scheduler or assistant), and (b) RAGA or RLDF, including but not limited to communications from email addresses ending in republicanags.com, ruleoflawdefensefund.org, and rldf.org.

5. All text messages and messages on messaging platforms (such as Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, or WhatsApp) between (a) Attorney General Wilson and (b) RAGA or RLDF.

For all parts of this request, American Oversight requests records reflecting communications with any state officials serving as RAGA or RLDF leadership, as well as all RAGA or RLDF representatives or employees. For example, if a former Chairman of RAGA communicated with Attorney General Wilson from his own government or personal email address, those emails would be responsive and should be produced. Therefore, at a minimum, records reflecting calendar entries/call logs, presentations, meeting notes, email communications, or text messages with the following individuals should be included in the search for responsive records:

- a. Republican Attorneys General Association (republicanags.com)
 - i. Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr (agcarr@law.ga.gov or ccarr@law.ga.gov)
 - ii. Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt (ag@ago.mo.gov or eric.schmitt@ago.mo.gov)
 - iii. Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry (landryj@ag.louisiana.gov or jefflandry@me.com)
 - iv. Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge (lesliecrutledge@gmail.com or Leslie.rutledge@arkansasag.gov)
 - v. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (ken@kenpaxtonlaw.com or ken.paxton@oag.texas.gov)
 - vi. Former Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill (Curtis.hill@atg.in.gov)
- b. Rule of Law Defense Fund (rldf.org, ruleoflawdefensefund.org)
 - i. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall (steve.marshall@alabamaag.gov or Da27th@gmail.com)
 - ii. Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes (seanreyes@agutah.gov or reyes.seand@gmail.com)

Please provide all responsive records from January 1, 2018, through the date a search is conducted.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-30(B), American Oversight requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. Disclosure of the requested records is in the public interest because it will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by the general public in a

significant way. In addition, this request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes.

A waiver of fees is “in the public interest because furnishing the information can be considered as primarily benefiting the general public.”² The general public has a significant interest in understanding Attorney General Wilson’s history with RAGA and RLDF, given these organizations’ recent association with the events of January 6, 2021 at the U.S. Capitol.³ Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including whether and to what extent Attorney General Wilson is involved with RAGA and RLDF. American Oversight is committed to transparency and makes the responses agencies provide to public records requests publicly available, and the public’s understanding of the government’s activities would be enhanced through American Oversight’s analysis and publication of these records.

Furthermore, American Oversight’s work is aimed solely at serving the public interest. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, American Oversight does not have a commercial purpose and the release of the information requested is not in American Oversight’s financial interest. American Oversight’s mission is 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.⁴

American Oversight has also demonstrated its commitment to the public disclosure of documents and creation of editorial content through regular substantive analyses posted to its website.⁵ Examples reflecting this commitment to the public disclosure of documents and the creation of editorial content include the posting of records and analysis related to the organization’s investigations into misconduct and corruption in state governments;⁶ posting records and analysis of federal and state governments’

² S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-30(B).

³ John Monk & Jamie Self, *Group Tied to SC AG Alan Wilson Urged ‘Patriots’ to Attend Trump Pre-Riot Rally*, The State (Jan. 11, 2021, 2:21 PM), <https://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/article248397745.html>.

⁴ American Oversight currently has approximately 15,700 page likes on Facebook and 106,100 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited June 3, 2021); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited June 3, 2021).

⁵ See generally *News*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/blog>.

⁶ See generally *State Investigations*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/states>; see, e.g., *State Government Contacts with Voting-Restriction Activists*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/state-government-contacts-with-voting-restriction-activists>; *Georgia’s Voting Machines and Election Security*, American

responses to the Coronavirus pandemic;⁷ posting records received as part of American Oversight’s “Audit the Wall” project to gather and analyze information related to the Trump administration’s proposed construction of a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, and analyses of what those records reveal;⁸ and the posting of records related to an ethics waiver received by a senior Department of Justice attorney and an analysis of what those records demonstrated regarding the Department’s process for issuing such waivers.⁹

Accordingly, American Oversight qualifies for a fee waiver.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

In connection with its request for records, American Oversight provides the following guidance regarding the scope of the records sought and the search and processing of records:

- Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. For instance, if the request seeks “communications,” please search all locations likely to contain communications, including relevant hard-copy files, correspondence files, appropriate locations on hard drives and shared drives, emails, text messages or other direct messaging systems (such as iMessage, WhatsApp, Signal, or

Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/georgias-voting-machines-and-election-security>.

⁷ See, e.g., *The Trump Administration’s Response to Coronavirus*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/the-trump-administrations-response-to-coronavirus>; *Tulsa Health Officials Initially Estimated Trump Rally Would Directly Lead to 2 to 9 Deaths*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/tulsa-health-officials-initially-estimated-trump-rally-would-directly-lead-to-2-to-9-deaths>; *Wisconsin Documents Offer Window into Early Uncertainty over COVID-19*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/wisconsin-documents-offer-window-into-early-uncertainty-over-covid-19>; *In the Documents: Florida Health Department Efforts to Suppress Release of Coronavirus Records*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/in-the-documents-florida-health-department-efforts-to-suppress-release-of-coronavirus-records>.

⁸ See generally *Audit the Wall*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/audit-the-wall>; see, e.g., *Border Wall Investigation Report: No Plans, No Funding, No Timeline, No Wall*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/border-wall-investigation-report-no-plans-no-funding-no-timeline-no-wall>.

⁹ *DOJ Records Relating to Solicitor General Noel Francisco’s Recusal*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/document/doj-civil-division-response-noel-francisco-compliance>; *Francisco & the Travel Ban: What We Learned from the DOJ Documents*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/francisco-the-travel-ban-what-we-learned-from-the-doj-documents>.

Twitter direct messages), voicemail messages, instant messaging systems such as Lync or ICQ, and shared messages systems such as Slack.

- In conducting your search, please understand the terms “record,” “document,” and “information” in their 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 for records includes any attachments to those records or other materials enclosed with those records when they were previously transmitted. To the extent that an email is responsive to our request, our request includes all prior messages sent or received in that email chain, as well as any attachments to the email.
- Please search all relevant records or systems containing records regarding agency business. Do not exclude records regarding agency business contained in files, email accounts, or devices in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts or text messages.
- 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.¹⁰ If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically why 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 the agency 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.

Conclusion

If you have any questions regarding how to construe this request for records or believe that further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production of records of interest to American Oversight, please do not hesitate to contact American Oversight to discuss this request. 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 your agency can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

¹⁰ S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-40(b).

Where possible, please provide responsive material in an electronic format by email. Alternatively, please provide responsive material in native format or in PDF 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.

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with your agency 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,

/s/ Khahilia Shaw
Khahilia Shaw
on behalf of
American Oversight