VIA EMAIL AND ONLINE PORTAL

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Via Online Portal

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Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and the implementing regulations of your agency, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Public reporting has indicated extensive engagement between the Trump administration—including the Department of Justice—the Trump campaign, and state officials in the months following the November 2020 election with the goal of delaying
or halting certification, or even overturning its results. Furthermore, lawyers representing the Trump campaign supported conspiracy theories that campaign officials knew to be false.

American Oversight seeks records with the potential to shed light on efforts by the Trump administration to challenge the results of the November 2020 election.

**Requested Records**

American Oversight requests that your agency produce the following records within twenty business days:

All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) and text messages or messages on messaging platforms (such as Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, Twitter direct messages, Facebook messages, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, or Parler) between (a) the agency officials specified in Column A and the (b) external entities listed in Column B that (c) contain any of the key terms listed below.

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3. American Oversight recognizes the potential for overlap between this requests and requests with the agency tracking numbers FOIA-2021-00654, FOIA-2021-00655, FOIA-2021-01584, FY21-082 (OLC), FY21-083 (OLC), and 145-FOI-17595 (CIV), and notwithstanding the expanded date range and list of custodians in this request. To the extent that your agency has already produced records responsive to this request, they do not need to be reproduced to American Oversight. American Oversight would not object to the exclusion or redaction of any duplicative record.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A: Agency Officials</th>
<th>Column B: External Individuals &amp; Entities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attorney General William Barr</td>
<td>1. Mark Meadows, White House Chief of Staff</td>
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<td>2. Chief of Staff Will Levi (and anyone subsequently serving in the role of Chief of Staff to AG Barr)</td>
<td>2. Tony Ornato, White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations</td>
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<td>5. John Moran, Chief of Staff to Acting AG Rosen)</td>
<td>5. Julia Hahn, Deputy White House Communications Director</td>
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<td>7. Anyone acting in the capacity of Chief of Staff to Acting Deputy AG Donoghue</td>
<td>7. Alyssa Farah, White House Communications Director</td>
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<td>8. Patrick Hovakimian, Associate Deputy Attorney General</td>
<td>8. Anyone subsequently fulfilling the role of White House Communications Director</td>
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<td>9. Jeffrey Clark, acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division</td>
<td>9. Anyone serving in the capacity of White House Director of Message Planning</td>
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<td>10. Stephen Engle, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel</td>
<td>10. Anyone serving in the capacity of White House Director of Rapid Response</td>
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<td>12. Brian Rabbitt, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division</td>
<td>12. Brian Morgenstern, Deputy White House Press Secretary</td>
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<td>13. Judd Deere, Deputy White House Press Secretary</td>
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<td>14. Pat Cipollone, White House Counsel</td>
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<td>15. Pat Philbin, Deputy White House Counsel</td>
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<td>16. Michael Purpura, Deputy White House Counsel</td>
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<td>17. Kathryn Todd, Deputy White House Counsel</td>
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<td>18. Scott Gast, Deputy White House Counsel</td>
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<td>19. Jared Kushner</td>
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<td>20. Ivanka Trump</td>
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<td>21. Stephen Miller, Senior Advisor to the President</td>
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22. Anyone communicating from an email address ending in @who.eop.gov

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<tr>
<th>Key Terms:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. “election fraud”</td>
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<td>ii. “election integrity”</td>
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<td>iii. “ballot fraud”</td>
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<td>iv. “vote fraud”</td>
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<td>v. “voter fraud”</td>
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<td>vi. Oltmann</td>
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<td>vii. Dominion</td>
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<td>viii. Maricopa</td>
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<td>ix. Antrim</td>
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<td>x. Fulton</td>
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<td>xi. Arizona</td>
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<td>xii. MyPillow</td>
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<td>xiii. “My pillow”</td>
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<td>xiv. Venezuela</td>
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<td>xv. Chavez</td>
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<td>xvi. Soros</td>
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<td>xvii. Lindell</td>
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<td>xviii. Luzerne</td>
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<td>xix. Sidney</td>
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<td>xx. Murdoch</td>
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Please note that American Oversight does not seek, and that this request specifically excludes, the initial mailing of news clips or other mass-distribution emails. However, subsequent communications forwarding such emails are responsive to this request. In other words, for example, if a specified individual received a mass-distribution news clip email from one of the listed external entities, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if a specified individual forwarded that email to another individual with his own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

Please provide all responsive records from November 1, 2020, through January 20, 2021.

**Fee Waiver Request**

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency’s regulations, American Oversight requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government, and the disclosures will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by the general public in a significant way. Moreover, the request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes.
American Oversight requests a waiver of fees because disclosure of the requested information is “in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of operations or activities of the government.” The public has a significant interest in communications and documents related to the “Big Lie” conspiracy that the 2020 election was stolen by fraud from former President Trump. Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the federal government, including what communications top officials at your agency may have had about the Big Lie. American Oversight is committed to transparency and makes the responses agencies provide to FOIA 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.

This request is primarily and fundamentally for non-commercial purposes. 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.

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. Examples reflecting this commitment to the public disclosure of documents and the creation of editorial content include the posting of records related to the Trump Administration’s contacts with Ukraine and analyses of those contacts; posting records and editorial content about the federal government’s response to the Coronavirus pandemic; posting records received as part of American Oversight’s

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5 See supra, notes 1 & 2.
10 See generally The Trump Administration’s Response to Coronavirus, American Oversight, https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/the-trump-administrations-response-to-coronavirus; see, e.g., CDC Calendars from 2018 and 2019: Pandemic-Related
“Audit the Wall” project to gather and analyze information related to the administration’s proposed construction of a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, and analyses of what those records reveal;\(^\text{11}\) 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;\(^\text{12}\) and posting records and analysis of federal officials’ use of taxpayer dollars to charter private aircraft or use government planes for unofficial business.\(^\text{13}\)

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

- 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

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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. Records of official business conducted
  using unofficial systems or stored outside of official files are subject to the
  Federal Records Act and FOIA. It is not adequate to rely on policies and
  procedures that require officials to move such information to official systems
  within a certain period of time; American Oversight has a right to records
  contained in those files even if material has not yet been moved to official
  systems or if officials have, by intent or through negligence, failed to meet their
  obligations.

- Please use all tools available to your agency to conduct a complete and efficient
  search for potentially responsive records. Agencies are subject to government-
  wide requirements to manage agency information electronically, and many
  agencies have adopted the National Archives and Records Administration
  (NARA) Capstone program, or similar policies. These systems provide options
  for searching emails and other electronic records in a manner that is reasonably
  likely to be more complete than just searching individual custodian files. For
  example, a custodian may have deleted a responsive email from his or her email
  program, but your agency’s archiving tools may capture that email under
  Capstone. At the same time, custodian searches are still necessary; agencies 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 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

  (Nov. 28, 2011), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-
  office/2011/11/28/presidential-memorandum-managing-government-records; Office of
  Mgmt. & Budget, Exec. Office of the President, Memorandum for the Heads of
  Executive Departments & Independent Agencies, “Managing Government Records
  mgmt/m-12-18.pdf.
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.

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, please contact Mehreen Rasheed at foia@americanoversight.org or (202) 848-1320. Also, if American Oversight’s request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact us immediately upon making such a determination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mehreen Rasheed
Mehreen Rasheed
on behalf of
American Oversight