



January 12, 2022

VIA EMAIL

Donetta D’Innocenzo
Room 104 North Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3052
RTKofficer@occ.pasen.gov

Re: Right-to-Know Law Request

Dear Open Records Officer:

Pursuant to the Right-to-Know Law (RTKL), as codified at 65 P.S. §§ 67.101 *et seq.*, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

On July 7, 2021, Senator Doug Mastriano announced a “forensic investigation” of elections in Pennsylvania, sending demands for ballots election materials to three counties.¹ In August, Senator Cris Dush replaced Senator Mastriano as chair of the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee and the following month issued a series of subpoenas requesting communications from the Department of State, as well as extensive information about all registered voters, including the last four digits of their social security numbers.² Though the Senate had initially indicated it would forego choosing a contractor until after a court ruled on the subpoenas, which are currently under litigation, in November, the Senate announced it had selected Envoy Sage, a company with no prior elections experience.³

American Oversight seeks records with the potential to shed light on the participation of Pennsylvania legislators in investigations of the November 2020 election, including any expenditure of public funds.

¹ Marley Parish, *et al.*, *Pa. GOP Lawmaker – and Trump Ally – Mastriano Initiates ‘Forensic Investigation’ into State Elections*, PA Capital-Star (updated July 7, 2021, 4:25 PM), <https://www.penncapital-star.com/government-politics/pa-gop-lawmaker-and-trump-ally-mastriano-initiates-forensic-investigation-into-state-elections/>.

² Stephen Caruso, *To Kick Off Election Investigation, Pa. Senate GOP Subpoena Voters’ Social Security Numbers*, PA Capital-Star (Sept. 15, 2021, 8:20 AM), <https://www.penncapital-star.com/government-politics/pa-senate-gop-set-to-subpoena-voters-identifying-info-as-part-of-election-investigation/>.

³ Marley Parish, *Pa. Court to Hear Arguments over Releasing Voter Information as Part of Election Investigation*, PA Capital-Star (Dec. 13, 2021, 7:13 AM), <https://www.penncapital-star.com/government-politics/pa-court-to-hear-arguments-over-releasing-voter-information-as-part-of-election-investigation/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=d8d5c37e-539a-44e2-8c7e-999004a25440>.



Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office produce the following records within five business days:

Please provide all responsive records described below from October 25, 2021, through the date the search is conducted:

1. A complete copy (including any attachments) of any contract or subcontract, amendment, memorandum of understanding, or other written agreement between (a) the Pennsylvania State Senate (or members thereof) and/or the Senate Intergovernmental Operations Committee, and (b) parties investigating elections in Pennsylvania. At a minimum, this request should be interpreted to include agreements with Envoy Sage, as well as any other individuals or entities contracted in association with any investigations of the 2020 election.
2. A complete copy (including any attachments) of any resume, bid, project proposal, cost or time estimate, scope of work, application form, or other document submitted to the Pennsylvania State Senate (or members or agents thereof) by entities investigating elections in Pennsylvania.
3. A complete copy of any invoice from or payment to entities investigating elections in Pennsylvania, or any of the other individuals or entities enumerated in item 1 above.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 65 P.S. § 67.1307(f)(2), American Oversight requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records, because disclosure of the requested information is “in the public interest.”

The public has a significant interest in attempts by Pennsylvania legislators to investigate and cast doubt on the results or administration of the November 2020 election.⁴ Records with the potential to shed light on this issue would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including whether or to what extent legislators spent public funds promoting partisan election investigations.

American Oversight is committed to transparency and makes the responses agencies provide to open 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. 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

⁴ *See supra*, notes 1-3.

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.⁵

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.⁶ 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;⁷ posting records and analysis of federal and state governments’ responses to the Coronavirus pandemic;⁸ 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;⁹ and the posting of records related to an ethics waiver received by a senior Department of Justice attorney and an analysis of

⁵ American Oversight currently has approximately 15,580 page likes on Facebook and 109,400 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Jan. 6, 2022); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Jan. 6, 2022).

⁶ See generally *News*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/blog>.

⁷ 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 Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/georgias-voting-machines-and-election-security>.

⁸ 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>.

⁹ 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>.

what those records demonstrated regarding the Department's process for issuing such waivers.¹⁰

Finally, 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.

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.
- 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. Records of official business conducted using unofficial systems or stored outside of official files are subject to the Right-to-Know Law.¹¹
- In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the

¹⁰ *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>.

¹¹ See, e.g., *Barkeyville Borough v. Stearns*, 35 A.3d 91, 95–97 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2012).

requested records under 65 P.S. § 67.706. 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.

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 Zachery Morris at records@americanoversight.org or 202.539.6507.

Sincerely,

/s/ Zachery Morris
Zachery Morris
on behalf of
American Oversight