



March 7, 2022

**VIA EMAIL**

Molly Widen  
Legal Counsel  
Iowa Secretary of State  
Lucas State Office Building  
Des Moines, IA 50319  
[molly.widen@sos.iowa.gov](mailto:molly.widen@sos.iowa.gov)

**Re: Public Records Request**

Dear Custodian of Public Records:

Pursuant to the Iowa Public Records Law, Iowa Code, Ch. 22, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Immediately following the November 2020 election, officials in the Trump administration and members of the Trump campaign team coordinated attempts to reverse the results of the election, including in individual states.<sup>1</sup> Since that time, public officials and activists have continued to advocate for more restrictive voting laws or partisan “audits” of elections.<sup>2</sup>

American Oversight seeks records with the potential to shed light on whether or to what extent officials in the Office of the Secretary of State of Iowa have been in contact with individuals or entities seeking to restrict ballot access or conduct a partisan review of elections.

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<sup>1</sup> Emma Brown et al., *Election Denier Who Circulated Jan. 6 PowerPoint Says He Met with Meadows at White House*, Wash. Post (Dec. 11, 2021, 12:30 PM), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/phil-waldron-mark-meadows-powerpoint/2021/12/11/4ea67938-59df-11ec-9a18-a506cf3aa31d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/phil-waldron-mark-meadows-powerpoint/2021/12/11/4ea67938-59df-11ec-9a18-a506cf3aa31d_story.html).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Ray Stern, *Arizona Republicans Propose Dozens of Bills to Change Voting and Elections Following Audit, 2020 Election*, AZ Republic (updated Jan. 23, 2022, 7:27 PM), <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/legislature/2022/01/18/arizona-legislature-dozens-gop-bills-alter-voting-elections/9188425002/>; Patrick Marley, *Gableman Subpoenas Election Officials and City IT Departments As GOP Election Review Widens* (updated Jan. 1, 2022 8:46 AM), <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2021/12/31/wisconsin-election-review-gableman-subpoenas-election-officials-and-municipal-departments-gop-electi/9064298002/>.



## Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office produce the following records promptly, or as soon as feasible:

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, such as Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, or WhatsApp) between (A) the listed officials in the Office of the Secretary of State of Iowa, and (B) any of the external individuals or entities listed below, including, but not limited to, at the suggested email addresses or domains.

In the case of emails and texts, the search should include those sent or received from the specified officials' personal accounts and/or devices if they were used to conduct official business, as well those sent from their official email addresses or government-issued devices.

Please provide all responsive records from November 3, 2020, through the date the search is conducted.

### A. Secretary of State Officials:

1. Paul Pate, Secretary of State & State Commissioner of Elections
2. Michael Ross, Deputy Secretary of State & Chief of Staff
3. Heidi Burhans, Director of Elections
4. Anyone serving as General Counsel

### B. External Entities:

1. Al Hartman, Jenny Limcher, and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Hartman REIT ([@hi-reit.com](mailto:@hi-reit.com))
2. Anyone communicating from the email addresses [arizonaaudit@gmail.com](mailto:arizonaaudit@gmail.com), [arizonaaudit@protonmail.com](mailto:arizonaaudit@protonmail.com), [azaudit@gmail.com](mailto:azaudit@gmail.com), [azauditmedia@gmail.com](mailto:azauditmedia@gmail.com), [azauditpress@gmail.com](mailto:azauditpress@gmail.com), and/or [info@arizonaaudit.com](mailto:info@arizonaaudit.com)
3. Boris Epshteyn ([bepshteyn@gmail.com](mailto:bepshteyn@gmail.com))
4. Charles Bundren III ([charles@bundrenlaw.net](mailto:charles@bundrenlaw.net))
5. Chris Witt, Earl Eugene Kern, and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Wake Technology Services, Inc. ([@waketsi.com](mailto:@waketsi.com))
6. Christina Bobb, Chanel Rion, Graham Ledger ([grahamledger@yahoo.com](mailto:grahamledger@yahoo.com)), and/or anyone communicating on behalf of One America News Network, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in [@oann.com](mailto:@oann.com)
7. Cleta Mitchell ([cleta@cletamitchell.com](mailto:cleta@cletamitchell.com), [cmitchell@foley.com](mailto:cmitchell@foley.com), and/or email addresses ending in [@bradleyfdn.org](mailto:@bradleyfdn.org))
8. Colonel Phil Waldron ([phil@onewarrior.com](mailto:phil@onewarrior.com) or anyone communicating from an email address ending in [@bonfiresearch.org](mailto:@bonfiresearch.org))
9. Doug Logan, and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Cyber Ninjas ([@cyberninjas.com](mailto:@cyberninjas.com))

10. Emily Newman ([enewman@protonmail.com](mailto:enewman@protonmail.com)), Todd Sanders ([todd@krknsys.com](mailto:todd@krknsys.com)), and/or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @americaproject.com
11. Former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn (@generalflynn.com), Joseph Flynn, Charles Flynn, Michael Flynn Jr., and/or anyone communicating on behalf of America's Future (@americasfuture.net)
12. Ivan Raiklin ([ivan.raiklin@gmail.com](mailto:ivan.raiklin@gmail.com), [socialmediaraiklin@gmail.com](mailto:socialmediaraiklin@gmail.com))
13. Jacqueline Timmer, Mary Coran, and/or anyone communicating on behalf of the American Voter's Alliance (@got-freedom.org)
14. Jenna Ellis ([jenna.ellis.esq@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.ellis.esq@gmail.com)), and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Liberty University's Falkirk Center (falkirkcenter.com) or the American Greatness Fund (@americangreatnessfund.com)
15. John Eastman ([jeastman@claremont.org](mailto:jeastman@claremont.org)) and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Constitutional Counsel Group (@ccg1776.com)
16. Jovan Hutton Pulitzer ([jovanhuttonpulitzer@gmail.com](mailto:jovanhuttonpulitzer@gmail.com))
17. Julie Fisher ([aztrumplican@gmail.com](mailto:aztrumplican@gmail.com), [azwinos@gmail.com](mailto:azwinos@gmail.com), and/or [julie.fisher@az51.org](mailto:julie.fisher@az51.org))
18. Katherine Friess ([kfriess@protonmail.com](mailto:kfriess@protonmail.com))
19. Ken Bennett ([kbennettaz7@gmail.com](mailto:kbennettaz7@gmail.com), [kbazos@gmail.com](mailto:kbazos@gmail.com), and/or [kjbennettaz@gmail.com](mailto:kjbennettaz@gmail.com))
20. Kurt Olsen ([kurtols@protonmail.com](mailto:kurtols@protonmail.com))
21. Matt Braynard, and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Look Ahead America (@lookaheadamerica.org)
22. Matthew DePerno ([matthew@depernelaw.com](mailto:matthew@depernelaw.com))
23. Mike Lindell ([mike@mypillow.com](mailto:mike@mypillow.com))
24. Mike Roman ([mikeroman@protonmail.com](mailto:mikeroman@protonmail.com))
25. Phill Kline ([phillklineva@gmail.com](mailto:phillklineva@gmail.com)), Luis Cornelio ([lcornel001@citymail.cuny.edu](mailto:lcornel001@citymail.cuny.edu)) and/or anyone communicating on behalf of the Thomas More Society (@thomasmoresociety.org) or The Amistad Project
26. Rob Natelson ([rob.natelson1@gmail.com](mailto:rob.natelson1@gmail.com))
27. Russell Ramsland ([yrku9sqs@protonmail.com](mailto:yrku9sqs@protonmail.com)), J. Keet Lewis ([keet@jkeetlewis.com](mailto:keet@jkeetlewis.com)), and/or anyone communicating on behalf of Allied Security Operations Group (@alliedspecialops.us)
28. Shiva Ayyadurai ([vashiva@vashiva.com](mailto:vashiva@vashiva.com)), and/or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @echomail.com
29. Sidney Powell ([sp@seeking-justice.org](mailto:sp@seeking-justice.org), [sidney@federalappeals.com](mailto:sidney@federalappeals.com))
30. Steve Montenegro ([stevemontenegro@gmail.com](mailto:stevemontenegro@gmail.com), [stevemontenegro@protonmail.com](mailto:stevemontenegro@protonmail.com), [steve@coronamconsulting.com](mailto:steve@coronamconsulting.com))
31. William Olson ([williamolson@lawandfreedom.com](mailto:williamolson@lawandfreedom.com), [wjo@mindspring.com](mailto:wjo@mindspring.com))

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 one of the listed officials received a mass-distribution news clip email from One America

News Network, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if they forwarded that email to another individual with their own commentary, the complete email chain would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

Please notify American Oversight of any anticipated fees or costs in excess of \$100 prior to incurring such costs or fee.

### **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:

- 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 Public Records Law.<sup>3</sup>
- 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 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.

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<sup>3</sup> See *Linder v. Eckard*, 152 N.W.2d 833, 835 (Iowa 1967) (“It is the nature and purpose of the document, not the place where it is kept, which determines its status” as a public record); *Chapter 22 Frequently Asked Questions*, Iowa Public Information Board, <https://ipib.iowa.gov/faq/if-email-report-or-other-document-composed-received-or-stored-my-personally-owned-electronic> (“If a government official or employee uses privately owned electronic devices or services, such as cell phones, computers, email accounts, smart phones, or such to conduct official government business, then the record generated is a public record.”).

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.

### **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.<sup>4</sup>

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 [records@americanoversight.org](mailto:records@americanoversight.org) or (202) 848-1320.

Sincerely,

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

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<sup>4</sup> American Oversight currently has approximately 15,720 page likes on Facebook and 117,800 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Feb. 28, 2022); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Feb. 28, 2022).