



February 28, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
Attn: Office of Open Government
400 S. Monroe Street, Suite 209
Tallahassee, FL 32399
desantis.opengov@eog.myflorida.com

Re: Public Records Request

Dear Public Records Officer:

Pursuant to Article I, section 24(a), of the Florida Constitution, and Florida's public records laws, as codified at Fla. Stat. Chapter 119, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office promptly produce the following:

1. All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, calendar invitations, text messages, and any attachments) between (A) Governor Ron DeSantis, Chief of Staff James Uthmeier, Director of Appointments Chelsea Aaron, General Counsel Ryan Newman, or anyone serving in the role of Deputy Chief of Staff (including, but not limited to, Melissa Smith, Anna DeCerchio, Katie Strickland, Alex Kelly, or Beau Beaubien), and (B) Leonard Leo, including, but not limited to, at the following email address(es) or an email address ending in the listed domain(s): leonard.leo@fed-soc.org, honestelections.org, ll@leonardleo.com, leonard.anthony.leo@gmail.com, lleo@fed-soc.org, leonard.leo@mindspring.com, leonard.leo@hotmail.com.

For part one of this request, please provide all responsive records from March 4, 2022, through the date the search is conducted.

2. All email communications (including any email messages, complete email chains, attachments, and calendar invitations) sent by any Governor's office employee listed below, containing any of the key terms also listed below.

Florida Governor's Office

- a. Governor Ron DeSantis
- b. Anyone serving in the role of Chief of Staff, including, but not limited to, James Uthmeier



- c. Deputy Chief of Staff (including, but not limited to, Melissa Smith, Anna DeCerchio, Katie Strickland, Alex Kelly, or Beau Beaubien
- d. Director of External Affairs Savannah Kelly Jefferson
- e. Communications Director Taryn Fenske
- f. Press Secretary Christina Pushaw
- g. General Counsel Ryan Newman
- h. Director of Appointments Chelsea Aaron
- i. Director of Legislative & Intergovernmental Affairs Stephanie Kopelousos
- j. The senior-most official in charge of coordinating Governor DeSantis' judicial appointments

Key Terms

1. Renatha
2. "Alan Lawson"
3. "Judicial Nominating Commission"
4. "Leonard Leo"
5. CRC
6. FedSoc
7. "Federalist Society"
8. "Greg Mueller"
9. "Daniel Casey"
10. "Dan Casey"
11. Marx
12. Severino
13. "Jonathan Bunch"
14. "Judicial Education Project"
15. "Judicial Crisis Network"
16. JCN
17. Calabresi
18. "Supreme Court"
19. "Ginni Thomas"

For part two of this request, please provide all responsive records from March 4, 2022, through August 4, 2022.

For part two of this request, in an effort to accommodate your office and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, American Oversight has limited its request to emails sent by the listed individuals. To be clear, however, American Oversight still requests that complete email chains be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis's email with a responsive key term and the initial received message are both 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.

Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records regarding official business. **You may not exclude searches of files or emails in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts.** Emails or texts conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the government official constitutes a record for purposes of Florida's public records laws.¹

In addition, American Oversight insists that your agency 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 your agency 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.

¹ *Cf. State v. City of Clearwater*, 863 So. 2d 149, 154 (Fla. 2003) (“The determining factor is the nature of the record, not its physical location.”).

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 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 Taylor Stoneman at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 848-1319.

Sincerely,

/s/ Taylor Stoneman
Taylor Stoneman
on behalf of
American Oversight

² American Oversight currently has approximately 16,000 followers on Facebook and 112,900 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Feb. 24, 2023); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Feb. 24, 2023).