



November 9, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Edward Blazel
Assembly Chief Clerk
17 West Main Street, Room 401
Madison, WI 53703
ted.blazel@legis.wisconsin.gov

Representative Robin Vos
Speaker, Wisconsin State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 217 West
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708
rep.vos@legis.wisconsin.gov

Re: Public Records Law Request

Dear Public Records Officer:

Pursuant to Wisconsin's public records law, Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31–19.39, American Oversight makes the following request for copies of records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office produce the following records “as soon as practicable and without delay”:¹

For all parts of this request, please provide all responsive records from 7 days before, through 90 days after the date upon which the text message exchange included in Exhibit A and attached to this request took place, or through the date the search is conducted, whichever occurred first.²

¹ Wis. Stat. § 19.35(4)(a).

² The text message attached as Exhibit A was produced to American Oversight by your office on November 3, 2023, and appears to be an exchange between Speaker Vos and his Chief of Staff Jenny Toftness, though no date is indicated on the record provided. Accordingly, inquiries should be made of Speaker Vos or Chief of Staff Toftness, or any other person with access to the attached text message or the ability to determine the date upon which the exchange took place. If there are any questions or obstacles to obtaining this information, please contact me through the information provided below to discuss.



1. All records reflecting communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, messages on messaging platforms (such as Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, Twitter.com direct messages, Facebook messages, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, or Parler), telephone call logs, calendar invitations, calendar entries, meeting notices, meeting agendas, informational material, talking points, any handwritten or electronic notes taken during any oral communications, or summaries of any oral communications) between (A) the Office of Representative Robin Vos officials listed in Column A below, or anyone communicating on their behalf, such as a scheduler or assistant, and (B) any of the external individuals listed in Column B below.

Column A: Office of Rep. Robin Vos Officials	Column B: External Individuals
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Robin Vos 2. Jenny Toftness 3. Steve Fawcett 4. Angela Joyce 5. Alex Richter 6. Tyler Clark 7. Moriah Krogstad 8. Abbey Rude 9. Jake Wolf 10. Kelly Wright 11. Joseph Knilans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. CJ Szafir b. Chris Reader c. Anthony LoCoco d. Alex Ignatowski e. Quinton Klabon f. Elizabeth Evenson g. Courtney Mullen h. Anyone communicating from an email address ending in reforminggovernment.org

2. All records received by the Office of Representative Robin Vos officials listed in Part 1 above originating from the Institute for Reforming Government.
3. All records reflecting communications (including emails, email attachments, text messages, messages on messaging platforms (such as Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, Twitter.com direct messages, Facebook messages, WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, or Parler), telephone call logs, calendar invitations, calendar entries, meeting notices, meeting agendas, informational material, draft legislation, talking points, any handwritten or electronic notes taken during any oral communications, or summaries of any oral communications) sent or received by the Office of Representative Robin Vos officials listed in Part 1 above and containing any of the key terms below.

Key Terms:

- i. “IRG”
- ii. “Institute for Reforming Government”
- iii. Szafir
- iv. Reader
- v. LoCoco
- vi. Ignatowski

- vii. Klabon
- viii. Evenson
- ix. Mullen

For all parts of this request, 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 Speaker Vos received a mass-distribution news clip email from a listed external individual or referencing a listed key term, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if Vos forwarded that email to another individual with his own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 19.35(3)(e), American Oversight respectfully requests that the records be produced without charge. Providing American Oversight with a waiver of fees is in the “public interest” because American Oversight will, in accordance with its organizational mission, make the records available to the public without charge. These disclosures will likely contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by the general public.

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. Rather, American Oversight’s mission is to serve the public by promoting transparency in government, educating the public about government activities, and ensuring 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.³ American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public

³ See generally *News*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/blog>; *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>; *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>.

website⁴ and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.com.⁵

The public has a significant interest in the extent of state public officials' interactions with and communications about private polling organizations. 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 Speaker Vos communicated with the Institute for Reforming Government. 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.

American Oversight asks that if its request for a fee waiver is denied in whole or in part, that you contact us prior to incurring any costs.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

American Oversight seeks all responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. In conducting your search, please understand the term "record" in its 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 includes any attachments to these records. **No category of material should be omitted from search, collection, and production.**

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 conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the authority's officer or employee constitutes a record for purposes of Wisconsin's public records laws.⁶

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.⁷ If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt

⁴ *Documents*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/documents>.

⁵ American Oversight currently has approximately 16,000 followers on Facebook and 111,300 followers on Twitter.com. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Nov. 9, 2023); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter.com, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Nov. 9, 2023).

⁶ Wisc. Dep't of J., *Wisconsin Public Records Law Compliance Guide*, Oct. 2019, at 3, <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/office-open-government/Resources/PRL-GUIDE.pdf>.

⁷ Wis. Stat. § 19.36(6).

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 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 Ben Sparks at downloads@americanoversight.org or (202) 873-1741. 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/ Ben Sparks
Ben Sparks
on behalf of
American Oversight

EXHIBIT A

From: Toftness, Jenny <Jenny.Toftness@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Sent: Thursday, November 02, 2023 5:02 PM EDT
To: Toftness, Jenny <Jenny.Toftness@legis.wisconsin.gov>
Subject: Screenshot 2023-11-02 at 4.01.35 PM

4:01



Robin >

Why don't we ask IRG to do a poll asap on recusal and try to affect the discussion?

Do
You mean POS?

IRG are idiots

Ask them to pay for it and make it public if it helps us

I know they're idiots but let's use their \$

K. If Szafer actually asked to talk to me today. So I'll ask.

Ok. And we would need it for next week's news cycle

I mean. Just curious. What question