

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

AMERICAN OVERSIGHT,

Plaintiff,

v.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
JUSTICE, *and* FEDERAL BUREAU OF  
INVESTIGATION

Defendants.

Case No. 25-3597-TJK

**ANSWER**

Defendants Department of Justice (“DOJ”) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), by and through undersigned counsel, respectfully submit this Answer to the Complaint, ECF No. 1, filed in this case by Plaintiff under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) 5 U.S.C. § 552.

**RESPONSES TO NUMBERED PARAGRAPHS OF THE COMPLAINT**

Defendants deny all allegations in the Complaint, including the relief sought, except as specifically admitted in this Answer. To the extent the Complaint refers to or quotes from external documents, statutes, or other sources, Defendants may refer to such materials for their accurate and complete contents in response; however, Defendants’ responses are not intended to be, and should not be construed to be, an admission that the cited materials are: (a) correctly cited or quoted by Plaintiff; (b) relevant to this, or any other, action; or (c) admissible in this, or any other, action. Defendants respond to the separately numbered paragraphs in the Complaint as follows.

**COMPLAINT**

1. Denied.

2. Paragraph 2 consists of Plaintiff's characterization of alleged facts not pertinent to the resolution of claims at issue in this FOIA action, to which no response is required.
3. Paragraphs 3 through 25 consist of Plaintiff's characterization of cited news stories, social media posts and documents, to which the Court is referred for a true and complete recitation of their contents. Otherwise, denied.
26. Paragraph 26 consists of Plaintiff's characterization of Plaintiff's motive for this suit which is not pertinent to the resolution of claims at issue in this FOIA action and to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, denied.
27. The allegations in Paragraph 27 consist of legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
28. Defendant FBI received a FOIA request from Plaintiff dated July 8, 2020. Defendants refer the Court to the FOIA request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents and deny any allegations inconsistent therewith. It is attached as an exhibit to the Complaint. ECF No. 1-1.
29. Defendant FBI admits that it responded to Plaintiff's FOIA request by letter dated July 23, 2020. Defendants refer the Court to the communication for a complete and accurate statement of its contents and deny any allegations inconsistent therewith. It is attached as an exhibit to the Complaint. ECF No. 1-2.
30. This paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of this action to which no response is required.
31. This paragraph consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.
32. This paragraph consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

33. This paragraph consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
34. Defendants lack sufficient information or knowledge to form a belief as to the truth or falsity of statement contained in this paragraph.
35. Defendant FBI denies that the FBI is an agency within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1), but admits that the FBI is a component of DOJ, which is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and is a federal agency within the meaning of FOIA. The remainder of this paragraph consists of conclusions of law to which no response is required.
36. Defendant DOJ admits only that it is federal agency within the meaning of FOIA. The remainder of the paragraph contains conclusions of law to which no response is required.
37. Defendants admit that FBI received a FOIA request from Plaintiff dated July 8, 2020. Defendants refer the Court to the FOIA request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents and deny any allegations inconsistent therewith.
38. Defendants admit FBI responded to Plaintiff's FOIA request on July 23, 2020. Defendants respectfully refer the Court to the cited letter for a full and accurate statement of its contents and deny any allegations inconsistent therewith.
39. Defendants respectfully refer the Court to the cited letter for a full and accurate statement of its contents.
40. This Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of Plaintiff's appeal of FBI response to which no response is required. Defendants respectfully refer the Court to the communication for a complete and accurate statement of its contents and deny any allegations inconsistent therewith. It is attached as an exhibit to the Complaint. ECF No. 1-3.

41. This Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of an appeal determination. Defendants respectfully refer the Court to the communication for a complete and accurate statement of its contents and deny any allegations inconsistent therewith. It is attached as an exhibit to the Complaint. ECF No. 1-4.
42. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
43. Defendants incorporate by reference responses to all preceding paragraphs.
44. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
45. Defendants deny that the FBI is an agency within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1) but admit that the FBI is a component of the Department of Justice, which is subject to the requirements of the FOIA. The remainder of this paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the remaining allegations in this paragraph.
46. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
47. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
48. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
49. Defendants incorporate by reference responses to all preceding paragraphs.
50. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.

51. Defendants deny that the FBI is an agency within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1) but admit that the FBI is a component of the Department of Justice, which is subject to the requirements of the FOIA. The remainder of this paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the remaining allegations in this paragraph.
52. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
53. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
54. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.
55. This paragraph consists of conclusions of law, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny the allegations in this paragraph.

The remaining paragraphs set forth Plaintiff's prayer for relief, to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendants deny that Plaintiff is entitled to the relief requested or to any relief whatsoever.

**DEFENSE**

Plaintiff is not entitled to compel the production of any record or portion of any record protected from disclosure by one or more of the exclusions or exemptions to the FOIA.

Dated: February 19, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division

ELIZABETH J. SHAPIRO

Deputy Branch Director

*/s/ Jason K. Altabet* \_\_\_\_\_

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