

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

DEMOCRACY FORWARD FOUNDATION,
P.O. Box 34553
Washington, D.C. 20043,

Plaintiff,

vs.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Defendant.

Case No. 26-cv-1206-DLF

FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

Plaintiff Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) brings this action against Defendant U.S. Department of Justice (“DOJ”) to compel compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”). Plaintiff alleges as follows:

Jurisdiction and Venue

1. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e), as Defendant’s headquarters are located in Washington, D.C., within this district, and a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to Plaintiff’s claims occurred here.

Parties

3. Plaintiff Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and based in Washington, D.C. Plaintiff

works to promote transparency and accountability in government, in part, by educating the public on government actions and policies.

4. Defendant U.S. Department of Justice (“DOJ”) is a federal agency within the meaning of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1), and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) is a component of DOJ. DOJ has possession, custody, and control of records to which Plaintiff seeks access.

Facts

5. Recent reporting indicates that CRT, the component of DOJ entrusted with enforcing federal voting laws to ensure that eligible voters can cast ballots freely and have them counted, has shifted aspects of its enforcement priorities to undermine the right to vote.¹

6. Most prominently, CRT has reportedly undertaken an unprecedented effort to demand that states provide all voter registration data to CRT for sharing with the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), sparking concerns about the Administration’s influence over state election administration.²

7. On information and belief, CRT’s voter data efforts with both states and DHS involves the execution of memoranda of agreement or understanding.

8. Reporting further indicates that senior CRT officials have had communications with certain external individuals and groups who have been associated with election integrity concerns.³ This includes reported special government employee Kurt Olsen, who the *New York*

¹ See e.g., Sam Levine, *Over 200 ex-staffers decry destruction of DoJ civil rights arm: ‘America deserves better’*, The Guardian (Dec. 9, 2025), <https://perma.cc/KNA8-YMSE>.

² See Sarah N. Lynch, *Justice Dept. close to finalizing deal to hand over states’ voter roll data to Homeland Security, sources say*, CBS News, Mar. 26, 2026, <https://perma.cc/YKZ3-TMUB>.

³ See e.g., Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://perma.cc/73CQ-CRPY>.

Times has described as a prominent election denier,⁴ and Election Integrity Network leader Cleta Mitchell, who the New York Times reported was “among a cadre of Republican lawyers who frantically compiled unsubstantiated accusations” to mount challenges to the 2020 election.⁵

9. DFF submitted FOIA requests to obtain records of CRT communications with such individuals and organizations, as well as agreements with other agencies or entities to better understand CRT’s activities, priorities, and interactions with outside actors concerning election administration ahead of the 2026 elections.

10. There is an urgent need for the information requested in advance of the coming federal midterm elections, as contemporaneous reporting and documented activities indicate that CRT is engaged in the collection, sharing, and analysis of state voter data, including interactions with external actors who have publicly questioned election integrity, raising time-sensitive concerns about transparency, public confidence, and the potential impact of these efforts on election administration and voter participation.

Kurt Olsen Communications Request

11. On November 12, 2025, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, text messages, messages on messaging platforms such as Signal and WhatsApp, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (1) the CRT officials listed below and (2) Kurt Olsen, a “special government employee” who has recently joined the Trump Administration.

⁴ See Shawn McCreesh et al, *Trump’s Director of Election Security Is an Election Denier*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 12, 2026), <https://perma.cc/JKX7-CNUA>.

⁵ See Alexandra Berzon, *Lawyer Who Plotted to Overturn Trump Loss Recruits Election Deniers to Watch Over the Vote*, N.Y. Times (May 30, 2022), <https://perma.cc/D2XW-QE5G>.

CRT Officials:

1. Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General
2. Jesus A. Osete, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
3. Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General
4. Maureen Riordan, Acting Chief of the Voting Section
5. Andrew “Mac” Warner, Attorney

12. This request sought records from October 1, 2025, through the date of the search.

13. On April 10, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request December 1, 2025, and assigned it tracking number 26-00056-F.

MOU Request (26-00256-F)

14. On February 6, 2026, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

All Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or other final inter- or intra-agency agreements between CRT and any other entity regarding elections and voting, including Voter Registration Lists.

15. This request sought records from January 20, 2025, through the date of the search.

16. On March 19, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request February 9, 2026, and assigned it tracking number 26-00256-F.

17. DFF has not received any further communication from CRT regarding this request.

Eric Neff Request (26-00257-F)

18. On February 6, 2026, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

- (1) All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) Eric Neff, Acting Voting Chief and former Trial Attorney and (b) anyone communicating from the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in who.eop.gov.

- (2) All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations) sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff containing any of the following key terms:

Key Terms

1. Fulton
2. Venezuela
3. Maduro
4. Tulsi
5. Gabbard
6. "Puerto Rico"
7. "Nationalize elections"
8. "Nationalizing elections"
9. "Voter Registration Lists"
10. "Voter Registration List"
11. VRL
12. VRLs
13. "Voter roll"
14. "Citizenship data"
15. "Voting machine"
16. "Voting machines"
17. "Election interference"

In an effort to accommodate the DOJ and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, we have limited part 2 of this request to communications sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff. To be clear, however, DFF still requests that complete email chains and texts be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both Neff's response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

- (3) All text messages (including messages sent on applications such as WhatsApp or Signal) sent and received by Acting Voting Chief Neff that concern official business.
- (4) All calendars or calendar entries (including calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments) for Acting Voting Chief Neff, including any calendars maintained by Acting Voting Chief Neff himself or on his behalf by any

administrative assistant or scheduler.

DFF requests that calendars be produced in a format that includes all invitees, notes, and attachments. Please do not limit your search to Outlook calendars or the calendars attached to Acting Voting Chief Neff's official DOJ email address; we request the production of any calendar—paper or electronic, on government or personal devices—used to track how he allocates time on agency business.

19. This request sought records from October 1, 2025, through the date of the search.
20. On February 24, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request February 9, 2026, and assigned it tracking number 26-00257-F.
21. DFF has not received any further communication from CRT regarding this request.

External Communications Request (26-00258-F)

22. On February 6, 2026, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) the DOJ CRT officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities listed below.

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees assigned to the CRT's Voting Section

External Entities

1. Election Integrity Network ("EIN") (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))
2. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](https://cletamitchell.com), [@conservativepartnership.org](https://conservativepartnership.org))
3. Citizen Election Research Center ("CERC") (including, but not limited to [@citizenselectionresearchcenter.org](https://citizenselectionresearchcenter.org))
4. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)

5. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginiainstitute.org)
6. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
7. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

23. This request sought records from May 1, 2025, through the date of the search.

24. On February 24, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request February 9, 2026, and assigned it tracking number 26-00258-F.

25. DFF has not received any further communication from CRT regarding this request.

26. On April 8, 2026, DFF sent a follow-up letter to CRT and the Office of Information Policy (OIP) regarding all of the above requests, and requested expedited processing given the urgent need for the information requested in advance of the coming federal midterm elections. A copy of this letter is attached as Exhibit 1. Defendant has not responded to this request for expedited processing.

Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies

27. As of the date of the Complaint, Defendant has failed to notify DFF of determinations regarding DFF's requests or DFF's request for expedited processing. Through Defendant's failure to respond within the time limits required by law, DFF has constructively exhausted administrative remedies.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Count 1 (Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)

28. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

29. By failing to respond to Plaintiff's requests with determinations and prompt productions of responsive records within the statutorily mandated time period, Defendant has

violated its duties under 5 U.S.C. § 552, including but not limited to, its duties to conduct a reasonable search for responsive records, to take reasonable steps to release all nonexempt information, and to not withhold responsive records.

Count 2 (Violation of FOIA, Failure to Grant Expedited Processing, 5 U.S.C. § 552, 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv)), 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(ii)

30. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs as though fully set forth herein

31. By failing to grant expedited processing under 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv), Defendants have violated the FOIA and their regulations for this matter involving exceptional and widespread media interest concerning questions of governmental integrity that affect public confidence.

32. By failing to grant expedited processing under 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(ii) and 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II), Defendants have violated the FOIA and their regulations for this matter involving actual or alleged Federal Government activity about which there is an urgent need to inform the public, made by an entity which is primarily engaged in disseminating information.

REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests that this Court:

1. Order Defendant to conduct searches for any and all responsive records to Plaintiff's FOIA requests using search methods reasonably calculated to lead to discovery of all responsive records;
2. Order Defendant to produce, by a date certain, any and all non-exempt responsive records and a *Vaughn* index of any responsive records withheld under a claim of exemption;

3. Enjoin Defendant from continuing to withhold any and all non-exempt responsive records;
4. Award Plaintiff its costs, attorneys' fees, and other disbursements for this action; and
5. Grant any other relief this Court deems appropriate.

Dated: April 20, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Anisha Hindocha

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Exhibit 1



April 8, 2026

Civil Rights Division FOIA Officers
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

RE: Request for Expedited Processing for Recently Submitted Requests

To FOIA Officials:

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) is writing to request the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) expedite the processing of the FOIA requests submitted on November 12, 2026, February 6, 2026, and March 9, 2026 and attached herein in Appendix A. These requests seek records, broadly speaking, reflecting communications of senior officials within the Civil Rights Division with known election deniers who reporting indicates previously worked to overturn President Trump’s loss in 2020 and are now actively seeking to undermine the midterm elections.

November 12, 2026 request (FOIA.gov confirmation ID 2517786; no agency tracking number; DFF-DOJ-CRT-25-1531):

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, text messages, messages on messaging platforms such as Signal and WhatsApp, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (1) the CRT officials listed below and (2) Kurt Olsen, a “special government employee” who has recently joined the Trump Administration. [footnote omitted]

CRT Officials

- a. Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General
- b. Jesus A. Osete, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- c. Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- d. Maureen Riordan, Acting Chief of the Voting Section
- e. Andrew “Mac” Warner, Attorney

This request seeks records from October 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

February 6, 2026 request (26-00256-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0206)

All Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or other final inter- or intra-agency agreements between CRT and any other entity regarding elections and voting, including Voter Registration Lists.

This request seeks records from January 20, 2025 until the date of the search.

February 6, 2026 request (26-00257-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0207)

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) Eric Neff, Acting Voting Chief and former Trial Attorney and (b) anyone communicating from the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in who.eop.gov.
2. All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations) sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff containing any of the following key terms:

Key Terms

- a. Fulton
- b. Venezuela
- c. Maduro
- d. Tulsi
- e. Gabbard
- f. "Puerto Rico"
- g. "Nationalize elections"
- h. "Nationalizing elections"
- i. "Voter Registration Lists"
- j. "Voter Registration List"
- k. VRL
- l. VRLs
- m. "Voter roll"
- n. "Citizenship data"
- o. "Voting machine"
- p. "Voting machines"
- q. "Election interference"

In an effort to accommodate the DOJ and reduce the number of potentially responsive

records to be processed and produced, we have limited part 2 of this request to communications sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff. To be clear, however, DFF still requests that complete email chains and texts be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both Neff's response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

3. All text messages (including messages sent on applications such as WhatsApp or Signal) sent and received by Acting Voting Chief Neff that concern official business.
4. All calendars or calendar entries (including calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments) for Acting Voting Chief Neff, including any calendars maintained by Acting Voting Chief Neff himself or on his behalf by any administrative assistant or scheduler.

DFF requests that calendars be produced in a format that includes all invitees, notes, and attachments. Please do not limit your search to Outlook calendars or the calendars attached to Acting Voting Chief Neff's official DOJ email address; we request the production of any calendar—paper or electronic, on government or personal devices—used to track how he allocates time on agency business.

This request seeks records from October 15, 2025 until the date of the search.

February 6, 2026 request (26-00258-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0208)

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) the DOJ CRT officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities listed below.

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees¹ assigned to the CRT's Voting Section

External Entities

¹ This includes individuals serving in their roles through presidential appointment, noncareer appointment and Schedule C appointment, as well as any career civil servant acting in a political role and any Special Government employee placed in their role from May 1, 2025 to the date of the search.

- A. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](#); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](#), [@electionintegrity.network](#))
- B. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](#), [@conservativepartnership.org](#))
- C. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to [@citizenselectionresearchcenter.org](#))
- D. EagleAI Network ([eagleai.pro](#))
- E. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to [virginiainstitute.org](#))
- F. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to [publicinterestlegal.org](#))
- G. True the Vote (including, but not limited to [truethevote.org](#))

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

March 9, 2026 request (26-00330-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0354)

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Andrew “Mac” Warner or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to [@generalflynn.com](#))
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute ([@goldiis.org](#))
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen
9. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](#); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](#), [@electionintegrity.network](#))
10. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](#), [@conservativepartnership.org](#))
11. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to [@citizenselectionresearchcenter.org](#))

12. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
13. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginiainstitute.org)
14. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
15. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

2. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) the CRT officials listed below or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees [footnote omitted] assigned to the CRT's Voting Section

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to @generalflynn.com)
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute (@goldiis.org)
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

DFF's requests merit expedited processing because: (1) the requests concern a "matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity that affect public confidence," *see* 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv); and (2) there is an urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity, *see* 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II).

I. DFF’s requests concern a matter attracting exceptional media interest in which there exist possible government integrity questions that affect public confidence.

To qualify for expedited processing under 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv), the Department of Justice has interpreted subsection (iv) to require that “the same matter that draws widespread and exceptional media interest must be the matter in which there exists possible questions about the government’s integrity that affect public confidence.” *Am. Oversight v. U.S. Dep’t of Just.*, 292 F. Supp. 3d 501, 506 (D.D.C. 2018). DFF’s instant FOIA requests satisfy both criteria.

A. DFF’s requests concern a matter attracting widespread and exceptional media interest.

The focus of DFF’s FOIA requests—the activities of senior political appointees in the Civil Rights Division and Voting Section, and specifically their communications with individuals known to have worked to undermine Trump’s electoral loss in 2020—has garnered immense attention from the American public, Congress, and the press. In particular, there has been significant media coverage and public interest surrounding the individuals in the Civil Rights Division and Voting section who are known to have ties to election deniers or activists who are pushing to nationalize elections, or themselves expressed support for overturning President Trump’s loss in 2020—as well as surrounding the ultimate aims of recent Voting section efforts to collect state voter roll data nationwide.

Press reporting indicates that Maureen Riordan, who served as acting chief of the Voting Section until January, previously worked for Public Interest Legal Foundation, an organization that has been known to promote falsehoods about widespread illegal voting and the 2020 election.² She has appeared on a podcast³ run by Cleta Mitchell, one of the most influential figures in the election denial movement.⁴ Indeed, Riordan’s role in the Voting Section, and open questions surrounding the most basic of issues such as the Section’s mission statement, has attracted attention from Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee.⁵

Andrew “Mac” Warner served as a senior official in the Civil Rights Division last year, where reporting indicates his work included investigating falsehoods about the 2020 election—claims

² Sam Levine, *Voter Fraud Activist Will Apologize To Citizens He Accused Of Being Illegal Voters*, HuffPost (July 18, 2019), [https://www.democracymodel.com/news-alerts/doj-top-voting-lawyer-worked-for-anti-voting-firm/](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/j-christian-adams-pilf-settlement_n_5d309002e4b0419fd3298ee6?02b; Yuniur Rivas, DOJ’s New Top Voting Lawyer Worked for Leading Anti-Voting Law Firm, Democracy Docket (May 31, 2025), <a href=);

³ *Who’s Counting with Cleta Mitchell*, Maureen Riordan: A First-Hand Account of the Left’s Takeover of the DOJ Voting Section (May 18, 2022), <https://open.spotify.com/episode/100I1O2zkCyEXGxovH1SO6>.

⁴ Marshall Cohen & Fredreka Schouten, *2020 election deniers and allies amass power, in and out of the Trump administration*, CNN (Oct. 24, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/24/politics/2020-election-deniers-power-trump-administration>.

⁵ Padilla, Durbin, Welch, *Colleagues Condemn DOJ’s Baseless Voter Fraud Investigations*, (July 17, 2025), <https://www.padilla.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/Letter-to-AAG-Dhillon-re-DOJ-Voting-Section.pdf>.

that he has also made in public comments.⁶ In February of this year, he attended a summit with other senior federal officials known for denying the results of the 2020 election—such as Kurt Olsen,⁷ the White House lawyer reinvestigating the 2020 election, and Heather Honey, who spearheads election integrity at the Department of Homeland Security⁸—as well as outside election deniers such as Cleta Mitchell and Peter Ticktin, who has claimed credit for drafting an executive order to ban mail-in ballots and eliminate voting machines.⁹ Although he reportedly resigned the day after the event and had not had agency approval to attend, this resignation in fact underscores the importance of shedding light on his communications while in office with outside election deniers.

Eric Neff, acting head of the Voting Section since late 2025, previously served as a district attorney in California, and reportedly based a prosecution around tips from True the Vote, an anti-voting organization that also promotes 2020 election denial falsehoods.¹⁰ He also represented a prominent election denier, Patrick Byrne, who supported Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.¹¹ Under his leadership, the Voting Section has been seeking state voter roll data, and attracting significant press attention surrounding the data collection and open questions regarding Neff’s goals with the effort.¹²

⁶ Yunion Rivas, *The DOJ Lawyer and Hardcore Election Denier Probing 2020 Democracy Docket* (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://www.democracymocket.com/news-alerts/the-doj-lawyer-and-hardcore-election-denier-probing-2020/>.

⁷ Jeremy Herb, *et al.*, *Key 2020 election denier is still working to prove it was stolen — now from inside the White House*, CNN (Mar. 8, 2020) <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/08/politics/kurt-olsen-2020-election-fraud-trump>.

⁸ The Associated Press,

Researcher who has distorted voter data appointed to Homeland Security election integrity role Politico (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/26/dhs-election-security-2020-election-conspiracy-00527453>.

⁹ Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026)

<https://www.propublica.org/article/election-denier-summit-trump-midterms>.

¹⁰ Matt Cohen, *DOJ’s New Voting Lawyer Has Web of Ties to Election-Conspiracy Theorists*, Democracy Docket (Dec. 9, 2025),

<https://www.democracymocket.com/news-alerts/dojs-new-voting-lawyer-has-web-of-ties-to-election-conspiracy-theorists/>.

¹¹ Abby Vesoulis, *Scoop: New Justice Department Voting Rights Chief Had Prior Job Suspension for Ties to Election Deniers*, Mother Jones (Dec. 12, 2025),

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/eric-neff-new-justice-department-voting-rights-chief-had-prior-job-suspension-for-ties-to-election-deniers/>.

¹² Devlin Barrett & Nick Corasaniti, *Trump Administration Quietly Seeks to Build National Voter Roll*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 9, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/09/us/politics/trump-voter-registration-data.html>; Jonathan Shorman, *In bid for voter data, Trump’s DOJ lays groundwork to undermine confidence in midterms*, Stateline (Mar. 13, 2026)

<https://stateline.org/2026/03/13/in-bid-for-voter-data-trumps-doj-lays-groundwork-to-question-midterm-results/>;

Sam Levine, *Alarm as Trump DoJ pushes for voter information on millions of Americans*, The Guardian (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/15/justice-department-voter-information>;

Patrick Marley & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, *DOJ hits states with broad requests for voter rolls, election data*, Wash. Post (July 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/16/trump-voter-fraud-elections/>;

Jessica Huseman, *Why states should scrutinize the Justice Department’s requests for voter rolls*, Votebeat (Aug. 11, 2025),

<https://www.votebeat.org/2026/01/15/justice-department-letters-states-request-voter-rolls-privacy-act/>;

Jonathan Shorman, *DOJ is sharing state voter roll lists with Homeland Security*, Stateline (Sept. 12, 2025)

<https://stateline.org/2025/09/12/doj-is-sharing-state-voter-roll-lists-with-homeland-security/>.

B. There exist in these media reports questions about the government’s integrity that affect public confidence.

Moreover, the widespread media reporting on the above matters leaves open questions regarding the government’s integrity, that affects public confidence in upcoming elections:

1. To what extent are DOJ CRT officials working with prominent election denier activists to undermine the midterm elections?¹³
2. Who is serving as the outside contractor for voter roll maintenance, as described in CRT’s memorandum of understanding with states turning over voter data?¹⁴

II. There is an urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity.

As an initial point, DFF—as a not-for-profit organization that works to promote transparency and accountability in government—is primarily engaged in disseminating information to the public. DFF is an organization primarily engaged in “disseminating information to the public,”¹⁵ as evidenced by the previous use of public records obtained by DFF in numerous news reports.¹⁶ In

¹³ Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/election-denier-summit-trump-midterms>; Peter Stone, *How an election conspiracy theorist has Trump’s ear on voting laws and midterms*, The Guardian (Mar. 27, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/27/trump-voting-election-conspiracy-midterms>; Jeremy Herb, et al, *Key 2020 election denier is still working to prove it was stolen — now from inside the White House*, CNN (Mar. 8, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/08/politics/kurt-olsen-2020-election-fraud-trump>; Alan Feuer et al, *Where Trump Has Installed Election Deniers in Government*, N.Y. Times (updated Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/03/26/us/politics/trump-2020-election-deniers.html>; Nicholas Riccardi, *Trump’s administration is loaded with people who backed his false 2020 election claims*, PBS News (Feb. 20, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trumps-administration-is-loaded-with-people-who-backed-his-false-2020-election-claims>.

¹⁴ Eileen O’Connor, *“Confidential” Agreements Show Trump Administration’s Plans for States’ Voter Data*, Brennan Center for Justice (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/confidential-agreements-show-trump-administrations-plans-states-voter>.

¹⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 552 (6)(E)(v)(II) (“Compelling need” for the purpose of expedited processing mean “with respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity.”).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Matias Civita, *Emails Show U.S. Marshals Bypassed Training Rules to Deputize Musk’s DOGE Security Detail: Report*, International Business Times (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.ibtimes.com/emails-show-us-marshals-bypassed-training-rules-deputize-musks-doge-security-detail-report-3800930>; Io Dodds, *Elon Musk’s Bodyguards Made Federal Agent Despite Lack of Training*, Independent (Apr. 8, 2026), <https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/elon-musk-doge-bodyguards-deputized-b2952758.html>; Tega Egwabor, *How Elon Musk’s Bodyguards Got Federal Agent Status*, Rolling Out (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://rollingout.com/2026/04/06/how-elon-musks-bodyguards-federal-agent/>; David Ingram et al., *U.S. Marshals Waived Training Rules for Musk’s Armed DOGE Security, Emails Show*, NBC News (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/elon-musk/elon-musk-trump-government-doge-security-rcna266088>; Ja’han Jones, *Amid Musk’s Paranoia, U.S. Marshals Deputized His Unqualified Security Staff*, MS Now (Apr. 6, 2026),

addition, DFF uses information gathered through FOIA to educate the public via numerous other

<https://www.ms.now/opinion/amid-musks-paranoia-u-s-marshals-deputized-his-unqualified-security-staff>; Lisa Needham, *Musk's DOGE Security Bros Promoted From Mall Cops to Federal Agents*, Daily Kos (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2026/4/6/2376599/-Musk-s-DOGE-security-bros-promoted-from-mall-cops-to-federal-agents>; Kasandra Rattle, *Marshals Waived Training Rules to Deputize Musk's Bodyguards*, Hoodline (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://hoodline.com/2026/04/feds-bent-badge-rules-to-arm-musk-s-security-detail/>; Maribel Velázquez, *Musk logró que guardaespaldas sin perfil fueran agentes federales*, La Opinión (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://laopinion.com/2026/04/07/musk-logro-que-guardaespaldas-sin-perfil-fueran-agentes-federales/>; Bethany McLean, *The Man Behind Trump's Attack on the Fed*, *The Free Press* (Jan. 20, 2026), <https://www.thefp.com/p/the-man-behind-trumps-fed-attack>; Chris Prentice & Marisa Taylor, *Exclusive: Trump appointee inspired by conservative media outlet to push for probe of Democratic congressman*, Reuters (Dec. 22, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/trump-appointee-inspired-by-conservative-media-outlet-push-probe-democratic-2025-12-20/>; Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, *"Happy to Do It": Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy*, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>; Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, Huffpost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron.'* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback-she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

means—including press releases, reports, blog posts, and social media.¹⁷ DFF’s social media platforms reach hundreds of thousands¹⁸ of people—and its website in 2025 earned 3.5 million views.

There is an urgency to inform the public about the CRT’s ongoing efforts to obtain, share, and analyze state voter data, as well as its interactions with outside actors who have promoted unfounded claims of election fraud pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II), as there is both intense public interest surrounding the Administration’s actions, and there are pending governmental decisions that could occur in short order within DOJ, including the potential for DOJ officials to work with election denial groups to analyze state voter rolls—at a time when confidence in elections has fallen significantly across party lines.¹⁹ This creates a current exigency for the public to receive the information requested in advance of those actions and the coming federal elections in November 2026.

Recent reporting indicates that the Department of Justice has sought expansive voter registration data from states, and in some instances, shared that data with other federal agencies, while exploring mechanisms to centralize such information.²⁰ These efforts have prompted concern among elections officials and experts that such data could be used to facilitate voter roll challenges or removals, or to cast doubt on the integrity of voter registration systems ahead of the 2026 federal elections.²¹

¹⁷ *Democracy Forward Obtains Records Regarding FHFA’s Politicized Investigations of Public Officials*, Democracy Forward (Oct. 30, 2025), <https://democracyforward.org/news/press-releases/pulte-lawsuit/>; *Using AI for Governance and Personnel Decisions*, Democracy Forward (updated February 13, 2026), <https://democracyforward.org/work/investigations/using-ai-for-governance-and-personnel-decisions-without-proper-guardrails/>; *Demanding Accountability: Democracy Forward’s Investigations in the First Year of the Trump-Vance Administration*, Democracy Forward (Mar. 13, 2026), <https://democracyforward.org/work/research/demanding-accountability/>; Democracy Forward (@democracyforward.org), *Thread regarding FOIAs about ICE facial recognition* (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://bsky.app/profile/democracyforward.org/post/3meqqefmoic2s>.

¹⁸ Democracy Forward currently has approximately 105,500 followers on Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/democracyforward.org>, last visited March 17, 2026), 106,000 followers on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/democracyforward/>, last visited March 17, 2026), and 17,300 followers on X (<https://x.com/DemocracyFwd>, last visited March 17, 2026).

¹⁹ Inga Kiderra & Christine Clark, *Trust in Elections Declines across Party Lines Ahead of 2026 Midterms, UC San Diego Survey Finds*, UC San Diego Today (Feb. 18, 2026), <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/trust-in-elections-declines-across-party-lines-ahead-of-2026-midterms-uc-san-diego-survey-finds>.

²⁰ Devlin Barrett & Nick Corasaniti, *Trump Administration Quietly Seeks to Build National Voter Roll*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 9, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/09/us/politics/trump-voter-registration-data.html>; Patrick Marley & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, *DOJ hits states with broad requests for voter rolls, election data*, Wash. Post (July 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/16/trump-voter-fraud-elections/>.

²¹ Sam Levine, *Alarm as Trump DoJ pushes for voter information on millions of Americans*, The Guardian (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/15/justice-department-voter-information>; Jonathan Shorman, *Trump’s DOJ offers states confidential deal to remove voters flagged by feds*, Stateline (Dec. 18, 2025); Natalie Contreras & Gabby Birenbaum, *Texas hands over complete list of registered voters to Trump administration*, Texas Trib. (Jan. 9, 2026), <https://www.texastribune.org/2026/01/09/texas-voter-roll-trump-administration-justice-department-democrats-dnc/>;

At the same time, there is substantial reporting that individuals within CRT have ties to individuals and organizations that reportedly denied and sought to overturn election results.²² Investigative reporting further indicates that some of these individuals and groups are engaging with federal officials regarding election administration and the conduct of future elections, including the 2026 midterm elections.²³ These developments raise serious and time sensitive questions about whether federal election-related activities are being influenced by individuals who have promoted false claims about election integrity.

The convergence of federal efforts to collect and share voter data alongside reported engagement with election denial advocates, creates an immediate need for transparency. The requested records will shed light on the nature of CRT's agreements with states and other entities, the potential use of voter data across agencies, and whether these efforts are connected to initiatives that could adversely affect voter eligibility or participation.²⁴

The urgency of disclosure is heightened by the proximity of the 2026 midterm elections. The records sought in DFF's requests concern ongoing activities that could gravely impact election administration and public confidence in the near term. Reporting underscores that these efforts are already being framed in connection with the upcoming elections and may influence how voter eligibility and election integrity are assessed in advance of the midterms.²⁵ Recent research

Abby Vesoulis & Ari Berman, *Your Private Data Is Building Trump's Voter Purge Machine*, Mother Jones (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/your-private-data-is-building-trumps-voter-purge-machine/>.

²² Marshall Cohen & Frederka Schouten, *2020 election deniers and allies amass power, in and out of the Trump Administration*, CNN (updated Oct. 24, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/24/politics/2020-election-deniers-power-trump-administration/>; David Gilbert, *The DOJ Misled a Judge About How It's Using Voter Roll Data*, Wired (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.wired.com/story/doj-misled-judge-voter-roll-data/>; Matt Cohen, *DOJ's New Voting Lawyer Has Web of Ties to Election-Conspiracy Theorists*, Democracy Docket (Dec. 9, 2025), <https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/dojs-new-voting-lawyer-has-web-of-ties-to-election-conspiracy-theorists/>; Abby Vesoulis, *Scoop: New Justice Department Voting Rights Chief Had Prior Job Suspension for Ties to Election Deniers*, Mother Jones (Dec. 12, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/eric-neff-new-justice-department-voting-rights-chief-had-prior-job-suspension-for-ties-to-election-deniers/>.

²³ Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/election-denier-summit-trump-midterms>; Alan Feuer et al, *Where Trump Has Installed Election Deniers in Government*, N.Y. Times (updated Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/03/26/us/politics/trump-2020-election-deniers.html>.

²⁴ See e.g. Eileen O'Connor, *"Confidential" Agreements Show Trump Administration's Plans for States' Voter Data*, Brennan Center (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/confidential-agreements-show-trump-administrations-plans-states-voter>.

²⁵ Jonathan Shorman, *In bid for voter data, Trump's DOJ lays groundwork to undermine confidence in midterms*, Stateline (Mar. 13, 2026), <https://stateline.org/2026/03/13/in-bid-for-voter-data-trumps-doj-lays-groundwork-to-question-midterm-results/>; Patrick Marley & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, *DOJ hits states with broad requests for voter rolls, election data*, Wash. Post (July 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/16/trump-voter-fraud-elections/>.

indicates that confidence in elections is already declining ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, amplifying the need for timely public access to this information.²⁶

I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the above is accurate and expedited processing is warranted in this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daniel A McGrath

Senior Oversight Counsel

On behalf of

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043

Appendix 1. Submitted Requests

²⁶ See e.g., Inga Kiderra & Christine Clark, *Trust in Elections Declines across Party Lines Ahead of 2026 Midterms, UC San Diego Survey Finds*, UC San Diego Today (Feb. 18, 2026), <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/trust-in-elections-declines-across-party-lines-ahead-of-2026-midterms-uc-san-diego-survey-finds>.

Appendix 1

Submitted Requests



November 12, 2025

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, text messages, messages on messaging platforms such as Signal and WhatsApp, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (1) the CRT officials listed below and (2) Kurt Olsen, a “special government employee” who has recently joined the Trump Administration.¹

CRT Officials

- a. Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General
- b. Jesus A. Osete, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- c. Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- d. Maureen Riordan, Acting Chief of the Voting Section
- e. Andrew “Mac” Warner, Attorney

This request seeks records from October 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

¹ For further identifying information, see Josh Dawsey, et al, *White House Hires ‘Stop the Steal’ Lawyer to Investigate 2020 Election Claims*, Wall Street J. (Oct. 17, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/elections/white-house-hires-stop-the-steal-lawyer-to-investigate-2020-election-claims-6395d322>.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a "demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information," *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates

records obtained through FOIA to “a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject” of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require “pointless specificity”; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its “ability to publicize disclosed information.” *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of “contacts with any major news[] companies” that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFP has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFP receives that contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of communications individuals in the Trump administration may be having with Kurt Olsen, a special government employee to work on election-related issues. When DFP obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFP’s communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFP staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFP have previously formed the basis of news reports.²

² See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, “Happy to Do It”: Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn’t Receive “Zero Tolerance” Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *‘Just answer the question and kill this story’: In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson’s refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a ‘moron,’* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback*

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043

she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.



February 6, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

All Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or other final inter- or intra-agency agreements between CRT and any other entity regarding elections and voting, including Voter Registration Lists.

This request seeks records from January 20, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how

that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a "demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information," *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates records obtained through FOIA to "a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject" of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require "pointless specificity"; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its "ability to publicize disclosed information." *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of "contacts with any major news[] companies" that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had

failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public's understanding of the actions and communications of individuals tasked with elections-related actions in the federal government. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF's communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.¹

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Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, 'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron,' Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043



February 6, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) Eric Neff, Acting Voting Chief and former Trial Attorney and (b) anyone communicating from the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in who.eop.gov.
2. All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations) sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff containing any of the following key terms:

Key Terms

- a. Fulton
- b. Venezuela
- c. Maduro
- d. Tulsi
- e. Gabbard
- f. “Puerto Rico”
- g. “Nationalize elections”

- h. “Nationalizing elections”
- i. “Voter Registration Lists”
- j. “Voter Registration List”
- k. VRL
- l. VRLs
- m. “Voter roll”
- n. “Citizenship data”
- o. “Voting machine”
- p. “Voting machines”
- q. “Election interference”

In an effort to accommodate the DOJ and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, we have limited part 2 of this request to communications sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff. To be clear, however, DFF still requests that complete email chains and texts be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both Neff’s response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

- 3. All text messages (including messages sent on applications such as WhatsApp or Signal) sent and received by Acting Voting Chief Neff that concern official business.
- 4. All calendars or calendar entries (including calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments) for Acting Voting Chief Neff, including any calendars maintained by Acting Voting Chief Neff himself or on his behalf by any administrative assistant or scheduler.

DFF requests that calendars be produced in a format that includes all invitees, notes, and attachments. Please do not limit your search to Outlook calendars or the calendars attached to Acting Voting Chief Neff’s official DOJ email address; we request the production of any calendar—paper or electronic, on government or personal devices—used to track how he allocates time on agency business.

This request seeks records from October 15, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably

segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a "demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information," *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates records obtained through FOIA to "a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject" of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require "pointless specificity"; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its "ability to publicize disclosed information." *Judicial Watch, Inc. v.*

Rossotti, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of “contacts with any major news[] companies” that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of the actions and communications of individuals tasked with elections-related actions in the federal government. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF’s communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.¹

¹ See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, “Happy to Do It”: Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn’t Receive “Zero Tolerance” Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, ‘Just answer the question and kill this story’: In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson’s refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a ‘moron,’ Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees’ war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018),

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.



February 6, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) the DOJ CRT officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities listed below.

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees¹ assigned to the CRT’s Voting Section

External Entities

- A. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))

¹ This includes individuals serving in their roles through presidential appointment, noncareer appointment and Schedule C appointment, as well as any career civil servant acting in a political role and any Special Government employee placed in their role from May 1, 2025 to the date of the search.

- B. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to @cletamitchell.com, @conservativepartnership.org)
- C. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to @citizenselectionresearchcenter.org)
- D. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
- E. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginia institute.org)
- F. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
- G. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep’t of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

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we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

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DFP has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFP receives that contribute significantly to the public's understanding of the actions and communications of individuals tasked with elections-related actions in the federal government. When DFP obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFP's communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFP staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFP have previously formed the basis of news reports.²

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Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

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Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

Do It: *Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy*, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron.'* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043



March 9, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Andrew “Mac” Warner or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to @generalflynn.com)
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute (@goldiis.org)
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen

9. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))
10. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](https://cletamitchell.com), [@conservativepartnership.org](https://conservativepartnership.org))
11. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to [@citizeselectionresearchcenter.org](https://citizeselectionresearchcenter.org))
12. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
13. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginiainstitute.org)
14. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
15. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

2. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) the CRT officials listed below or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees¹ assigned to the CRT’s Voting Section

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to [@generalflynn.com](https://generalflynn.com))
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute ([@goldiis.org](https://goldiis.org))
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen

¹ This includes individuals serving in their roles through presidential appointment, noncareer appointment and Schedule C appointment, as well as any career civil servant acting in a political role and any Special Government employee placed in their role from May 1, 2025 to the date of the search.

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a “demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information,” *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates records obtained through FOIA to “a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject” of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require “pointless specificity”; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its “ability to publicize disclosed information.” *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of “contacts with any major news[] companies” that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of communications individuals in the administration may have had with individuals and entities associated with an election integrity summit attended by the administration officials. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF’s communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.²

² See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, “Happy to Do It”: Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn’t Receive “Zero Tolerance” Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *‘Just answer the question and kill this story’: In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson’s refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a ‘moron,’* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting,*

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043

ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DEMOCRACY FORWARD FOUNDATION,
P.O. Box 34553
Washington, D.C. 20043,

Plaintiff,

vs.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Defendant.

Case No. 26-cv-[1206-DLF](#)

FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

Plaintiff Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) brings this action against Defendant U.S. Department of Justice (“DOJ”) to compel compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”). Plaintiff alleges as follows:

Jurisdiction and Venue

1. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e), as Defendant’s headquarters are located in Washington, D.C., within this district, and a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to Plaintiff’s claims occurred here.

Parties

3. Plaintiff Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and based in Washington, D.C. Plaintiff

works to promote transparency and accountability in government, in part, by educating the public on government actions and policies.

4. Defendant U.S. Department of Justice (“DOJ”) is a federal agency within the meaning of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1), and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) is a component of DOJ. DOJ has possession, custody, and control of records to which Plaintiff seeks access.

Facts

5. Recent reporting indicates that CRT, the component of DOJ entrusted with enforcing federal voting laws to ensure that eligible voters can cast ballots freely and have them counted, has shifted aspects of its enforcement priorities to undermine the right to vote.¹

6. Most prominently, CRT has reportedly undertaken an unprecedented effort to demand that states provide all voter registration data to CRT for sharing with the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”), sparking concerns about the Administration’s influence over state election administration.²

7. On information and belief, CRT’s voter data efforts with both states and DHS involves the execution of memoranda of agreement or understanding.

8. Reporting further indicates that senior CRT officials have had communications with certain external individuals and groups who have been associated with election integrity concerns.³ This includes reported special government employee Kurt Olsen, who the *New York*

¹ See e.g., Sam Levine, *Over 200 ex-staffers decry destruction of DoJ civil rights arm: ‘America deserves better’*, The Guardian (Dec. 9, 2025), <https://perma.cc/KNA8-YMSE>.

² See Sarah N. Lynch, *Justice Dept. close to finalizing deal to hand over states’ voter roll data to Homeland Security, sources say*, CBS News, Mar. 26, 2026, <https://perma.cc/YKZ3-TMUB>.

³ See e.g., Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://perma.cc/73CQ-CRPY>.

Times has described as a prominent election denier,⁴ and Election Integrity Network leader Cleta Mitchell, who the New York Times reported was “among a cadre of Republican lawyers who frantically compiled unsubstantiated accusations” to mount challenges to the 2020 election.⁵

9. DFF submitted FOIA requests to obtain records of CRT communications with such individuals and organizations, as well as agreements with other agencies or entities to better understand CRT’s activities, priorities, and interactions with outside actors concerning election administration ahead of the 2026 elections.

10. There is an urgent need for the information requested in advance of the coming federal midterm elections, as contemporaneous reporting and documented activities indicate that CRT is engaged in the collection, sharing, and analysis of state voter data, including interactions with external actors who have publicly questioned election integrity, raising time-sensitive concerns about transparency, public confidence, and the potential impact of these efforts on election administration and voter participation.

Kurt Olsen Communications Request

11. On November 12, 2025, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, text messages, messages on messaging platforms such as Signal and WhatsApp, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (1) the CRT officials listed below and (2) Kurt Olsen, a “special government employee” who has recently joined the Trump Administration.

⁴ See Shawn McCreesh et al, *Trump’s Director of Election Security Is an Election Denier*, N.Y. Times (Feb. 12, 2026), <https://perma.cc/JKX7-CNUA>.

⁵ See Alexandra Berzon, *Lawyer Who Plotted to Overturn Trump Loss Recruits Election Deniers to Watch Over the Vote*, N.Y. Times (May 30, 2022), <https://perma.cc/D2XW-QE5G>.

CRT Officials:

1. Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General
2. Jesus A. Osete, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
3. Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General
4. Maureen Riordan, Acting Chief of the Voting Section
5. Andrew "Mac" Warner, Attorney

12. This request sought records from October 1, 2025, through the date of the search.

13. On April 10, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request

December 1, 2025, and assigned it tracking number 26-00056-F.

Deleted: This request received confirmation ID 2517786 through the FOIA gov portal, but CRT has not acknowledged the request.

MOU Request (26-00256-F)

14. On February 6, 2026, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

All Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or other final inter- or intra-agency agreements between CRT and any other entity regarding elections and voting, including Voter Registration Lists.

15. This request sought records from January 20, 2025, through the date of the search.

16. On March 19, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request

February 9, 2026, and assigned it tracking number 26-00256-F.

17. DFF has not received any further communication from CRT regarding this request.

Eric Neff Request (26-00257-F)

18. On February 6, 2026, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

- (1) All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) Eric Neff, Acting Voting Chief and former Trial Attorney and (b) anyone communicating from the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in who.eop.gov.

- (2) All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations) sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff containing any of the following key terms:

Key Terms

1. Fulton
2. Venezuela
3. Maduro
4. Tulsi
5. Gabbard
6. "Puerto Rico"
7. "Nationalize elections"
8. "Nationalizing elections"
9. "Voter Registration Lists"
10. "Voter Registration List"
11. VRL
12. VRLs
13. "Voter roll"
14. "Citizenship data"
15. "Voting machine"
16. "Voting machines"
17. "Election interference"

In an effort to accommodate the DOJ and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, we have limited part 2 of this request to communications sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff. To be clear, however, DFF still requests that complete email chains and texts be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both Neff's response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

- (3) All text messages (including messages sent on applications such as WhatsApp or Signal) sent and received by Acting Voting Chief Neff that concern official business.
- (4) All calendars or calendar entries (including calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments) for Acting Voting Chief Neff, including any calendars maintained by Acting Voting Chief Neff himself or on his behalf by any

administrative assistant or scheduler.

DFF requests that calendars be produced in a format that includes all invitees, notes, and attachments. Please do not limit your search to Outlook calendars or the calendars attached to Acting Voting Chief Neff's official DOJ email address; we request the production of any calendar—paper or electronic, on government or personal devices—used to track how he allocates time on agency business.

19. This request sought records from October 1, 2025, through the date of the search.

20. On February 24, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request February 9, 2026, and assigned it tracking number 26-00257-F.

21. DFF has not received any further communication from CRT regarding this request.

External Communications Request (26-00258-F)

22. On February 6, 2026, DFF sent a FOIA request to CRT seeking the following:

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) the DOJ CRT officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities listed below.

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees assigned to the CRT's Voting Section

External Entities

1. Election Integrity Network ("EIN") (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))
2. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](https://cletamitchell.com), [@conservativepartnership.org](https://conservativepartnership.org))
3. Citizen Election Research Center ("CERC") (including, but not limited to [@citizenselectionresearchcenter.org](https://citizenselectionresearchcenter.org))
4. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)

5. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginiainstitute.org)
6. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
7. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

23. This request sought records from May 1, 2025, through the date of the search.

24. On February 24, 2026, CRT acknowledged this request, stated it received the request February 9, 2026, and assigned it tracking number 26-00258-F.

25. DFF has not received any further communication from CRT regarding this request.

26. On April 8, 2026, DFF sent a follow-up letter [to CRT and the Office of Information Policy \(OIP\)](#) regarding all of the above requests, and requested expedited processing given the urgent need for the information requested in advance of the coming federal midterm elections. [A copy of this letter is attached as Exhibit 1. Defendant has not responded to this request for expedited processing.](#)

Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies

27. As of the date of the Complaint, Defendant has failed to notify DFF of determinations regarding DFF's requests [or DFF's request for expedited processing](#). Through Defendant's failure to respond within the time limits required by law, DFF has constructively exhausted administrative remedies.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

Count 1 (Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)

28. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

29. By failing to respond to Plaintiff's requests with determinations and prompt productions of responsive records within the statutorily mandated time period, Defendant has

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violated its duties under 5 U.S.C. § 552, including but not limited to, its duties to conduct a reasonable search for responsive records, to take reasonable steps to release all nonexempt information, and to not withhold responsive records.

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Count 2 (Violation of FOIA, Failure to Grant Expedited Processing, 5 U.S.C. § 552, 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv)), 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(ii))

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30. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs as though fully set forth herein.

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31. By failing to grant expedited processing under 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv), Defendants have violated the FOIA and their regulations for this matter involving exceptional and widespread media interest concerning questions of governmental integrity that affect public confidence.

32. By failing to grant expedited processing under 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(ii) and 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II), Defendants have violated the FOIA and their regulations for this matter involving actual or alleged Federal Government activity about which there is an urgent need to inform the public, made by an entity which is primarily engaged in disseminating information.

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REQUEST FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests that this Court:

1. Order Defendant to conduct searches for any and all responsive records to Plaintiff's FOIA requests using search methods reasonably calculated to lead to discovery of all responsive records;
2. Order Defendant to produce, by a date certain, any and all non-exempt responsive records and a *Vaughn* index of any responsive records withheld under a claim of exemption;

3. Enjoin Defendant from continuing to withhold any and all non-exempt responsive records;
4. Award Plaintiff its costs, attorneys' fees, and other disbursements for this action; and
5. Grant any other relief this Court deems appropriate.

Dated: April 20, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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/s/ Anisha Hindocha

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Exhibit 1



April 8, 2026

Civil Rights Division FOIA Officers
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

RE: Request for Expedited Processing for Recently Submitted Requests

To FOIA Officials:

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) is writing to request the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) expedite the processing of the FOIA requests submitted on November 12, 2026, February 6, 2026, and March 9, 2026 and attached herein in Appendix A. These requests seek records, broadly speaking, reflecting communications of senior officials within the Civil Rights Division with known election deniers who reporting indicates previously worked to overturn President Trump’s loss in 2020 and are now actively seeking to undermine the midterm elections.

November 12, 2026 request (FOIA.gov confirmation ID 2517786; no agency tracking number; DFF-DOJ-CRT-25-1531):

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, text messages, messages on messaging platforms such as Signal and WhatsApp, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (1) the CRT officials listed below and (2) Kurt Olsen, a “special government employee” who has recently joined the Trump Administration. [footnote omitted]

CRT Officials

- a. Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General
- b. Jesus A. Osete, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- c. Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- d. Maureen Riordan, Acting Chief of the Voting Section
- e. Andrew “Mac” Warner, Attorney

This request seeks records from October 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

February 6, 2026 request (26-00256-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0206)

All Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or other final inter- or intra-agency agreements between CRT and any other entity regarding elections and voting, including Voter Registration Lists.

This request seeks records from January 20, 2025 until the date of the search.

February 6, 2026 request (26-00257-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0207)

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) Eric Neff, Acting Voting Chief and former Trial Attorney and (b) anyone communicating from the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in who.eop.gov.
2. All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations) sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff containing any of the following key terms:

Key Terms

- a. Fulton
- b. Venezuela
- c. Maduro
- d. Tulsi
- e. Gabbard
- f. "Puerto Rico"
- g. "Nationalize elections"
- h. "Nationalizing elections"
- i. "Voter Registration Lists"
- j. "Voter Registration List"
- k. VRL
- l. VRLs
- m. "Voter roll"
- n. "Citizenship data"
- o. "Voting machine"
- p. "Voting machines"
- q. "Election interference"

In an effort to accommodate the DOJ and reduce the number of potentially responsive

records to be processed and produced, we have limited part 2 of this request to communications sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff. To be clear, however, DFF still requests that complete email chains and texts be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both Neff's response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

3. All text messages (including messages sent on applications such as WhatsApp or Signal) sent and received by Acting Voting Chief Neff that concern official business.
4. All calendars or calendar entries (including calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments) for Acting Voting Chief Neff, including any calendars maintained by Acting Voting Chief Neff himself or on his behalf by any administrative assistant or scheduler.

DFF requests that calendars be produced in a format that includes all invitees, notes, and attachments. Please do not limit your search to Outlook calendars or the calendars attached to Acting Voting Chief Neff's official DOJ email address; we request the production of any calendar—paper or electronic, on government or personal devices—used to track how he allocates time on agency business.

This request seeks records from October 15, 2025 until the date of the search.

February 6, 2026 request (26-00258-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0208)

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) the DOJ CRT officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities listed below.

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees¹ assigned to the CRT's Voting Section

External Entities

¹ This includes individuals serving in their roles through presidential appointment, noncareer appointment and Schedule C appointment, as well as any career civil servant acting in a political role and any Special Government employee placed in their role from May 1, 2025 to the date of the search.

- A. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))
- B. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](https://cletamitchell.com), [@conservativepartnership.org](https://conservativepartnership.org))
- C. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to [@citizeselectionresearchcenter.org](https://citizeselectionresearchcenter.org))
- D. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
- E. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginia institute.org)
- F. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
- G. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

March 9, 2026 request (26-00330-F; DFF-DOJ-CRT-26-0354)

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Andrew “Mac” Warner or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to [@generalflynn.com](https://generalflynn.com))
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute ([@goldiis.org](https://goldiis.org))
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen
9. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))
10. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](https://cletamitchell.com), [@conservativepartnership.org](https://conservativepartnership.org))
11. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to [@citizeselectionresearchcenter.org](https://citizeselectionresearchcenter.org))

12. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
13. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginiainstitute.org)
14. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
15. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

2. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) the CRT officials listed below or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees [footnote omitted] assigned to the CRT's Voting Section

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to @generalflynn.com)
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute (@goldiis.org)
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

DFF's requests merit expedited processing because: (1) the requests concern a "matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity that affect public confidence," *see* 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv); and (2) there is an urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity, *see* 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II).

I. DFF’s requests concern a matter attracting exceptional media interest in which there exist possible government integrity questions that affect public confidence.

To qualify for expedited processing under 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(iv), the Department of Justice has interpreted subsection (iv) to require that “the same matter that draws widespread and exceptional media interest must be the matter in which there exists possible questions about the government’s integrity that affect public confidence.” *Am. Oversight v. U.S. Dep’t of Just.*, 292 F. Supp. 3d 501, 506 (D.D.C. 2018). DFF’s instant FOIA requests satisfy both criteria.

A. DFF’s requests concern a matter attracting widespread and exceptional media interest.

The focus of DFF’s FOIA requests—the activities of senior political appointees in the Civil Rights Division and Voting Section, and specifically their communications with individuals known to have worked to undermine Trump’s electoral loss in 2020—has garnered immense attention from the American public, Congress, and the press. In particular, there has been significant media coverage and public interest surrounding the individuals in the Civil Rights Division and Voting section who are known to have ties to election deniers or activists who are pushing to nationalize elections, or themselves expressed support for overturning President Trump’s loss in 2020—as well as surrounding the ultimate aims of recent Voting section efforts to collect state voter roll data nationwide.

Press reporting indicates that Maureen Riordan, who served as acting chief of the Voting Section until January, previously worked for Public Interest Legal Foundation, an organization that has been known to promote falsehoods about widespread illegal voting and the 2020 election.² She has appeared on a podcast³ run by Cleta Mitchell, one of the most influential figures in the election denial movement.⁴ Indeed, Riordan’s role in the Voting Section, and open questions surrounding the most basic of issues such as the Section’s mission statement, has attracted attention from Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee.⁵

Andrew “Mac” Warner served as a senior official in the Civil Rights Division last year, where reporting indicates his work included investigating falsehoods about the 2020 election—claims

² Sam Levine, *Voter Fraud Activist Will Apologize To Citizens He Accused Of Being Illegal Voters*, HuffPost (July 18, 2019), [https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/doj-top-voting-lawyer-worked-for-anti-voting-firm/](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/j-christian-adams-pilf-settlement_n_5d309002e4b0419fd3298ee6?02b; Yuniur Rivas, DOJ’s New Top Voting Lawyer Worked for Leading Anti-Voting Law Firm”, Democracy Docket (May 31, 2025), <a href=);

³ *Who’s Counting with Cleta Mitchell*, Maureen Riordan: A First-Hand Account of the Left’s Takeover of the DOJ Voting Section (May 18, 2022), <https://open.spotify.com/episode/100II02zkCyEXGxovH1SO6>.

⁴ Marshall Cohen & Fredreka Schouten, *2020 election deniers and allies amass power, in and out of the Trump administration*, CNN (Oct. 24, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/24/politics/2020-election-deniers-power-trump-administration>.

⁵ Padilla, Durbin, Welch, *Colleagues Condemn DOJ’s Baseless Voter Fraud Investigations*, (July 17, 2025), <https://www.padilla.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/Letter-to-AAG-Dhillon-re-DOJ-Voting-Section.pdf>.

that he has also made in public comments.⁶ In February of this year, he attended a summit with other senior federal officials known for denying the results of the 2020 election—such as Kurt Olsen,⁷ the White House lawyer reinvestigating the 2020 election, and Heather Honey, who spearheads election integrity at the Department of Homeland Security⁸—as well as outside election deniers such as Cleta Mitchell and Peter Ticktin, who has claimed credit for drafting an executive order to ban mail-in ballots and eliminate voting machines.⁹ Although he reportedly resigned the day after the event and had not had agency approval to attend, this resignation in fact underscores the importance of shedding light on his communications while in office with outside election deniers.

Eric Neff, acting head of the Voting Section since late 2025, previously served as a district attorney in California, and reportedly based a prosecution around tips from True the Vote, an anti-voting organization that also promotes 2020 election denial falsehoods.¹⁰ He also represented a prominent election denier, Patrick Byrne, who supported Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election results.¹¹ Under his leadership, the Voting Section has been seeking state voter roll data, and attracting significant press attention surrounding the data collection and open questions regarding Neff’s goals with the effort.¹²

⁶ Yunion Rivas, *The DOJ Lawyer and Hardcore Election Denier Probing 2020 Democracy Docket* (Oct. 23, 2025), <https://www.democracymocket.com/news-alerts/the-doj-lawyer-and-hardcore-election-denier-probing-2020/>.

⁷ Jeremy Herb, *et al.*, *Key 2020 election denier is still working to prove it was stolen — now from inside the White House*, CNN (Mar. 8, 2020) <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/08/politics/kurt-olsen-2020-election-fraud-trump>.

⁸ The Associated Press,

Researcher who has distorted voter data appointed to Homeland Security election integrity role Politico (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/26/dhs-election-security-2020-election-conspiracy-00527453>.

⁹ Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026)

<https://www.propublica.org/article/election-denier-summit-trump-midterms>.

¹⁰ Matt Cohen, *DOJ’s New Voting Lawyer Has Web of Ties to Election-Conspiracy Theorists*, Democracy Docket (Dec. 9, 2025),

<https://www.democracymocket.com/news-alerts/dojs-new-voting-lawyer-has-web-of-ties-to-election-conspiracy-theorists/>.

¹¹ Abby Vesoulis, *Scoop: New Justice Department Voting Rights Chief Had Prior Job Suspension for Ties to Election Deniers*, Mother Jones (Dec. 12, 2025),

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/eric-neff-new-justice-department-voting-rights-chief-had-prior-job-suspension-for-ties-to-election-deniers/>.

¹² Devlin Barrett & Nick Corasaniti, *Trump Administration Quietly Seeks to Build National Voter Roll*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 9, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/09/us/politics/trump-voter-registration-data.html>; Jonathan Shorman, *In bid for voter data, Trump’s DOJ lays groundwork to undermine confidence in midterms*, Stateline (Mar. 13, 2026)

<https://stateline.org/2026/03/13/in-bid-for-voter-data-trumps-doj-lays-groundwork-to-question-midterm-results/>;

Sam Levine, *Alarm as Trump DoJ pushes for voter information on millions of Americans*, The Guardian (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/15/justice-department-voter-information>;

Patrick Marley & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, *DOJ hits states with broad requests for voter rolls, election data*, Wash. Post (July 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/16/trump-voter-fraud-elections/>;

Jessica Huseman, *Why states should scrutinize the Justice Department’s requests for voter rolls*, Votebeat (Aug. 11, 2025),

<https://www.votebeat.org/2026/01/15/justice-department-letters-states-request-voter-rolls-privacy-act/>;

Jonathan Shorman, *DOJ is sharing state voter roll lists with Homeland Security*, Stateline (Sept. 12, 2025)

<https://stateline.org/2025/09/12/doj-is-sharing-state-voter-roll-lists-with-homeland-security/>.

B. There exist in these media reports questions about the government’s integrity that affect public confidence.

Moreover, the widespread media reporting on the above matters leaves open questions regarding the government’s integrity, that affects public confidence in upcoming elections:

1. To what extent are DOJ CRT officials working with prominent election denier activists to undermine the midterm elections?¹³
2. Who is serving as the outside contractor for voter roll maintenance, as described in CRT’s memorandum of understanding with states turning over voter data?¹⁴

II. There is an urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity.

As an initial point, DFF—as a not-for-profit organization that works to promote transparency and accountability in government—is primarily engaged in disseminating information to the public. DFF is an organization primarily engaged in “disseminating information to the public,”¹⁵ as evidenced by the previous use of public records obtained by DFF in numerous news reports.¹⁶ In

¹³ Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/election-denier-summit-trump-midterms>; Peter Stone, *How an election conspiracy theorist has Trump’s ear on voting laws and midterms*, The Guardian (Mar. 27, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/27/trump-voting-election-conspiracy-midterms>; Jeremy Herb, et al, *Key 2020 election denier is still working to prove it was stolen — now from inside the White House*, CNN (Mar. 8, 2026), <https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/08/politics/kurt-olsen-2020-election-fraud-trump>; Alan Feuer et al, *Where Trump Has Installed Election Deniers in Government*, N.Y. Times (updated Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/03/26/us/politics/trump-2020-election-deniers.html>; Nicholas Riccardi, *Trump’s administration is loaded with people who backed his false 2020 election claims*, PBS News (Feb. 20, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trumps-administration-is-loaded-with-people-who-backed-his-false-2020-election-claims>.

¹⁴ Eileen O’Connor, *“Confidential” Agreements Show Trump Administration’s Plans for States’ Voter Data*, Brennan Center for Justice (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/confidential-agreements-show-trump-administrations-plans-states-voter>.

¹⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 552 (6)(E)(v)(II) (“Compelling need” for the purpose of expedited processing mean “with respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity.”).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Matias Civita, *Emails Show U.S. Marshals Bypassed Training Rules to Deputize Musk’s DOGE Security Detail: Report*, International Business Times (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.ibtimes.com/emails-show-us-marshals-bypassed-training-rules-deputize-musks-doge-security-detail-report-3800930>; Io Dodds, *Elon Musk’s Bodyguards Made Federal Agent Despite Lack of Training*, Independent (Apr. 8, 2026), <https://www.independent.co.uk/bulletin/news/elon-musk-doge-bodyguards-deputized-b2952758.html>; Tega Egwabor, *How Elon Musk’s Bodyguards Got Federal Agent Status*, Rolling Out (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://rollingout.com/2026/04/06/how-elon-musks-bodyguards-federal-agent/>; David Ingram et al., *U.S. Marshals Waived Training Rules for Musk’s Armed DOGE Security, Emails Show*, NBC News (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/elon-musk/elon-musk-trump-government-doge-security-rcna266088>; Ja’han Jones, *Amid Musk’s Paranoia, U.S. Marshals Deputized His Unqualified Security Staff*, MS Now (Apr. 6, 2026),

addition, DFF uses information gathered through FOIA to educate the public via numerous other

<https://www.ms.now/opinion/amid-musks-paranoia-u-s-marshals-deputized-his-unqualified-security-staff>; Lisa Needham, *Musk's DOGE Security Bros Promoted From Mall Cops to Federal Agents*, Daily Kos (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2026/4/6/2376599/-Musk-s-DOGE-security-bros-promoted-from-mall-cops-to-federal-agents>; Kasandra Rattle, *Marshals Waived Training Rules to Deputize Musk's Bodyguards*, Hoodline (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://hoodline.com/2026/04/feds-bent-badge-rules-to-arm-musk-s-security-detail/>; Maribel Velázquez, *Musk logró que guardaespaldas sin perfil fueran agentes federales*, La Opinión (Apr. 7, 2026), <https://laopinion.com/2026/04/07/musk-logro-que-guardaespaldas-sin-perfil-fueran-agentes-federales/>; Bethany McLean, *The Man Behind Trump's Attack on the Fed*, *The Free Press* (Jan. 20, 2026), <https://www.thefp.com/p/the-man-behind-trumps-fed-attack>; Chris Prentice & Marisa Taylor, *Exclusive: Trump appointee inspired by conservative media outlet to push for probe of Democratic congressman*, Reuters (Dec. 22, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/trump-appointee-inspired-by-conservative-media-outlet-push-probe-democratic-2025-12-20/>; Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, *"Happy to Do It": Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy*, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>; Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, Huffpost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron.'* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback-she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

means—including press releases, reports, blog posts, and social media.¹⁷ DFF’s social media platforms reach hundreds of thousands¹⁸ of people—and its website in 2025 earned 3.5 million views.

There is an urgency to inform the public about the CRT’s ongoing efforts to obtain, share, and analyze state voter data, as well as its interactions with outside actors who have promoted unfounded claims of election fraud pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II), as there is both intense public interest surrounding the Administration’s actions, and there are pending governmental decisions that could occur in short order within DOJ, including the potential for DOJ officials to work with election denial groups to analyze state voter rolls—at a time when confidence in elections has fallen significantly across party lines.¹⁹ This creates a current exigency for the public to receive the information requested in advance of those actions and the coming federal elections in November 2026.

Recent reporting indicates that the Department of Justice has sought expansive voter registration data from states, and in some instances, shared that data with other federal agencies, while exploring mechanisms to centralize such information.²⁰ These efforts have prompted concern among elections officials and experts that such data could be used to facilitate voter roll challenges or removals, or to cast doubt on the integrity of voter registration systems ahead of the 2026 federal elections.²¹

¹⁷ *Democracy Forward Obtains Records Regarding FHFA’s Politicized Investigations of Public Officials*, Democracy Forward (Oct. 30, 2025), <https://democracyforward.org/news/press-releases/pulte-lawsuit/>; *Using AI for Governance and Personnel Decisions*, Democracy Forward (updated February 13, 2026), <https://democracyforward.org/work/investigations/using-ai-for-governance-and-personnel-decisions-without-proper-guardrails/>; *Demanding Accountability: Democracy Forward’s Investigations in the First Year of the Trump-Vance Administration*, Democracy Forward (Mar. 13, 2026), <https://democracyforward.org/work/research/demanding-accountability/>; Democracy Forward (@democracyforward.org), *Thread regarding FOIAs about ICE facial recognition* (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://bsky.app/profile/democracyforward.org/post/3meqqefmoic2s>.

¹⁸ Democracy Forward currently has approximately 105,500 followers on Bluesky (<https://bsky.app/profile/democracyforward.org>, last visited March 17, 2026), 106,000 followers on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/democracyforward/>, last visited March 17, 2026), and 17,300 followers on X (<https://x.com/DemocracyFwd>, last visited March 17, 2026).

¹⁹ Inga Kiderra & Christine Clark, *Trust in Elections Declines across Party Lines Ahead of 2026 Midterms*, UC San Diego Survey Finds, UC San Diego Today (Feb. 18, 2026), <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/trust-in-elections-declines-across-party-lines-ahead-of-2026-midterms-uc-san-diego-survey-finds>.

²⁰ Devlin Barrett & Nick Corasaniti, *Trump Administration Quietly Seeks to Build National Voter Roll*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 9, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/09/us/politics/trump-voter-registration-data.html>; Patrick Marley & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, *DOJ hits states with broad requests for voter rolls, election data*, Wash. Post (July 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/16/trump-voter-fraud-elections/>.

²¹ Sam Levine, *Alarm as Trump DoJ pushes for voter information on millions of Americans*, The Guardian (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jan/15/justice-department-voter-information>; Jonathan Shorman, *Trump’s DOJ offers states confidential deal to remove voters flagged by feds*, Stateline (Dec. 18, 2025); Natalie Contreras & Gabby Birenbaum, *Texas hands over complete list of registered voters to Trump administration*, Texas Trib. (Jan. 9, 2026), <https://www.texastribune.org/2026/01/09/texas-voter-roll-trump-administration-justice-department-democrats-dnc/>;

At the same time, there is substantial reporting that individuals within CRT have ties to individuals and organizations that reportedly denied and sought to overturn election results.²² Investigative reporting further indicates that some of these individuals and groups are engaging with federal officials regarding election administration and the conduct of future elections, including the 2026 midterm elections.²³ These developments raise serious and time sensitive questions about whether federal election-related activities are being influenced by individuals who have promoted false claims about election integrity.

The convergence of federal efforts to collect and share voter data alongside reported engagement with election denial advocates, creates an immediate need for transparency. The requested records will shed light on the nature of CRT's agreements with states and other entities, the potential use of voter data across agencies, and whether these efforts are connected to initiatives that could adversely affect voter eligibility or participation.²⁴

The urgency of disclosure is heightened by the proximity of the 2026 midterm elections. The records sought in DFF's requests concern ongoing activities that could gravely impact election administration and public confidence in the near term. Reporting underscores that these efforts are already being framed in connection with the upcoming elections and may influence how voter eligibility and election integrity are assessed in advance of the midterms.²⁵ Recent research

Abby Vesoulis & Ari Berman, *Your Private Data Is Building Trump's Voter Purge Machine*, Mother Jones (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/your-private-data-is-building-trumps-voter-purge-machine/>.

²² Marshall Cohen & Frederka Schouten, *2020 election deniers and allies amass power, in and out of the Trump Administration*, CNN (updated Oct. 24, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/10/24/politics/2020-election-deniers-power-trump-administration/>; David Gilbert, *The DOJ Misled a Judge About How It's Using Voter Roll Data*, Wired (Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.wired.com/story/doj-misled-judge-voter-roll-data/>; Matt Cohen, *DOJ's New Voting Lawyer Has Web of Ties to Election-Conspiracy Theorists*, Democracy Docket (Dec. 9, 2025), <https://www.democracymarket.com/news-alerts/dojs-new-voting-lawyer-has-web-of-ties-to-election-conspiracy-theorists/>; Abby Vesoulis, *Scoop: New Justice Department Voting Rights Chief Had Prior Job Suspension for Ties to Election Deniers*, Mother Jones (Dec. 12, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/12/eric-neff-new-justice-department-voting-rights-chief-had-prior-job-suspension-for-ties-to-election-deniers/>.

²³ Doug Bock Clark, *Trump Officials Attended a Summit of Election Deniers Who Want the President to Take Over the Midterms*, ProPublica (Feb. 28, 2026), <https://www.propublica.org/article/election-denier-summit-trump-midterms>; Alan Feuer et al, *Where Trump Has Installed Election Deniers in Government*, N.Y. Times (updated Apr. 6, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/03/26/us/politics/trump-2020-election-deniers.html>.

²⁴ See e.g. Eileen O'Connor, *"Confidential" Agreements Show Trump Administration's Plans for States' Voter Data*, Brennan Center (Feb. 5, 2026), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/confidential-agreements-show-trump-administrations-plans-states-voter>.

²⁵ Jonathan Shorman, *In bid for voter data, Trump's DOJ lays groundwork to undermine confidence in midterms*, Stateline (Mar. 13, 2026), <https://stateline.org/2026/03/13/in-bid-for-voter-data-trumps-doj-lays-groundwork-to-question-midterm-results/>; Patrick Marley & Yvonne Wingett Sanchez, *DOJ hits states with broad requests for voter rolls, election data*, Wash. Post (July 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/16/trump-voter-fraud-elections/>.

indicates that confidence in elections is already declining ahead of the 2026 midterm elections, amplifying the need for timely public access to this information.²⁶

I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the above is accurate and expedited processing is warranted in this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Daniel A McGrath

Senior Oversight Counsel

On behalf of

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043

Appendix 1. Submitted Requests

²⁶ See e.g., Inga Kiderra & Christine Clark, *Trust in Elections Declines across Party Lines Ahead of 2026 Midterms, UC San Diego Survey Finds*, UC San Diego Today (Feb. 18, 2026), <https://today.ucsd.edu/story/trust-in-elections-declines-across-party-lines-ahead-of-2026-midterms-uc-san-diego-survey-finds>.

Appendix 1

Submitted Requests



November 12, 2025

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, text messages, messages on messaging platforms such as Signal and WhatsApp, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (1) the CRT officials listed below and (2) Kurt Olsen, a “special government employee” who has recently joined the Trump Administration.¹

CRT Officials

- a. Harmeet Dhillon, Assistant Attorney General
- b. Jesus A. Osete, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- c. Michael Gates, Deputy Assistant Attorney General
- d. Maureen Riordan, Acting Chief of the Voting Section
- e. Andrew “Mac” Warner, Attorney

This request seeks records from October 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

¹ For further identifying information, see Josh Dawsey, et al, *White House Hires ‘Stop the Steal’ Lawyer to Investigate 2020 Election Claims*, Wall Street J. (Oct. 17, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/politics/elections/white-house-hires-stop-the-steal-lawyer-to-investigate-2020-election-claims-6395d322>.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a "demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information," *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates

records obtained through FOIA to “a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject” of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require “pointless specificity”; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its “ability to publicize disclosed information.” *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of “contacts with any major news[] companies” that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFE has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFE receives that contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of communications individuals in the Trump administration may be having with Kurt Olsen, a special government employee to work on election-related issues. When DFE obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFE’s communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFE staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFE have previously formed the basis of news reports.²

² See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, “Happy to Do It”: Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn’t Receive “Zero Tolerance” Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *‘Just answer the question and kill this story’: In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson’s refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a ‘moron,’* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback*

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman
President & CEO
Democracy Forward Foundation
P.O. Box 34553
Washington, D.C. 20043

she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.



February 6, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

All Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) or other final inter- or intra-agency agreements between CRT and any other entity regarding elections and voting, including Voter Registration Lists.

This request seeks records from January 20, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how

that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

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failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public's understanding of the actions and communications of individuals tasked with elections-related actions in the federal government. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF's communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.¹

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Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, 'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron,' Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043



February 6, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) Eric Neff, Acting Voting Chief and former Trial Attorney and (b) anyone communicating from the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in who.eop.gov.
2. All email communications (including email messages, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations) sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff containing any of the following key terms:

Key Terms

- a. Fulton
- b. Venezuela
- c. Maduro
- d. Tulsi
- e. Gabbard
- f. “Puerto Rico”
- g. “Nationalize elections”

- h. “Nationalizing elections”
- i. “Voter Registration Lists”
- j. “Voter Registration List”
- k. VRL
- l. VRLs
- m. “Voter roll”
- n. “Citizenship data”
- o. “Voting machine”
- p. “Voting machines”
- q. “Election interference”

In an effort to accommodate the DOJ and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, we have limited part 2 of this request to communications sent by Acting Voting Chief Neff. To be clear, however, DFF still requests that complete email chains and texts be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both Neff’s response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

3. All text messages (including messages sent on applications such as WhatsApp or Signal) sent and received by Acting Voting Chief Neff that concern official business.
4. All calendars or calendar entries (including calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments) for Acting Voting Chief Neff, including any calendars maintained by Acting Voting Chief Neff himself or on his behalf by any administrative assistant or scheduler.

DFF requests that calendars be produced in a format that includes all invitees, notes, and attachments. Please do not limit your search to Outlook calendars or the calendars attached to Acting Voting Chief Neff’s official DOJ email address; we request the production of any calendar—paper or electronic, on government or personal devices—used to track how he allocates time on agency business.

This request seeks records from October 15, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably

segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a "demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information," *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates records obtained through FOIA to "a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject" of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require "pointless specificity"; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its "ability to publicize disclosed information." *Judicial Watch, Inc. v.*

Rossotti, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of “contacts with any major news[] companies” that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of the actions and communications of individuals tasked with elections-related actions in the federal government. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF’s communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.¹

¹ See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, “Happy to Do It”: Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn’t Receive “Zero Tolerance” Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *‘Just answer the question and kill this story’: In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson’s refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a ‘moron,’* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees’ war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018),

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman
President & CEO
Democracy Forward Foundation
P.O. Box 34553
Washington, D.C. 20043

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.



February 6, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Civil Rights Division (“CRT”) of the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams) between (a) the DOJ CRT officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities listed below.

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees¹ assigned to the CRT’s Voting Section

External Entities

- A. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))

¹ This includes individuals serving in their roles through presidential appointment, noncareer appointment and Schedule C appointment, as well as any career civil servant acting in a political role and any Special Government employee placed in their role from May 1, 2025 to the date of the search.

- B. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to @cletamitchell.com, @conservativepartnership.org)
- C. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to @citizenselectionresearchcenter.org)
- D. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
- E. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginia institute.org)
- F. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
- G. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep’t of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period,

we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a "demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information," *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates records obtained through FOIA to "a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject" of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep't of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require "pointless specificity"; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its "ability to publicize disclosed information." *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of "contacts with any major news[] companies" that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public's understanding of the actions and communications of individuals tasked with elections-related actions in the federal government. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF's communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.²

² See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, "Happy to

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

Do It: *Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy*, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron.'* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

Skye Perryman

President & CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043



March 9, 2026

VIA Electronic Delivery

Kilian B. Kagle, Chief
4CON, Room 6.153
950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20530
CRT.FOIArequests@usdoj.gov

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. §§ 552, Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

Records Requested

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) produce the following within twenty (20) business days:

1. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Andrew “Mac” Warner or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to @generalflynn.com)
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute (@goldiis.org)
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen

9. Election Integrity Network (“EIN”) (including, but not limited to [@whoscounting.us](https://whoscounting.us); [@electionintegritynetwork.org](https://electionintegritynetwork.org), [@electionintegrity.network](https://electionintegrity.network))
10. Cleta Mitchell, Chair of EIN (including, but not limited to [@cletamitchell.com](https://cletamitchell.com), [@conservativepartnership.org](https://conservativepartnership.org))
11. Citizen Election Research Center (“CERC”) (including, but not limited to [@citizenselectionresearchcenter.org](https://citizenselectionresearchcenter.org))
12. EagleAI Network (eagleai.pro)
13. Virginia Institute for Public Policy (including, but not limited to virginia institute.org)
14. Public Interest Legal Foundation (including, but not limited to publicinterestlegal.org)
15. True the Vote (including, but not limited to truethevote.org)

2. All electronic communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, calendar invitation attachments, text messages, or messages on messaging platforms, including Signal, WhatsApp, Slack and Microsoft Teams, and direct messages on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social) between (a) the CRT officials listed below or anyone communicating on his behalf such as a Chief of Staff, executive assistant, or scheduler and (b) external individuals or domains listed below:

DOJ CRT Officials

1. Acting Voting Chief Maureen Riordan
2. Acting Voting Chief Eric Neff
3. All political appointees or special government appointees¹ assigned to the CRT’s Voting Section

External Individuals & Entities

1. Michael Flynn (including but not limited to [@generalflynn.com](https://generalflynn.com))
2. Patrick Byrne
3. Gold Institute ([@goldiis.org](https://goldiis.org))
4. Seth Keshel
5. Will Huff
6. Holly Kelser
7. Brad Carver
8. Kurt Olsen

¹ This includes individuals serving in their roles through presidential appointment, noncareer appointment and Schedule C appointment, as well as any career civil servant acting in a political role and any Special Government employee placed in their role from May 1, 2025 to the date of the search.

This request seeks records from May 1, 2025 until the date of the search.

Scope of Search

FOIA requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information that would harm an interest protected by a specific exemption or where disclosure is prohibited by law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(8)(A). In the event that any of the requested documents cannot be disclosed in their entirety, we request that you release any material that can be reasonably segregated. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Should any documents or portions of documents be withheld, we further request that you state with specificity the description of the document to be withheld and the legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions thereof in an index, as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). Should any document include both disclosable and non-disclosable material that cannot reasonably be segregated, we request that you describe what proportion of the information in a document is non-disclosable and how that information is dispersed throughout the document. *Mead Data Cent., Inc. v. U.S. Dep't of Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in an electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond to this request in writing within 20 working days as required under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i). If all of the requested documents are not available within that time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period. If all relevant records are not produced within that time period, we are entitled to a waiver of fees for searching and duplicating records under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(viii)(I).

Request for Fee Waiver

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and your agency's regulations, Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing records for this request. FOIA requires documents to be furnished to requesters at no fee or reduced fees when "if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A).

In determining whether a fee waiver is appropriate, courts consider whether a requester has a “demonstrated . . . ability to disseminate the requested information,” *Cause of Action v. F.T.C.*, 799 F.3d 1108, 1116-17 (D.C. Cir. 2015), and whether the requester regularly disseminates records obtained through FOIA to “a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject” of its work. *Carney v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice*, 19 F.3d 807, 814-15 (2d Cir. 1994). FOIA does not require a requester to describe exactly how it intends to disseminate the information requested, as that would require “pointless specificity”; all that is necessary is for a requester to adequately demonstrate its “ability to publicize disclosed information.” *Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003). In evaluating a fee waiver request, courts consider how a requester actually communicates information collected through FOIA to the public, including press releases or a website where documents received are made available, see *id.*, or whether the requester has a history of “contacts with any major news[] companies” that suggest an ability to disseminate materials of interest through the press. *Larson v. C.I.A.*, 843 F.2d 1481, 1483 (D.C. Cir. 1988) (upholding a denial of a fee waiver to a requester who had failed to identify his relationships with newspaper companies that could disseminate documents).

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA, and intends to publicize records DFF receives that contribute significantly to the public’s understanding of communications individuals in the administration may have had with individuals and entities associated with an election integrity summit attended by the administration officials. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF’s communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.²

² See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, “Happy to Do It”: Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>;

Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn’t Receive “Zero Tolerance” Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, BuzzFeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, HuffPost (Dec. 17, 2018), https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba; Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, ‘Just answer the question and kill this story’: In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson’s refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a ‘moron,’ Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018), <https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9; Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting*,

Democracy Forward Foundation is not filing this request to further any commercial interest, and any information obtained by Democracy Forward Foundation as a result of this request and disclosed will be disclosed at no cost.

If the request for a waiver is denied, we are willing to pay all reasonable fees incurred for searching and duplicating records in responding to this request, up to \$100. If the costs of responding to this request should exceed that amount, please contact us before incurring costs exceeding that amount.

Conclusion

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within 20 business days, please contact me as soon as possible at foia@democracyforward.org.

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

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ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.