

In Reply Refer To: **FOIA Request 20-05138-F**

June 28, 2022

Mr. Austin Evers
American Oversight
1030 15th Street, N.W. Suite B255
Washington, DC, 20005

Dear Mr. Evers:

This letter is the initial agency decision to your March 5, 2020 request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Central Office FOIA Office seeking “All email communications (including emails, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) from January 30, 2020 to through the date of the search between (a) Executive in Charge Richard Stone or anyone serving as White House Liaison or agency point of contact for the coronavirus task force, and (b) the Executive Office of the President officials listed below:

1. Vice President Mike Pence
2. National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien
3. Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor
Matthew Pottinger
4. Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor to the Chief of Staff Robert Blair
5. Assistant to the President and Director of the Domestic Policy Council
Joseph Grogan
6. Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Coordination
Christopher Liddell
7. Director of the National Economic Council Larry Kudlow
8. White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Deborah Birx
9. Press Secretary Katie Miller (formerly Katie Waldman)
10. Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
Kelvin Droegmeier”

As indicated in our March 9, 2022 letter acknowledging receipt, VHA Central Office FOIA Office received your request on March 5, 2022, assigned it the FOIA tracking number of 20-05138-F, placed it in the complex processing category, stated that we would search for records responsive to your FOIA request that were gathered or created by VHA Central Office on or before the date your request was sent out for reach search, and granted your request for a fee waiver. I sincerely apologize for the delay in responding to your request.

On March 9, 2020 a search request on Dr. Richard Stone’s electronic mail

(email) account was submitted to the VA, Office of Information and Technology (OIT). The account was searched for emails Dr. Stone sent to or received directly from the ten named individuals for the time frame of January 30, 2020 through March 9, 2020. At the conclusion of the search, no records were located as responsive to your request.

To note, the Office of the Executive Secretary, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (OSVA) FOIA Office processed a similar request, dated March 5, 2020, from you under the FOIA tracking number 20-05139-F for all email communications (including emails, complete email chains, email attachments, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) from January 30, 2020 to through the date of the search between Secretary Robert Wilkie or anyone serving as White House Liaison or agency point of contact for the coronavirus task force, and the ten Executive Office of the President officials listed above. The OSVA FOIA Office issued a response to 20-05139-F on May 28, 2020. Consequently, I did not refer your request to the OSVA FOIA Office as they had already received it.

This concludes VHA Central Office FOIA Office's response to FOIA request 20-05138-F. Please be advised you may appeal the determinations made in this response to the VA, Office of General Counsel. Appeals may be mailed or submitted electronically to:

Appeal mailing address:

Office of the General Counsel (024)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Appeal email address: ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov

If you should choose to file an appeal, your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted no later than ninety (90) calendar days from the date of this letter. Please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly state why you disagree with the determinations set forth in this response.

You may also seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services for any other aspect of your FOIA request, excluding the release determination, from VHA's FOIA Public Liaison and/or Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) as provided below:

VHA FOIA Public Liaison:

Email Address: yhafoia2@va.gov

Phone Number: (877) 461-5038

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

Email: ogis@nara.gov

Fax: (202) 741-5769

Mailing address:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

If you should have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at 319-383-2609 or by email at barbara.swailes@va.gov.

Sincerely,



Barbara Swailes, M.H.A., CIPP/US, CIPP/G
VHA FOIA Officer