



February 1, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Senator Daniel Knodl
Room 108 South
State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707
Sen.Knodl@legis.wisconsin.gov

Re: Public Records Law Request

Dear Senator Daniel Knodl:

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

Requested Records

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

1. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) between (a) State Senator Daniel Knodl or his staffers Connor Fitzgerald, James Mietus, or William Neville and (b) any of the external entities or individuals listed below or anyone communicating from the listed email addresses and/or domains.

External Entities and Individuals:

- a. American Legislative Exchange Council (alec.org)
- b. Cleta Mitchell (cleta@cletamitchell.com or cmitchell@foley.com)
- c. Conservative Partnership Institute (cpi.org or conservativepartnership.org)
- d. Don Millis (dmillis@reinhartlaw.com, don.millis@wi.gov)
- e. Election Integrity Network (whoscounting.us, ElectionIntegrity.Network)
- f. Gina Swoboda (ginaswoboda@hotmail.com, ginaswo@asu.edu, gs@voterreferencefoundation.com, gswoboda@azleg.gov) or anyone communicating on behalf of the Voter Reference Foundation (voteref.com, voterreferencefoundation.com)
- g. Haystack Investigations (haystackinvestigations.com)

¹ Wis. Stat. § 19.35(4)(a).



- h. Heather Honey (heather@verityvote.us, hhoney@haystackinvestigations.com, h2osint@protonmail.com)
- i. Jay Valentine (jay@contingencysales.com) or anyone communicating on behalf of Omega4America (omega4america.com, contingencysales.com, jayvalentine.com, electionwatch.info, or fractalweb.app)
- j. James “Jim” Womack (james.k.womack@gmail.com, jameskwomack@gmail.com)
- k. Marge Bostelmann (marge.bostelmann@wi.gov)
- l. Meagan Wolfe (meagan.wolfe@wi.gov)
- m. Patrice Johnson (patricejohnson11@gmail.com) or anyone communicating on behalf of Pure Integrity Michigan Elections (mifairelections@gmail.com, PIME2024@protonmail.com)
- n. Patricia Chandler (jsia34765@gmail.com)
- o. Rick Richards (drr@cathaid.com, drr@EagleAI.pro, DrR@eagleai.pro, drronline@me.com) or anyone communicating on behalf of EagleAI NETwork (EagleAI.pro)
- p. Robert Kehoe (robert.kehoe@wi.gov)
- q. Robert Spindell (cd4.chairman@wisgop.info, rspindell@gottesman-company.com, robert.spindell@wi.gov, bob.spindell@wi.gov)
- r. Secretary of State Sarah Godlewski
- s. Virginia Institute of Public Policy (virginiainstitute.org)
- t. Verity Vote (verityvote.us)

For part 1 of this request, please note that American Oversight does not seek, and that this request specifically excludes, the initial mailing of news clips or other mass-distribution emails. However, subsequent communications responding to or forwarding such emails are responsive to this request. In other words, for example, if Sen. Knodl received a mass-distribution news clip email from the Election Integrity Network, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if Sen. Knodl responded to that email with their own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

2. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) sent by State Senator Daniel Knodl or his staffers Connor Fitzgerald, James Mietus, or William Neville and containing any of the key terms listed below.

Key Terms:

- a. “Senate Bill 834”
- b. “SB 834”
- c. SB834
- d. “Assembly Bill 899”
- e. “AB 899”
- f. AB899
- g. “Secretary of State”
- h. Godlewski

- i. “Elections Commission”
- j. “Election Commission”
- k. WEC
- l. “dissolve commission”
- m. “Electronic Registration Information Center”
- n. “ERIC member”
- o. “ERIC replacement”
- p. “ERIC alternative”
- q. “ERIC data”
- r. “ERIC information”
- s. “ERIC withdraw”
- t. “ERIC state”
- u. “member of ERIC”
- v. “members of ERIC”
- w. “members in ERIC”
- x. “replace ERIC”
- y. “resignation from ERIC”
- z. “resign from ERIC”
- aa. “withdraw from ERIC”
- bb. “leave ERIC”

For part two of this request, in an effort to accommodate your office and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, American Oversight has limited part 2 of this request to emails sent by the specified individuals. To be clear, however, American Oversight still requests that complete email chains be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means, for example, that both an individuals’ response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

For both parts of this request, please provide all responsive records from August 1, 2023, through the date the search is conducted.

Fee Waiver Request

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

American Oversight’s work is aimed solely at serving the public interest. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, American Oversight does not have a commercial purpose and the release of the information requested is not in American Oversight’s financial interest. Rather, American Oversight’s mission is to serve the public by promoting transparency in government, educating the public about government activities, and ensuring the

accountability of government officials. American Oversight uses the information gathered, and its analysis of it, to educate the public through reports, press releases, or other media.² American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website³ and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.com.⁴

The public has a significant interest in Wisconsin legislators' efforts to dissolve the Wisconsin Elections Commission.⁵ Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including the role election integrity activists may have had in shaping legislation to dissolve the Wisconsin Elections Commission. American Oversight is committed to transparency and makes the responses agencies provide to public records requests publicly available, and the public's understanding of the government's activities would be enhanced through American Oversight's analysis and publication of these records.

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

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

American Oversight seeks all responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. In conducting your search, please understand the term "record" in its broadest sense, to include any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio material of any kind. We seek records of any kind, including electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, and photographs, as well as letters, emails, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations or discussions. Our request includes any attachments to these records. **No category of material should be omitted from search, collection, and production.**

² See generally *News*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/blog>; *State Investigations*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/states>; see, e.g., *State Government Contacts with Voting-Restriction Activists*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/investigation/state-government-contacts-with-voting-restriction-activists>; *Wisconsin Documents Offer Window into Early Uncertainty over COVID-19*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/wisconsin-documents-offer-window-into-early-uncertainty-over-covid-19>.

³ *Documents*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/documents>.

⁴ American Oversight currently has approximately 16,000 followers on Facebook and 111,400 followers on Twitter.com. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Jan. 31, 2024); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter.com, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Jan. 31, 2024).

⁵ See, e.g., Molly Beck, *GOP Lawmakers Propose Abolishing Wisconsin Elections Commission, Giving Duties to Secretary of State*, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Dec. 5, 2023, 2:37 PM), <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2023/12/04/republican-lawmakers-propose-abolishing-wisconsin-elections-commission/71805425007/>.

Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records regarding official business. **You may not exclude searches of files or emails in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts.** Emails conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the authority's officer or employee constitutes a record for purposes of Wisconsin's public records laws.⁶

In the event some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records.⁷ If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically that it is not reasonable to segregate portions of the record for release.

Please take appropriate steps to ensure that records responsive to this request are not deleted by the agency before the completion of processing for this request. If records potentially responsive to this request are likely to be located on systems where they are subject to potential deletion, including on a scheduled basis, please take steps to prevent that deletion, including, as appropriate, by instituting a litigation hold on those records.

Conclusion

If you have any questions regarding how to construe this request for records or believe that further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production of records of interest to American Oversight, please do not hesitate to contact American Oversight to discuss this request. American Oversight welcomes an opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or duplication costs. By working together at the outset, American Oversight and your agency can decrease the likelihood of costly and time-consuming litigation in the future.

Where possible, please provide responsive material in an electronic format by email. Alternatively, please provide responsive material in native format or in PDF format on a USB drive. Please send any responsive material being sent by mail to American Oversight, 1030 15th Street NW, Suite B255, Washington, DC 20005. If it will accelerate release of responsive records to American Oversight, please also provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

We share a common mission to promote transparency in government. American Oversight looks forward to working with your agency on this request. If you do not understand any part of this request, please contact Ben Sparks at

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

⁷ Wis. Stat. § 19.36(6).

records@americanoversight.org or 202.873.1741. Also, if American Oversight's request for a fee waiver is not granted in full, please contact us immediately upon making such a determination.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ben Sparks

Ben Sparks
on behalf of
American Oversight