



February 20, 2024

VIA ONLINE PORTAL

Youngstown State University
1 Tressel Way
Youngstown, Ohio 44555
[Via Online Portal](#)

Re: Public Records Act Request

Dear Public Records Officer:

Pursuant to the Ohio Public Records Act (PRA), Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43, and other applicable Ohio law, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your agency promptly produce the following records:

1. All email communications (including email messages, calendar invitations, and any attachments) between any of the Youngstown University officials listed below and Representative Bill Johnson, Communications Director Ben Keeler (Benjamin.Keeler@mail.house.gov), or Chief of Staff Mike Smullen (Mike.Smullen@mail.house.gov).

Youngstown University Officials:

- a. Chair Michael A. Peterson
- b. Vice Chair Charles T. George
- c. Secretary Anita A. Hackstedde
- d. Trustee Molly S. Seals
- e. Trustee John R. Jakubek
- f. Trustee Laura A. Lyden
- g. Trustee Allen L. Ryan, Jr.
- h. Trustee Joseph J. Kerola
- i. Trustee Sergul A. Erzurum

Please note that American Oversight does not seek, and that part one of this request specifically excludes, the initial mailing of news clips or other mass-distribution emails. However, subsequent communications forwarding such emails are responsive to this request. In other words, for example, if Chair Michael A. Peterson received a mass-distribution email from Representative Bill Johnson, that initial email would not be responsive to part one of this request. However, if Chair Peterson forwarded that email to another individual with his own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.



2. All resumes, curriculum vitae (CV), or cover letters submitted by Rep. Bill Johnson in his application for President of Youngstown University.
3. All email communications (including emails, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and attachments thereto) sent by any of the Youngstown University officials listed below or anyone communicating on their behalf, such as an assistant or scheduler, and containing any of the following key terms, also listed below:

Youngstown University Officials:

- a. Chair Michael A. Peterson
- b. Vice Chair Charles T. George
- c. Secretary Anita A. Hackstedde
- d. Trustee Molly S. Seals
- e. Trustee John R. Jakubek
- f. Trustee Laura A. Lyden
- g. Trustee Allen L. Ryan, Jr.
- h. Trustee Joseph J. Kerola
- i. Trustee Sergul A. Erzurum

Key Terms:

- a. "Ben Keeler"
- b. "Bill Johnson"
- c. "Biological sex"
- d. "Critical Race Theory"
- e. "D.E.I."
- f. "gendered facilities"
- g. "Mike Smullen"
- h. "parental rights"
- i. CRT
- j. DEI
- k. Hillsdale
- l. LGBT
- m. Queer
- n. Trans
- o. Transgender
- p. WittKieffer

In an effort to accommodate Youngstown University and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, American Oversight has limited part three of this request to emails sent by any of the officials listed above or anyone communicating on their behalf and containing any of the above key terms. 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 Trustee Sergul Erzurum's

response to an email with the listed key term and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

For all parts of this request, please provide all responsive records from November 1, 2023, to the date this request is received.

Please notify American Oversight of any anticipated fees or costs in excess of \$100 prior to incurring such costs or fee.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

In connection with its request for records, American Oversight provides the following guidance regarding the scope of the records sought and the search and processing of records:

- Our request for records includes any attachments to those records or other materials enclosed with those records when they were previously transmitted. To the extent that an email is responsive to our request, our request includes all prior messages sent or received in that email chain, as well as any attachments to the email.
- Please search all relevant records or systems containing records regarding agency business. Do not exclude records regarding agency business contained in files, email accounts, or devices in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts or text messages.
- 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.¹ If a request is denied in whole, please state specifically why 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.

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. 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.

¹ Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43(B)(1).

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.

Conclusion

American Oversight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to promote transparency in government, to educate the public about government activities, and to ensure 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. American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public website and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.com.²

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 records@americanoversight.org or (202) 873-1741.

Sincerely,

/s/ Ben Sparks

Ben Sparks
on behalf of
American Oversight

² 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 Feb. 13, 2024); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter.com, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Feb. 13, 2024).