



February 27, 2024

**VIA ONLINE FORM**

Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs  
5636 East McDowell Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85008  
Via Online Form

**Re: Public Records Request**

Dear Public Records Officer(s):

Pursuant to the Arizona Public Records Law, A.R.S. §§ 39-121 et seq., American Oversight makes the following request for records.

**Requested Records**

American Oversight requests that the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs promptly produce the following records:

All email communications (including emails, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and attachments thereto) sent by any of the officials listed below—or by anyone communicating on their behalf, such as a chief of staff, assistant, or secretary—containing any of the following key terms:

Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs Officials:

- a. Major General Kerry Muehlenbeck
- b. Command Sergeant Major Aaron Buelow
- c. Brigadier General Lonnie Branum
- d. Major General Troy Daniels
- e. Brigadier General John Conley
- f. Lieutenant Colonel Justin Douglas

Key Terms:

- a. Paramilitary
- b. Militia
- c. Convoy
- d. Vigilante
- e. “Proud Boys”
- f. “Oath Keepers”
- g. “Take Back Our Border”
- h. “Take Our Border Back”
- i. “Arizona Border Recon”
- j. “AZ Border Recon”
- k. “Mayhem Solutions”
- l. “Veterans on Patrol”



- m. VOP
- n. Foley

In an effort to accommodate the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs and reduce the number of potentially responsive records to be processed and produced, American Oversight has limited 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. However, American Oversight requests that complete email chains be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means that both a listed official's response to an email and the initial received message are responsive to this request and should be produced.

**Please provide all responsive records from September 1, 2023, through the date the search is conducted.**

### **Statement of Noncommercial Purpose**

This request is made for noncommercial purposes. American Oversight seeks records regarding the operations and activities of state officials related to paramilitary activity along the U.S.-Mexico Border.<sup>1</sup> Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including how state agencies working along the U.S.-Mexico Border handle issues related to paramilitary activity.

Because American Oversight is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, this request is not in American Oversight's financial interest and is not made for a commercial purpose. American Oversight's mission is 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.<sup>2</sup>

Because this request is made for noncommercial purposes, American Oversight requests that any fees charged in connection with processing this request be limited to copying

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<sup>1</sup> Keegan Hamilton, *As Border Extremism Goes Mainstream, Vigilante Groups Take a Starring Role*, Los Angeles Times (Dec. 18, 2023, 3:00 AM), <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2023-12-18/arizona-border-militias-extremism-mainstream-immigration>.

<sup>2</sup> 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. 8, 2024); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter.com, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Feb. 8, 2024).

and postage charges, if applicable.<sup>3</sup> Please notify American Oversight of any anticipated fees or costs in excess of \$100 prior to incurring such costs or fees.

### **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:

- In conducting your search, please understand the terms “record,” “document,” and “information” in their 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 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.
- If any records are withheld in full or in part, pursuant to A.R.S. § 39-121.01(D)(2), please provide an index of records or categories of records that have been withheld and the reasons the records or categories of records have been withheld.
- 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. 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

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<sup>3</sup> A.R.S. § 39-121.01(D)(1); *see also Hanania v. City of Tucson*, 128 Ariz. 135, 624 P.2d 332 (Ct. App. 1980). Furthermore, because this request is for noncommercial purposes, additional fees provided for under A.R.S. § 39-121.03(A) are not applicable and should not be assessed.

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. 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 Elizabeth Haddix at [records@americanoversight.org](mailto:records@americanoversight.org) or 252.359.7424 ext. 1031.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Elizabeth Haddix*

Elizabeth Haddix  
on behalf of  
American Oversight