



July 3, 2024

VIA EMAIL

Molly Widen
Legal Counsel
Iowa Secretary of State
Lucas State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
Sos@sos.iowa.gov

Re: Public Records Request

Dear Custodian of Public Records:

Pursuant to the Iowa Public Records Law, Iowa Code, Ch. 22, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office produce the following records promptly, or as soon as feasible:

1. All email communications (including emails, complete email chains, calendar invitations, or attachments thereto) between (a) the officials listed below and (b) any of the external entities or individuals listed below, including, but not limited to, communications sent to or from the listed email domains.

Iowa Secretary of State's Office Officials:

- a. Secretary of State Paul Pate, or anyone communicating on his behalf, such as an assistant, scheduler, or aide
- b. Michael Ross, Chief of Staff
- c. Heidi Burhans, Director of Elections
- d. Deputy Secretary Christy Johnson
- e. Chief Operating Officer Eric Gookin

External Entities/Individuals:

1. Only Citizens Vote Foundation (onlycitizensvotecoalition.com)
2. State Freedom Caucus Network (statefreedomcaucus.org)
3. Andrew "Andy" Roth
4. Election Transparency Initiative (electiontransparency.org)
5. Honest Elections Project (jasonsnead.com, honestelections.org)
6. Association of Mature American Citizens (amac.us)
7. Americans for Citizen Voting (onlycitizens.vote)
8. Save Our States (saveourstates.com)
9. Federation for American Immigration Reform (fairus.org)



10. America First Legal (aflegal.org, athospr.com)
11. America First Policy Institute (americafirstpolicy.com)
12. Jenny Beth Martin
13. Rosemary Jenks
14. Tea Party Patriots (teapartypatriots.org)

Please note that American Oversight does not seek, and 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. For example, if an official received a mass-distribution news clip email from an email ending in alegal.org, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if the official forwarded that email to another listed individual 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 the officials listed above in part 1 and containing any of the key terms listed below.

Key Terms:

1. Noncitizen
2. "Non-citizen"
3. "Non citizen"
4. Undocumented
5. Immigrant
6. Immigrants
7. "Foreign citizen"
8. "SJR 9"
9. SJR9
10. "Senate Joint Resolution 9"
11. "Iowa Require Citizenship to Vote in Elections"

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 requests that complete email chains be produced, displaying both sent and received messages. This means that both an individual's 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 January 1, 2024, through the date the search is conducted.

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. Records of official business conducted using unofficial systems or stored outside of official files are subject to the Public Records Law.¹
- 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 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 the opportunity to discuss its request with you before you undertake your search or incur search or

¹ See *Linder v. Eckard*, 152 N.W.2d 833, 835 (Iowa 1967) (“It is the nature and purpose of the document, not the place where it is kept, which determines its status” as a public record); *Chapter 22 Frequently Asked Questions*, Iowa Public Information Board, <https://ipib.iowa.gov/faq/if-email-report-or-other-document-composed-received-or-stored-my-personally-owned-electronic> (“If a government official or employee uses privately owned electronic devices or services, such as cell phones, computers, email accounts, smart phones, or such to conduct official government business, then the record generated is a public record.”).

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.

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 David Kronig at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 897-3915.

Sincerely,

/s/ David Kronig
David Kronig
on behalf of
American Oversight

² American Oversight currently has approximately 16,000 followers on Facebook and 111,500 followers on X (formerly Twitter). American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited July 2, 2024); American Oversight (@weareoversight), X (formerly Twitter), <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited July 2, 2024).