AMERICAN OVERSIGHT

January 14, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Florida Department of State
Office of the General Counsel
Attn: Public Records Custodian
500 S. Bronough St.
Ste. 100
Tallahassee, FL 32399
PublicRecords@DOS.fl.gov

Re: Public Records Request

Dear Public Records Officer:

Pursuant to Article I, section 24(a), of the Florida Constitution, and Florida's public records laws, as codified at Fla. Stat. Chapter 119, American Oversight makes the following request for records.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that the Florida Department of State promptly produce the following:

1. All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) between any of the Florida Department of State officials listed below, and any of the external entities or individuals listed below (including the listed email addresses and/or domains).

   Florida Department of State Officials:
   i. Cord Byrd, Secretary
   ii. Jennifer Kennedy, Assistant Secretary of State and Chief of Staff
   iii. Maria Matthews, Division of Elections Director
   iv. Amber Marconnet, Division of Elections Assistant Director

   External Entities and Individuals:
   a. John "Rick" Richards (drr@cathaid.com, drr@EagleAI.pro, drronline@me.com)
   b. John Richards (johnrichards@EagleAI.pro)
   c. EagleAI NETwork (EagleAI.pro)
   d. ELLY, including any entity or individual providing or offering "ELLY" as a service
   e. ELLIE, including any entity or individual providing or offering "ELLIE" as a service

The search should include emails from officials' personal accounts (including Secretary Byrd's email address cord@cordbyrdlaw.com), as well as those from their official email addresses. Emails or texts conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the government official constitutes a record for purposes of Florida's public records laws.[1]

2. All text messages (including complete text message threads or conversations) and messages on messaging platforms (such as Signal, Slack, GChat or Google Hangouts, Lync, Skype, X (formerly Twitter) direct messages, Facebook messages, Microsoft Teams messages, WhatsApp, Telegram, Parler, Mattermost, Wickr, TeleMessage, TM SGNL or any app that can interface with an app such as those listed or otherwise borrow its technology) between any of the Florida Department of State officials listed above in part 1, and John "Rick" Richards.

   American Oversight requests that all images, videos, audio recordings, or other attachments regarding official government business shared via text message and/or messaging platforms be produced in response to this request. To the extent any hyperlinks and/or URLs were shared via text message and/or messaging platforms, American Oversight requests records in a form that display the full URL.

   American Oversight is not in a position to provide a phone number for the listed individuals. If the listed officials are unable to provide them, please use the individuals' names as search terms. For example, a search for text messages between an official and Rick Richards would be conducted by searching the official's text messages using the key terms "John," "Rick," and "Richards" to identify potentially responsive records.

For both parts of this request, please provide all responsive records from July 1, 2025, 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.

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

[1] *Cf. State v. City of Clearwater*, 863 So. 2d 149, 154 (Fla. 2003) ("The determining factor is the nature of the record, not its physical location.").

records. **No category of material should be omitted from search, collection, and production.**

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 or texts conducting government business sent or received on the personal account of the government official constitutes a record for purposes of Florida's public records laws.[2]

In addition, American Oversight insists that your agency use the most up-to-date technologies to search for responsive information and take steps to ensure that the most complete repositories of information are searched. American Oversight is available to work with you to craft appropriate search terms. **However, custodian searches are still required; your office may not have direct access to files stored in .PST files, outside of network drives, in paper format, or in personal email accounts.**

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 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 your office 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.

To ensure that this request is properly construed, that searches are conducted in an adequate but efficient manner, and that extraneous costs are not incurred, 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 electronic format by email or in PDF or TIF 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.

Section 119.12 Notice

[2] *See supra* note 1.

This document provides written notice identifying American Oversight's public records request to your agency's custodian of public records in compliance with Section 119.12(1)(b) of the Florida Statutes. Should your agency fail to comply with its obligations under Florida's public records laws, American Oversight may be prepared to file suit to enforce the provisions of Fla. Stat. Chapter 119.

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 X (formerly Twitter).[3]

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, have any questions, or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please contact Danny Martinez at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 897-2465.

Sincerely,

/s/ Danny Martinez
Danny Martinez
on behalf of
American Oversight

[3] American Oversight currently has approximately 16,000 followers on Facebook and 94,200 followers on X (formerly Twitter). American Oversight, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/ (last visited Jan. 13, 2026); American Oversight (@weareoversight), X (formerly Twitter), https://x.com/weareoversight (last visited Jan. 13, 2026).