



December 8, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Meagan Wolfe, Administrator
Wisconsin Elections Commission
212 East Washington Avenue, Third Floor
P.O. Box 7984
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7984
elections@wi.gov

Re: Public Records Law Request

Dear Ms. Wolfe:

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

On November 18, 2020, the Wisconsin Elections Commission convened in advance of a partial recount of votes requested by the Trump campaign but failed to agree on several provisions of the recount, divided along partisan lines.¹

American Oversight seeks records with the potential to shed light on whether or to what extent Wisconsin officials are acting at the behest of external political actors.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that your office produce the following records “as soon as practicable and without delay”:²

All email communications (including emails, email attachments, complete email chains, calendar invitations, and calendar invitation attachments) between (a) Commissioner Dean Knudson, and (b) any of the external parties listed below.

External Parties:

1. Speaker Robin Vos or his Chief of Staff, Jenny Toftness (including but not limited to email addresses ending in @legis.wisconsin.gov)

¹ Patrick Marley, *Wisconsin Recount Gets Off to a Rough Start As Elections Commission Repeatedly Clashes*, Milwaukee J.-Sentinel (updated Nov. 20, 2020, 9:00 AM), <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2020/11/18/wisconsin-recount-gets-off-rough-start-elections-commission-clashes/3773591001/>.

² Wis. Stat. § 19.35(4)(a).



2. Rep. Ron Tusler or his aide, William Penterman (including but not limited to rtusler@tuslerlaw.com or email addresses ending in @legis.wisconsin.gov)
3. James Troupis, including troupisjames@gmail.com or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @troupislawoffice.com
4. R. George Burnett or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @lcojlaw.com
5. Erick Kaardal, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @mklaw.com
6. Karen Mueller, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @amoscenterforjustice.org
7. Stewart Karge, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @advancedpricing.com
8. Joseph Voiland, including, but not limited to jvvoiland@yahoo.com
9. Anyone communicating from an email address ending in @donaldtrump.com, @donaldjtrump.com, @trumpvictory.com, or @trumporg.com
10. Anyone communicating on behalf of the White House, including anyone communicating from an email address ending in @who.eop.gov
11. Ronna McDaniel, Laura Cox, Terry Bowman, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @gop.com, @rnchq.com, @wisgop.org, or @wisgop.info
12. John Gore, Alex Potapov, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @jonesday.com
13. Justin Clark, Nathan Groth, Stefan Passantino, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @michaelbest.com
14. Kory Langhofer, Thomas Basile, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @statecraftlaw.com
15. Brett Johnson, Eric Spencer, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @swlaw.com
16. Jay Sekulow or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @aclj.org
17. Matt Schlapp or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @conservative.org
18. Rudolph Giuliani, or anyone communicating on his behalf (such as Jo Ann Zafonte, Christianne Allen, Beau Wagner, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @giulianisecurity.com, giulianipartners.com, gdcillc.com)
19. Anyone communicating from an email address ending in mail.house.gov or senate.gov
20. Joseph diGenova, Victoria Toensing, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @digenovatoensing.com
21. Sidney Powell, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @federalappeals.com
22. Jenna Ellis, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @falkirkcenter.com or @thomasmore.org.

23. John Solomon (including, but not limited to john@solomonmediallc.com, or any of his email addresses ending in @fox.com, @thehill.com, @justthenews.com, @washingtonguardian.net, or @washingtontimes.com)
24. David Bossie, or anyone communicating from an email address ending in @citizensunited.org

Please provide all responsive records from November 3, 2020, through the date the search is conducted.

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 forwarding such emails are responsive to this request. In other words, for example, if Mr. Knudson received a mass-distribution news clip email from Fox News, that initial email would not be responsive to this request. However, if Mr. Knudson forwarded that email to another individual with his own commentary, that subsequent message would be responsive to this request and should be produced.

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.³ American Oversight also makes materials it gathers available on its public

³ See generally *News*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/blog>; *State Accountability Project*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/areas-of-investigation/state-local-investigations>; 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>.

website⁴ and promotes their availability on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.⁵

The public has a significant interest in the conduct of elections in the state of Wisconsin. Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including whether or to what extent entities external to the state government may be attempting to exert influence over election administration.⁶ 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. Our request also includes any attachments to these 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 and mobile devices.** Correspondence 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.⁷

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.⁸ 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.

⁴ *Documents*, American Oversight, <https://www.americanoversight.org/documents>.

⁵ American Oversight currently has approximately 15,600 page likes on Facebook and 106,000 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Nov. 30, 2020); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Nov. 30, 2020).

⁶ *See, e.g.*, Beck, *supra* note 1.

⁷ 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>.

⁸ Wis. Stat. § 19.36(6).

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 please contact Emma Lewis at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 919-6303. 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,



Austin R. Evers
Executive Director
American Oversight