



August 31, 2021

VIA EMAIL

Deputy Public Information Officer
Attorney General's Office
2005 North Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85004
publicrecords@azag.gov

Re: Public Records Request

Dear Public Records Officer:

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

In October 2020, the *Washington Post* obtained recordings of two gatherings of the Council for National Policy (CNP), a secretive group of conservative activists, which “show influential activists discussing election tactics, amplifying conspiracy theories and describing much of America in dark and apocalyptic terms.”¹ The *Post* reported that then-President Donald Trump spoke to a CNP gathering in August 2020, with then-Acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf in attendance. Documents released to American Oversight pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act have shown Trump Administration officials, including former Labor Secretary Alex Acosta, former Ambassador-at-Large for Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, and former Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, scheduled to speak at CNP events.²

American Oversight seeks records with the potential to shed light on any interactions that Attorney General Brnovich may have had with CNP.

Requested Records

American Oversight requests that the Office of the Attorney General promptly produce the following records:

¹ Robert O’Harrow, Jr., *Videos Show Closed-Door Sessions of Leading Conservative Activists: ‘Be Not Afraid of the Accusations that You’re a Voter Suppressor,’* Wash. Post (Oct. 14, 2020, 10:04 PM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/council-national-policy-video/2020/10/14/367f24c2-f793-11ea-a510-f57d8ce76e11_story.html.

² See, e.g., *DOL Communications Concerning White House Distinguishing Between Officials Based on Political Loyalty*, American Oversight, Oct. 11, 2020, <https://www.americanoversight.org/document/dol-communications-concerning-white-house-distinguishing-between-officials-based-on-political-loyalty>.



1. All email communications (including full email chains and attachments), meeting invitations or agendas, or notes from meetings, between (a) Attorney General Mark Brnovich or any person communicating on his behalf, such as a scheduler or an assistant, and (b) any person representing the Council for National Policy (CNP) or CNP Action, Inc., including but not limited to any person communicating from an email address ending in @cfnp.org.
2. All materials provided to Attorney General Brnovich in connection with any event hosted by CNP, including but not limited to agendas, participant lists, background materials, recordings, transcripts, or invitations to log in to remote events or recordings.

Please provide all responsive records from September 1, 2020, through the date of search.

Statement of Noncommercial Purpose

This request is made for noncommercial purposes. American Oversight seeks records reflecting communications of a high-ranking government official with an activist organization. Records with the potential to shed light on this matter would contribute significantly to public understanding of operations of the government, including whether and to what extent Attorney General Brnovich may be communicating with prominent national activists about matters that could affect the interests of Arizonans.

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.³

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

³ American Oversight currently has approximately 15,650 page likes on Facebook and 107,700 followers on Twitter. American Oversight, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/weareoversight/> (last visited Aug. 30, 2021); American Oversight (@weareoversight), Twitter, <https://twitter.com/weareoversight> (last visited Aug. 30, 2021).

and postage charges, if applicable.⁴ 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:

- Please search all locations and systems likely to have responsive records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. For instance, if the request seeks “communications,” please search all locations likely to contain communications, including relevant hard-copy files, correspondence files, appropriate locations on hard drives and shared drives, emails, text messages or other direct messaging systems (such as iMessage, WhatsApp, Signal, or Twitter direct messages), voicemail messages, instant messaging systems such as Lync or ICQ, and shared messages systems such as Slack.
- 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.

⁴ 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.

- 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.

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 Zachery Morris at records@americanoversight.org or (202) 897-4213.

Sincerely,

/s/ Zachery Morris
Zachery Morris
on behalf of
American Oversight