

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.² FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.³
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”⁴

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3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.⁵

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.⁶ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.⁷

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁸

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

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March 20, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

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To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁸

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

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March 20, 2025

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

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March 20, 2025

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Wright:

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 - c. The nature and scope of exemptions that should be invoked as a matter of policy; or
 - d. The appropriate period of time for responding to FOIA requests and disclosing responsive records.

The Honorable Chris Wright
Page 4

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.² FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.³
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”⁴

¹ ‘Good Luck with That.’ *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html>).

² See *What Is FOIA?* (online at www.FOIA.gov) (Accessed Mar. 17, 2025).

³ Congressional Research Service, *The Freedom of Information act (FOIA): An Introduction* (updated Dec. 22, 2023) (online at www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11450).

⁴ Congressional Research Service, *The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): A Legal Overview* (June 27, 2024) (online at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46238>).

3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.⁵

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.⁶ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.⁷

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁸

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ See, e.g.: *CREW requests records on DOGE*, CREW (Jan. 9, 2025) (online at www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/foia-requests/crew-requests-records-on-doge/) and 'Good Luck with That.' *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html).

⁷ See, for example, *Trump administration orders consumer protection agency to stop work, closes building*, Associated Press (Feb. 9, 2025) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/trump-consumer-protection-cease-1b93c60a773b6b5ee629e769ae6850e9>), *What Trump's Cuts to the Department of Education Mean for Schools and Students*, NPR (March 12, 2025) (online at www.npr.org/2025/03/12/nx-s1-5325731/what-trumps-cuts-to-the-department-of-education-mean-for-schools-and-students), *USAID's extremely uncertain future risks global aid efforts, especially in Ukraine*, CNN (Feb. 27, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/27/politics/usaaid-government-spending-global-aid-dg/index.html), *Judge blocks Trump administration's mass firings of federal workers*, Washington Post (Feb. 27, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/02/27/judge-probationary-federal-employee-firings-lawsuit/) and *Here's Where Trump's Government Layoffs Are Targeted—As Veterans Affairs Reportedly Plans Thousands of Cuts*, Forbes (Mar. 5, 2025) (online at www.forbes.com/sites/saradorn/2025/03/05/heres-where-trumps-government-layoffs-are-targeted-as-veterans-affairs-reportedly-plans-thousands-of-cuts/).

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3. The title and employment status (e.g. subject to a reduction in force (RIF) in agency's RIF and Reorganization Planning (ARRP), terminated, etc.) for each full-time-equivalent position that was included in your agency's Freedom of Information Act Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024.
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5. All memoranda, guidance, or other correspondence between your agency and Trump Administration officials, including officials at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and White House regarding staffing of your agency's FOIA or equivalent office between January 21, 2025, and March 20, 2025.
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The Honorable Doug Burgum
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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹ Concerningly, specific reporting indicates that the head of the Department of Justice Office of Information Policy—which handles FOIA requests—has been fired.² The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.³ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.⁴

¹ ‘Good Luck with That.’ *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html>).

² *Trump Justice Department Fires More Career Officials*, Reuters (Mar. 10, 2025) (online at <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-justice-dept-fires-head-pardon-office-2025-03-07/>).

³ See *What Is FOIA?* (online at www.FOIA.gov) (Accessed Mar. 17, 2025).

⁴ Congressional Research Service, *The Freedom of Information act (FOIA): An Introduction* (updated Dec. 22, 2023) (online at www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11450).

2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”⁵
3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.⁶

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President’s clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.⁷ This Administration’s efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.⁸

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: “Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team.”⁹

⁵ Congressional Research Service, *The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): A Legal Overview* (June 27, 2024) (online at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46238>).

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⁷ See, e.g.: *CREW requests records on DOGE*, CREW (Jan. 9, 2025) (online at www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/foia-requests/crew-requests-records-on-doge/) and ‘Good Luck with That.’ *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html).

⁸ See, for example, *Trump administration orders consumer protection agency to stop work, closes building*, Associated Press (Feb. 9, 2025) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/trump-consumer-protection-cease-1b93c60a773b6b5ee629e769ae6850e9>), *What Trump’s Cuts to the Department of Education Mean for Schools and Students*, NPR (March 12, 2025) (online at www.npr.org/2025/03/12/nx-s1-5325731/what-trumps-cuts-to-the-department-of-education-mean-for-schools-and-students), *USAID’s extremely uncertain future risks global aid efforts, especially in Ukraine*, CNN (Feb. 27, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/27/politics/usaid-government-spending-global-aid-dg/index.html), *Judge blocks Trump administration’s mass firings of federal workers*, Washington Post (Feb. 27, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/02/27/judge-probationary-federal-employee-firings-lawsuit/) and *Here’s Where Trump’s Government Layoffs Are Targeted—As Veterans Affairs Reportedly Plans Thousands of Cuts*, Forbes (Mar. 5, 2025) (online at www.forbes.com/sites/saradorn/2025/03/05/heres-where-trumps-government-layoffs-are-targeted-as-veterans-affairs-reportedly-plans-thousands-of-cuts/).

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Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

1. The agency's plans to continue to comply with FOIA.
2. The number of full-time equivalent personnel employed in your agency's FOIA office or equivalent office tasked with responding to FOIA requests as of January 20, 2025, February 20, 2025, and March 20, 2025.
3. The title and employment status (e.g. subject to a reduction in force (RIF) in agency's RIF and Reorganization Planning (ARRP), terminated, etc.) for each full-time-equivalent position that was included in your agency's Freedom of Information Act Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024.
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 - d. Average response times for FOIA requests; and
 - e. Detailed information on the use of FOIA exemptions.
5. All memoranda, guidance, or other correspondence between your agency and Trump Administration officials, including officials at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and White House regarding staffing of your agency's FOIA or equivalent office between January 21, 2025, and March 20, 2025.
6. All memoranda, guidance, or other correspondence between your agency's Office of General Counsel to staff responsible for responding to and processing FOIA requests regarding the following topics for the period between January 21, 2025, and March 20, 2025:
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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

Mr. Vince Micone
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Acting Secretary Micone:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹⁷ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.¹⁸ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.¹⁹
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”²⁰

¹⁷ ‘Good Luck with That.’ *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html>).

¹⁸ See *What Is FOIA?* (online at www.FOIA.gov) (Accessed Mar. 17, 2025).

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3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.²¹

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.²² This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.²³

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."²⁴

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

²¹ *Id.*

²² See, e.g.: *CREW requests records on DOGE*, CREW (Jan. 9, 2025) (online at www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/foia-requests/crew-requests-records-on-doge/) and 'Good Luck with That.' *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html).

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Mr. Vince Micone

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.²⁵ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.²⁶ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

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2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”²⁸

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Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

²⁹ *Id.*

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The Honorable Sean Duffy

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.³³ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.³⁴ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.³⁵
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”³⁶

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3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.³⁷

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.³⁸ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.³⁹

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁴⁰

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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The Honorable Linda McMahon

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Zeldin:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.⁴¹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.⁴² FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

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The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.⁴⁶ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.⁴⁷

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁴⁸

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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The Honorable Lee Zeldin

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

Mr. Stephen Ehikian
Acting Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Acting Administrator Ehikian:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.⁴⁹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

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Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

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MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

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The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Scott Turner
Secretary
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Turner:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.⁶⁵ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.⁶⁶ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.⁶⁷
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”⁶⁸

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3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.⁶⁹

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.⁷⁰ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.⁷¹

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁷²

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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The Honorable Scott Turner

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

Ms. Janet Petro
Acting Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Acting Administrator Petro:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.⁷³ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.⁷⁴ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.⁷⁵
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”⁷⁶

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3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.⁷⁷

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.⁷⁸ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.⁷⁹

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."⁸⁰

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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Ms. Janet Petro

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

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MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable David A. Wright
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Chairman Wright:

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Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan
Director
National Science Foundation
2415 Eisenhower Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Director Panchanathan:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.⁸⁹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

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Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

Mr. Charles Ezell
Acting Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415

Dear Acting Director Ezell:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.⁹⁷ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.⁹⁸ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.⁹⁹
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”¹⁰⁰

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To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."¹⁰⁴

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Mr. Charles Ezell

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Kelly Loeffler
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator Loeffler:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹⁰⁵ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.¹⁰⁶ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.¹⁰⁷
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”¹⁰⁸

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The Honorable Kelly Loeffler
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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

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COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

Mr. Leland Dudek
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Social Security Administration
1300 D Street, SW
Washington, DC 20254

Dear Acting Commissioner Dudek:

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹²¹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.¹²² FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.¹²³
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”¹²⁴

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3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.¹²⁵

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.¹²⁶ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.¹²⁷

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."¹²⁸

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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The Honorable Marco Rubio

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹²⁹ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.¹³⁰ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.¹³¹
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”¹³²

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The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.¹³⁴ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.¹³⁵

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."¹³⁶

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

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The Honorable Scott Bessent

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Acting Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Acting Administrator Rubio:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹³⁷ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

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Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹⁴⁵ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

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 - c. The nature and scope of exemptions that should be invoked as a matter of policy; or
 - d. The appropriate period of time for responding to FOIA requests and disclosing responsive records.

The Honorable Brooke Rollins

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The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. The Committee has legislative jurisdiction over “public information and records, including the Freedom of Information Act, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Presidential Records Act.” The information requested in this letter will inform potential legislative reforms to the federal civil service.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Doug A. Collins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Collins:

Recent reporting indicates that Trump Administration has terminated a number of officials responsible for handling Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.¹⁵³ The elimination of staff responsible for facilitating FOIA is the latest effort by this Administration to conceal its flagrant violations of the law and prevent the public from obtaining the information about their government that they are entitled to request. I urge you to provide detailed information responsive to the requests included in this letter to bring sunshine to the FOIA operations within the Trump Administration.

FOIA ensures that the public has a right to access federal agency information. Since its enactment in 1967, it has been crucial to ensuring government transparency and accountability.¹⁵⁴ FOIA provides that any person may submit a request for agency records and that agencies must comply with the following when responding to such requests:

1. The agency must review and respond with a determination concerning the scope of the records it will disclose and the exemptions it will invoke within 20 business days.¹⁵⁵
2. The agency must conduct a search that is “reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ ‘Good Luck with That.’ *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html>).

¹⁵⁴ See *What Is FOIA?* (online at www.FOIA.gov) (Accessed Mar. 17, 2025).

¹⁵⁵ Congressional Research Service, *The Freedom of Information act (FOIA): An Introduction* (updated Dec. 22, 2023) (online at www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11450).

¹⁵⁶ Congressional Research Service, *The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): A Legal Overview* (June 27, 2024) (online at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46238>).

3. With limited exceptions, the agency must disclose records to the requester promptly.¹⁵⁷

The press and the public have recently used the FOIA process to seek records related to the President's clandestine Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). FOIA requests on DOGE range from information requests regarding the basic structure, budget, and leadership of the organization to whether DOGE employees with access to sensitive or classified government networks have the requisite security clearances and whether these clearances were granted following national security protocol.¹⁵⁸ This Administration's efforts to dismantle agencies, impound congressionally appropriated funds, and unlawfully terminate civil servants have been rapid and capricious. Now more than ever, maintaining transparency about the operations of government agencies and officials is crucial to enforcing accountability for ongoing abuses of power.¹⁵⁹

To properly respond to FOIA requests in accordance with the law, agencies must have appropriately staffed and functional processing offices. These practices are the bare minimum to ensure that agencies are able to comply with their legal obligations, but this does not appear to be the case at the Office of Personnel Management, for example. According to reports, the agency responded to a request for DOGE related records from CNN with an email stating: "Good luck with that they just got rid of the entire privacy team."¹⁶⁰

Preserving your agency's ability to respond to FOIA requests is a critical tool to provide the American people the transparency to which they are entitled. In furtherance of the Committee's oversight, I request that you provide the following information to the Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 3, 2025:

¹⁵⁷ *Id.*

¹⁵⁸ See, e.g.: *CREW requests records on DOGE*, CREW (Jan. 9, 2025) (online at www.citizensforethics.org/reports-investigations/foia-requests/crew-requests-records-on-doge/) and 'Good Luck with That.' *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html).

¹⁵⁹ See, for example, *Trump administration orders consumer protection agency to stop work, closes building*, Associated Press (Feb. 9, 2025) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/trump-consumer-protection-cease-1b93c60a773b6b5ee629e769ae6850e9>), *What Trump's Cuts to the Department of Education Mean for Schools and Students*, NPR (March 12, 2025) (online at www.npr.org/2025/03/12/nx-s1-5325731/what-trumps-cuts-to-the-department-of-education-mean-for-schools-and-students), *USAID's extremely uncertain future risks global aid efforts, especially in Ukraine*, CNN (Feb. 27, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/27/politics/usaaid-government-spending-global-aid-dg/index.html), *Judge blocks Trump administration's mass firings of federal workers*, Washington Post (Feb. 27, 2025) (online at www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/02/27/judge-probationary-federal-employee-firings-lawsuit/) and *Here's Where Trump's Government Layoffs Are Targeted—As Veterans Affairs Reportedly Plans Thousands of Cuts*, Forbes (Mar. 5, 2025) (online at www.forbes.com/sites/saradorn/2025/03/05/heres-where-trumps-government-layoffs-are-targeted-as-veterans-affairs-reportedly-plans-thousands-of-cuts/).

¹⁶⁰ 'Good Luck with That.' *Trump Administration Terminates Privacy Officials at Agency Overseeing Government Hiring and Firing*, CNN (Feb. 18, 2025) (online at www.cnn.com/2025/02/18/politics/opm-privacy-team-fired/index.html).

1. The agency's plans to continue to comply with FOIA.
2. The number of full-time equivalent personnel employed in your agency's FOIA office or equivalent office tasked with responding to FOIA requests as of January 20, 2025, February 20, 2025, and March 20, 2025.
3. The title and employment status (e.g. subject to a reduction in force (RIF) in agency's RIF and Reorganization Planning (ARRP), terminated, etc.) for each full-time-equivalent position that was included in your agency's Freedom of Information Act Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024.
4. Data on the performance of your agency's FOIA office or equivalent office tasked with responding to FOIA requests for the period from January 21, 2025, through March 20, 2025:
 - a. Number of requests received, processed, and pending;
 - b. The status of the ten oldest pending requests;
 - c. Number of administrative appeals received and processed;
 - d. Average response times for FOIA requests; and
 - e. Detailed information on the use of FOIA exemptions.
5. All memoranda, guidance, or other correspondence between your agency and Trump Administration officials, including officials at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and White House regarding staffing of your agency's FOIA or equivalent office between January 21, 2025, and March 20, 2025.
6. All memoranda, guidance, or other correspondence between your agency's Office of General Counsel to staff responsible for responding to and processing FOIA requests regarding the following topics for the period between January 21, 2025, and March 20, 2025:
 - a. The appropriate scope of agency searches for responsive records;
 - b. The scope of FOIA disclosures, including proposed blanket limitations;
 - c. The nature and scope of exemptions that should be invoked as a matter of policy; or
 - d. The appropriate period of time for responding to FOIA requests and disclosing responsive records.

The Honorable Doug A. Collins

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Connolly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman