

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2025

Andrew Fiorillo
Chief, Initial Request Staff
Office of the Attorney General
Office of the Deputy Attorney General
Office of Information Policy
Department of Justice
441 G St. NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear FOIA Officer:

Implicit in Article I of the Constitution is Congress's power of inquiry, which is an essential component of Congress's legislative and oversight functions. Concurrent with inquiries we have made to the Department of Justice pursuant to our Article I oversight authority, which have not yet received a response, we are submitting a parallel request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, and 28 C.F.R. Part 16, for the following records.

Requested Records

During her confirmation hearing, Attorney General Pam Bondi committed under oath to "consult with the career ethics officials with the Department [of Justice]" to "make the appropriate decision" with respect to matters pertaining to Qatar, given her previous registration as a lobbyist for Qatar under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. According to public reporting, Trump administration officials approached Qatar in 2025 to acquire a Boeing 747 plane to be used as Air Force One by President Donald Trump. After public accusations that this "gift" violates the U.S. Constitution's Foreign Emoluments Clause, Attorney General Bondi reportedly issued a legal memorandum to White House Counsel David Warrington concluding it would be "legally permissible" for the donation of the aircraft to be conditioned on transferring its ownership to Trump's presidential library before the end of President Trump's second term. On May 21, 2025, the Department of Defense officially confirmed that the United States accepted a Boeing 747 from Qatar.

Please produce within twenty business days the following records:

1. All memoranda or other documentation that include analysis, legal or otherwise, of the request or receipt of a plane from Qatar by the United States, the Trump presidential library, or President Trump in his official or personal capacity.
2. All communications involving Department of Justice employees relating to a legal analysis of the request or receipt of a plane from Qatar by the United States, the Trump presidential library, or President Trump in his official or personal capacity.
3. All communications regarding a plane from Qatar that contain Pam Bondi, Todd Blanche, Emil Bove, or any White House official on the to, from, cc, or bcc lines.
4. All records relating to the value of the Boeing 747 plane that the United States accepted from Qatar.

5. All records relating to ethics advice sought or received by Attorney General Bondi relating to Qatar.

For all parts of this request, please provide all responsive records from January 20, 2025, through the date the search is conducted.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and 28 C.F.R. § 16.10(k), a waiver of fees associated with processing this request is appropriate. Disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it (i) would shed light on the operations or activities of the government; (ii) would contribute significantly to the general public's understanding of government operations and activities; and (iii) is necessary to carry out Congress's Article I oversight functions, as opposed to for a commercial purpose.

First, disclosure of the requested records would shed light on the circumstances surrounding the Qatari government's provision of an airplane to President Trump to be used as Air Force One. This arrangement raises obvious concerns about undue foreign influence, Attorney General Bondi's potential conflict of interest given her past work for the Qatari government, and possible violations of the Constitution's Foreign Emoluments Clause. See, e.g., Kat Lonsdorf, *Trump administration officially accepts jet from Qatar for use as Air Force One*, NPR (May 21, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/05/21/nx-s1-5406420/trump-accepts-qatar-plane-air-force-one>. Congress and the public have a strong interest in knowing the circumstances surrounding the decision to accept this airplane, Attorney General Bondi's role in approving it, and any legal justifications issued by the Department of Justice.

Second, disclosure of the requested records would contribute significantly to the general public's understanding of these questions. This information is not already in the public domain, despite several congressional oversight requests. Upon receipt of these records, we intend to disseminate pertinent information along with our analysis through publication on our offices' various platforms, which will enhance the public's understanding of the government's activities.

Third, the request is wholly for non-commercial purposes. Our Senate offices operate as part of the federal government. We seek the requested information not for commercial use, but to aid in congressional oversight, good government, and transparency for the American people.

Expedited Processing Request

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(E) and 28 C.F.R. § 16.5(e)(1)(ii) and (iv), expedited processing is warranted. Expedition is required when there is a compelling need for the requested information, including where requests involve urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged federal government activity or a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity that affect public confidence. We certify to be true and correct to the best of our knowledge that circumstances warranting expedited processing exist here.

First, Congress has the constitutional authority to legislate and conduct oversight and is entitled to the expeditious disclosure of information to facilitate those processes. The requested information relates to the propriety of a gift from a foreign government under the Foreign Emoluments Clause, which Congress has a constitutional role in enforcing, as well as potential conflicts of interest on the part of the Attorney General, who reportedly generated a legal analysis concluding acceptance of the airplane was lawful. Timely provision of this information is vital for Congress to perform its constitutionally mandated legislative and oversight functions.

Second, it is urgent that the public know whether the conveyance of the airplane comports with the Constitution and federal law, whether the gift is intended to influence the President's decision-making, and whether the Attorney General violated ethical standards when she concluded the gift was lawful. Upon receipt of these records, we intend to disseminate pertinent information along with our analysis through publication on our offices' various platforms.

Third, there is widespread and exceptional media interest in this matter, which, as explained above, raises questions about the government's integrity that affect public confidence. *See, e.g.,* Geoff Bennett & Ian Couzens, *Qatar gifting Trump \$400M luxury jet raises ethical and legal concerns*, PBS (May 12, 2025), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/qatar-gifting-trump-400m-luxury-jet-raises-ethical-and-legal-concerns>; Maggie Haberman, *Trump, Pressed on Qatari Jet, Says Only 'Stupid' People Reject Gifts*, N.Y. Times (May 12, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/12/us/politics/trump-qatar-plane-jet.html>; Bernd Debusmann Jr., *US begins preparing Qatari jet to be used as Air Force One*, BBC (July 28, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwy5lp4v594o>; Connor O'Brien, *Republicans reject push to block Trump from using Qatari jet as Air Force One*, Politico (Oct. 10, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/live-updates/2025/10/09/congress/republicans-reject-push-to-block-trump-from-using-qatari-jet-as-air-force-one-00601178>.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

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Please search all relevant records or systems containing records regarding agency business. Do not exclude records regarding agency business contained in files, email accounts, or devices in the personal custody of your officials, such as personal email accounts or text messages. Records of official business conducted using unofficial systems or stored outside of official files are subject to the Federal Records Act and FOIA.

FOIA requires agencies to disclose records to Congress that may otherwise be withheld from the public. 5 U.S.C. § 552(d). If it is your position that any of the requested documents are nonetheless exempted from disclosure requirements, please provide a *Vaughn* index as required by *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F. 2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973); *see also Roth v. U.S. Dept. of Justice*, 642 F. 3d 1161, 1185 (D.C. Cir. 2011) ("Under our case law, agencies invoking a FOIA exemption must provide a specific, detailed explanation of why the exemption applies to the withheld materials."). FOIA also requires agencies to release "any reasonably segregable portions" of documents that may be partially exempt and to prepare "an index relating any withheld portions to specific FOIA exemptions." *Lykins v. U.S. Dept. of Justice*, 725 F.2d 1455, 1466 (D.C. Cir. 1984).

Where possible, please provide responsive material in an electronic format by email. Please send any responsive material being sent by email to Annie_Owens@judiciary-dem.senate.gov. Please send any material being mailed to Sheldon Whitehouse, 530 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. If it will accelerate release of responsive records, please provide responsive material on a rolling basis.

Conclusion

We look forward to working with the Department of Justice to ensure the timely and exhaustive disclosure of all non-exempt records responsive to this request. If you have any questions regarding how to construe this request or believe that further discussions regarding search and processing would facilitate a more efficient production, please do not hesitate to contact us. If the request for a fee waiver is denied in part or in full, please contact our offices immediately. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Federal
Courts, Oversight, Agency
Action, and Federal Rights

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Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

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Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator

United States Senate

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November 21, 2025

Melissa Golden
Lead Paralegal and FOIA Specialist
Office of Legal Counsel
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 5517
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United States Senator

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