

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2025

Andrew Fiorillo
Chief, Initial Request Staff
Office of the 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 expedited 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

On January 15, 2025, Pam Bondi appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee as President Trump's nominee to be Attorney General of the United States. During that hearing, in response to a question regarding the Justice Department's internal policy governing contacts between Justice Department and White House officials, Bondi stated, "I will meet with White House Counsel, and I will meet with the appropriate officials and follow the contacts policy."

Please produce within twenty business days the following records:

1. All records reflecting any meetings between Attorney General Bondi and the Counsel to the President to discuss the policy governing contacts between Justice Department personnel and White House officials, including but not limited to calendar invitations or entries, scheduling emails, itineraries, and meeting agendas.
2. All memoranda or other documentation memorializing the current policy governing contacts between Justice Department personnel and White House officials or the adoption of a previous administration's policy.

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 whether the Department of Justice under Attorney General Bondi has taken affirmative steps to consider, adopt, and enforce a meaningful policy limiting contacts between the Justice Department and the White House. The Justice Department has a long history of issuing a memorandum at the beginning of each new administration to memorialize such a policy, which is designed to minimize political interference in investigations or other inappropriate influence. Attorney General Bondi testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that she would meet with the White House Counsel's Office regarding the contacts policy under this administration; however, whether she has done so is unclear. Moreover, although the Justice Manual contains the contacts policy adopted by the previous administration, the adoption of a new policy by the current White House Counsel raises questions about whether the Justice Department and White House Counsel's Office are operating under compatible policies. *See* Perry Stein & Jeff Stein, *Trump White House says it can talk to Justice Dept. on criminal cases*, Wash. Post (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/09/trump-justice-department-guidance-memo/>.

Second, disclosure of the requested records would contribute significantly to the general public's understanding of the issues discussed above. 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 adoption of policies designed to prevent improper influence on the Justice Department's decision-making with respect to criminal prosecutions and investigations, areas in which independence from political considerations is especially important. This information is vital for Congress to perform its constitutionally mandated legislative and oversight functions.

Second, it is urgent that the public have insight into what steps the Justice Department has taken to limit political influence on its decision-making and whether applicable policies are being followed. 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 and the related issue of politicization of the Justice Department, which, as explained above, raises questions about the government's integrity that affect public confidence. *See, e.g.,* Perry Stein & Jeff Stein, *Trump White House says it can talk to Justice Dept. on criminal cases*, Wash. Post (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/02/09/trump-justice-department-guidance-memo/>; Ben Penn, *DOJ Criminal Chief Pick Misspoke to Senate on White House Policy*, Bloomberg Law (Oct. 29, 2025), <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/doj-criminal-chief-pick-misspoke-to->

senate-on-white-house-policy; Eli Stokols, *Cheering Comey indictment, Trump predicts 'there will be others'*, Politico (Sept. 26, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/09/26/cheering-comey-indictment-trump-predicts-there-will-be-others-00582321>; Kyle Cheney et al., *How Trump's message to 'Pam' got exactly the results he wanted*, Politico (Oct. 10, 2025), <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/10/10/trump-doj-prosecutions-comey-james-00601838>.

Guidance Regarding the Search & Processing of Requested Records

Please search for responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. In conducting the search, please construe the terms “record,” “document,” and “information” in their broadest sense, including any written, typed, recorded, graphic, printed, or audio or video material of any kind. Any request for “records” includes any attachments to those records or other materials enclosed with those records when they were previously transmitted. Any request for “communications” includes, but is not limited to, emails, letters, memoranda, calendar invitations, text messages, direct messages, and attachments thereto. To the extent that an email is responsive to a request, the 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. 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.

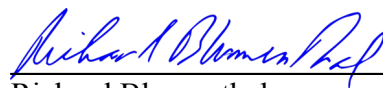
Conclusion

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,



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



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator