



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

August 8, 2022

Submitted through portal

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Office of Information Policy
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Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Anthony Coley
Director, Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Re: Expedition Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (“CREW”) submits this request for the expedition of FOIA-2022-01536 submitted through FOIA STAR on July 19, 2022.

CREW’s FOIA request seeks the following records to shed light on the Election Threats Task Force’s inaction and lack of transparency regarding why legal action has been taken in only three of around 1000 tips that have been submitted to the task force thus far:¹

1. Any records sufficient to identify the members of the Election Threats Task Force including, but not limited to, individuals, agencies, and divisions.
2. Any records specifying the number of tips received by the task force, including but not limited to those closed without investigation, currently open, and closed with investigation.
3. All communications between Attorney General Merrick Garland and Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco regarding the Election Threats Task Force from June 1, 2021 to the day this request is processed.

¹ Steve Benen, [After Threats Against Election Workers, DOJ Starts Making Arrests](#), MSNBC, January 28, 2022, available at [MSNBC](#)

For your convenience, I've enclosed a copy of this request.

Request for Expedition

CREW requests that the Department of Justice ("DOJ") expedite the processing of FOIA-2022-01536 as there is "an urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged federal government activity" and CREW is "primarily engaged in disseminating information[.]" 28 C.F.R. §16.5(e)(1)(ii). There is a particularly urgent need to inform the public of legal and investigative actions the Election Threats Task Force has taken or failed to take thus far, given the multitude of state government elections rapidly approaching. With the staggering number of tips the task force has received so far, it is clear that workers in these upcoming elections are vulnerable to verbal threats directed toward them and their loved ones and even risk attempts of bodily harm, as was documented by Freeman and Moss.² The public, specifically those scheduled to work in upcoming elections, must know what is being done to protect them *before* opening themselves up to the vulnerabilities that are currently associated with their roles as election workers.

Further, as explained above, CREW is "primarily engaged in disseminating information" to the public. As explained, CREW's primary purpose is to inform and educate the public about the activities of government officials and agencies. To that end, CREW uses statutes like the FOIA to gather information the public needs to hold public officials accountable and disseminates this information through social media and its website, www.citizensforethics.org, which receives tens of thousands of views every month.

Pursuant to 28 C.F.R. §5.5(e)(2) CREW also requests expedition from DOJ's Office of Public Affairs because there is a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government's integrity affecting public confidence and safety.

The topic of wavering democracy in the US has dominated media interest, as evidenced by the January 6 hearings being viewed by millions.³ The mission of the Election Threats Task Force aligns with the subject of the January 6 hearings, as both involve the democratic process of elections and their results being violently challenged. Unquestionably, the requested records raise "possible questions about the government's integrity" affecting public confidence and safety. In addition to the mass consumption of the hearings, countless reports have been publicized on both the January 6 insurrection and the Election Threats Task Force, which clearly implicates a matter of "widespread and exceptional media interest."

For all these reasons, CREW satisfies the requirements for expedition.

The undersigned certifies that the above statement is true and correct.

² Wines & Fawcett

³ Sonia Rao, [Nearly 17.7 Million Watched the Second Prime-Time Jan. 6 Hearing](#), The Washington Post, July 22, 2022, available at [Washington Post](#)

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Conclusion

If you have any questions about this request or foresee any problems in expediting FOIA-2022-01536, please contact me at ghonig@citizensforethics.org. Also, if CREW's request for the expedition is denied, please contact our office immediately upon making such a determination.

Where possible, please produce records in electronic format. Please send the requested records to me at either ghonig@citizensforethics.org or Grace Honig, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, 1331 F St. NW, Suite 900, Washington, D.C. 20004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grace Honig". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" and "H".

Grace Honig
Research Intern