

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBILITY
AND ETHICS IN WASHINGTON,

Plaintiff,

v.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Defendant.

Case No. 1:24-cv-01497-LLA

DEFENDANT’S ANSWER TO PLAINTIFF’S COMPLAINT

Defendant, United States Department of Justice (“Defendant”), responds to the allegations in Plaintiff, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington’s (“Plaintiff”), Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Complaint, ECF No. 1, as follows.

1. Paragraph 1 consists of Plaintiff’s characterization of this case, to which no response is required.
2. Paragraph 2 consists of Plaintiff’s characterization of this case and legal conclusions, to which no response is required.
3. Paragraph 3 consists of Plaintiff’s characterization of this case and the relief sought, to which no response is required.
4. Paragraph 4 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.
5. Paragraph 5 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.
6. Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the allegations set forth in Paragraph 6.
7. Paragraph 7 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

8. Defendant admits that it is an agency of the United States government. Defendant further admits that its components include the Criminal Division, the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, the Office of Information Policy, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The remainder of Paragraph 8 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

9. Paragraph 9 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

10. Paragraph 10 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

11. Paragraph 11 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

12. Paragraph 12 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

13. Paragraph 13 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

14. Paragraph 14 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

15. Paragraph 15 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

16. Paragraph 16 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

17. The allegations in Paragraph 17 do not set forth a claim for relief or aver facts in support of a claim to which a response is required. Defendant respectfully refers the Court to the article quoted in this paragraph for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

18. The allegations in Paragraph 18 do not set forth a claim for relief or aver facts in support of a claim to which a response is required. Defendant respectfully refers the Court to the article quoted in this paragraph for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

19. The allegations in Paragraph 19 do not set forth a claim for relief or aver facts in support of a claim to which a response is required. Defendant respectfully refers the Court to the article quoted in this paragraph for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

20. The allegations in Paragraph 20 do not set forth a claim for relief or aver facts in support of a claim to which a response is required. Defendant respectfully refers the Court to the article cited in support of this paragraph for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

21. Admitted.

22. Defendant admits that Plaintiff submitted a FOIA request on February 22, 2023 to FBI and the Criminal Division. Defendant admits that the material quoted in Paragraph 22 appears in Plaintiff's FOIA request and respectfully refers the Court to the request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

23. Defendant admits that the material quoted in Paragraph 23 appears in Plaintiff's FOIA request and respectfully refers the Court to the request for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

24. Admitted.

25. Defendant admits that on June 5, 2023, its Criminal Division acknowledged receipt of Plaintiff's FOIA request and assigned it Request No. CRM-301920897. Defendant admits that the material quoted in Paragraph 25 appears in its June 5, 2023 letter and respectfully refers the Court to the letter for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

26. Defendant admits that on November 24, 2023, the FBI denied Plaintiff's FOIA request and assigned it Request No. 1585062-00. Defendant admits that the material quoted in Paragraph 26 appears in its November 24, 2023 letter and respectfully refers the Court to the letter for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

27. Defendant admits that on February 21, 2024, Plaintiff appealed the FBI's denial of its FOIA request and respectfully refers the Court to Plaintiff's appeal for a complete and accurate statement of its contents.

28. Defendant admits that as of the date of the filing of Plaintiff's Complaint, no appellate determination had issued regarding the FOIA request to the FBI.

29. Defendant admits that as of the date of the filing of Plaintiff's Complaint, no final determination had issued regarding the FOIA request to the Criminal Division.

30. Paragraph 30 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

31. Denied.

32. Denied.

33. Defendant admits that the materials quoted in Paragraph 33 appear in the cited sources and respectfully refers the Court to those sources for complete and accurate statements of their contents.

34. Paragraph 34 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

35. Defendant admits that the FOIA request referenced in Exhibit E remains pending in another litigation. Defendant lacks knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief about the truth of the remainder of the first sentence in Paragraph 35. The second sentence is denied.

36. Defendant incorporates by reference its responses to the preceding paragraphs.

37. Paragraph 37 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

38. Paragraph 38 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

39. Paragraph 39 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

40. Paragraph 40 consists of legal conclusions to which no response is required.

41. Denied.

42. Defendant incorporates by reference its responses to the preceding paragraphs.

43. Denied.

44. Denied.

45. Denied.

Because the Court dismissed Count III, no response is required to Paragraphs 46 through 51. The remainder of the Complaint sets forth Plaintiff's requested relief to which no response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, Defendant denies that Plaintiff is entitled to the relief requested or to any other relief in this action.

Defendant further denies all allegations in Plaintiff's Complaint not expressly admitted or denied herein.

AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

1. Some or all of the requested documents and information are exempt from disclosure under FOIA. *See* 5 U.S.C. § 552(b).

Dated: May 5, 2025

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