



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

April 6, 2026

Submitted via ArkCase FOIA

ATTN: Freedom of Information Act Request
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (“CREW”) submits this request for records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) regulations.

Specifically, CREW requests records sufficient to identify the total amount of government funds expended by the FCC at President Donald Trump’s Mar-a-Lago club and residence from January 20, 2025 to the present.

Please search for responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. We seek records of any kind, including paper records, electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, data, and graphical material. Our request includes without limitation all correspondence, letters, emails, text messages, social media posts and messages, messages on messaging applications, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages, and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings, telephone conversations, or discussions. Our request also includes any attachments to emails and other records, and anyone who was cc’ed or bcc’ed on any emails.

If it is your position any portion of the requested records is exempt from disclosure, CREW requests that you provide it with an index of those documents as required under *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). If some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. See *Mead Data Central v. U.S. Dep’t of the Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

Please be advised that CREW intends to pursue all legal remedies to enforce its rights under FOIA. Accordingly, because litigation is reasonably foreseeable, the agency should

institute an agencywide preservation hold on all documents potentially responsive to this request.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A) and agency regulations, CREW requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government, and the disclosures likely will contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by CREW and the general public in a significant way. *See id.* § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). Moreover, the request primarily and fundamentally is for non-commercial purposes. *See, e.g., McClellan Ecological v. Carlucci*, 835 F.2d 1282, 1285 (9th Cir. 1987).

On Sunday, March 15, CNN reported that FCC Chairman Brendan Carr was at President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago club the night before, on March 14.¹ According to CNN, Carr visits Mar-a-Lago "every month or so during the winter months,"² and social media posts and press reports confirm that he was there in at least December,³ November⁴ and February⁵ last year.

During President Trump's first term, government agencies spent substantial amounts of taxpayer money at Trump properties when their employees visited them. In 2017, for example, the Department of Commerce spent \$2,740 at Trump International Hotel in D.C. for one employee's five-day stay, even though there were several more affordable options nearby.⁶ The Department of Defense spent nearly \$150,000 at Trump properties between January and June 2017.⁷ As of 2020, the Washington Post calculated that the U.S. government paid at least \$970,000 for room rentals at Trump properties.⁸ The requested records will illustrate how much, if any, taxpayer money was being spent during this period

¹ Brian Stelter, FCC chair threatens TV networks amid Iran war coverage — but his warning rings hollow, *CNN*, (March 15, 2026),

<https://www.cnn.com/2026/03/14/media/fcc-brendan-carr-trump-iran-war-abc-nbc-cbs>

² *Id.*

³ Michael Solakiewicz (@realmichaelsolakiewicz), Instagram (Dec. 21, 2026),

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DSiN5KLEY3n/>

⁴ Brendan Carr (@BrendanCarrFCC), X (Nov. 16, 2025, 10:42 AM),

<https://x.com/BrendanCarrFCC/status/1990083122835124413>

⁵ Ian Mohr, Daniel Penny 'chummy' with President Trump at Mar-a-Lago, spotted with Rudy Giuliani, *Page Six*, (February 20, 2025),

<https://pagesix.com/2025/02/20/society/daniel-penny-chummy-with-president-trump-at-mar-a-lago-spotted-with-rudy-giuliani/>

⁶ Derek Kravitz, Alex Mierjeski and Gabriel Sandoval, We've Found \$16.1 Million in Political and Taxpayer Spending at Trump Properties, *ProPublica*, (June 27, 2018),

<https://www.propublica.org/article/political-and-taxpayer-spending-at-trump-properties-16-1-million>

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ David A. Fahrenthold and Joshua Partlow, Trump's company has received at least \$970,000 from U.S. taxpayers for room rentals, *The Washington Post*, (May 14, 2020),

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trumps-company-has-received-at-least-970000-from-us-taxpayers-for-room-rentals/2020/05/14/26d27862-916d-11ea-9e23-6914ee410a5f_story.html

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at a property the President owns and from which he generates personal profit, which is a matter of public interest.

CREW is a non-profit corporation, organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CREW is committed to protecting the public's right to be aware of the activities of government officials, to ensuring the integrity of those officials, and to highlighting and working to reduce the influence of money on politics. CREW uses a combination of research, litigation, and advocacy to advance its mission. CREW intends to analyze the information responsive to this request and to share its analysis with the public through reports, press releases, or other means. In addition, CREW will disseminate any documents it acquires from this request to the public through its website, www.citizensforethics.org. The release of information obtained through this request is not in CREW's financial interest.

CREW further requests that it not be charged search or review fees for this request pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) because CREW qualifies as a member of the news media. *See Nat'l Sec. Archive v. U.S. Dep't of Defense*, 880 F.2d 1381, 1386 (D.C. Cir. 1989) (holding non-profit a "representative of the news media" and broadly interpreting the term to include "any person or organization which regularly publishes or disseminates information to the public").

CREW routinely disseminates information obtained through FOIA to the public in several ways. For example, CREW's website receives over 150,000 page views every month. The website includes blogposts that report on and analyze newsworthy developments regarding government ethics, corruption, and money in politics, as well as numerous reports CREW has published to educate the public about these issues. These reports frequently rely on government records obtained through FOIA. CREW also posts the documents it obtains through FOIA on its website.

Under these circumstances, CREW satisfies fully the criteria for a fee waiver.

Conclusion

If you have any questions about this request or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please email me at [REDACTED] and foia@citizensforethics.org or call me at (202) 408-5565. Also, if CREW's request for a fee waiver 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 [REDACTED] and foia@citizensforethics.org or by mail to Rebecca Jacobs, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, P.O. Box 14596, Washington, D.C. 20044.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RJ' followed by a stylized flourish.

Rebecca Jacobs
Research Manager