CREW

CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

September 23, 2026

Arla Witte-Simpson
FOIA Public Liaison, FOIA/Privacy Staff
Executive Office for United States Attorneys
Department of Justice
175 N Street, NE
Suite 5.400
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Ms. Witte-Simpson:

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 U.S. Department of Justice ("DOJ") regulations.

Specifically, CREW requests all records, created between April 1, 2025 and March 1, 2026, related to the now-closed investigation conducted by DOJ and the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") of Medicaid settlement funds diverted to the Hope Florida Foundation that are not covered by grand jury secrecy pursuant to Rule 6(e) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, including but not limited to DOJ's decision not to bring criminal charges against anyone involved in the diversion of the funds.

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, 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).

In the spring of 2025, a subcommittee of the Florida House of Representatives conducted an investigation into how $10 million tied to a Medicaid overbilling settlement the state quietly agreed to with the healthcare giant Centene ended up flowing into the Hope Florida Foundation, a charity affiliated with a state program created by Gov. Ron DeSantis's administration that aims to connect low-income families with private support.[1] After the Hope Florida Foundation received the $10 million, it quickly gave $5 million grants to two nonprofits that subsequently provided $8.5 million to a political committee overseen by Gov. Desantis's then-chief of staff that opposed a marijuana legalization ballot initiative. When the investigation ended, Florida state Rep. Alex Andrade, who led the probe, said he believed that there was "a conspiracy to commit money laundering and wire fraud" and that he had discussed his findings with the DOJ. Former federal prosecutors who spoke to the *Miami Herald* said they believed Rep. Andrade's allegations were on solid ground as they could identify how "at least eight different federal charges, from theft of government funds to money laundering, could be investigated related to the dollars that passed through the Hope Florida Foundation."[2] A Florida state grand jury that investigated the money transfers concluded that taxpayer funds had been "misappropriated" as "part of a sophisticated scheme to fund political activities," but did not propose any criminal charges because nobody would "take responsibility for deciding the $10 million of taxpayer money would go to Hope Florida… or had any memory of who made it."[3]

---

[1] Patricia Mazzei, *Why Did a Charity Tied to Casey DeSantis Suddenly Get a $10 Million Boost?,* New York Times (April 24, 2025), https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/24/us/ron-desantis-casey-desantis-charity.html; *Hope Florida: A timeline of how a DeSantis-backed state charity was accused of wrongdoing*, Associated Press (April 28, 2025), https://www.wusf.org/politics-issues/2025-04-28/hope-florida-timeline-how-desantis-backed-state-charity-accused-wrongdoing.

[2] Dara Kam, *'We are not judges or prosecutors': Florida House halts Hope Florida probe*, WUSF (April 24, 2025), https://wusf.org/text/politics-issues/2025-04-24/florida-house-halts-hope-florida-probe; Alexandra Glorioso , Lawrence Mower and Justin Garcia, *Former federal prosecutors lay out possible crimes in Hope Florida saga*, Miami Herald (May 1, 2025), https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article305225371.html.

[3] Jim DeFade, *Grand jury finds DeSantis administration "misappropriated" $10 million in taxpayer money to Hope Florida*, CBS Miami (August 26, 2026), https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/grand-jury-report-hope-florida/.

On February 4, 2026, *The Floridian* reported that "a source within the Department of Justice" with "direct knowledge" of the agency's decisionmaking told the news website that DOJ had "looked into" allegations related to the $10 million that flowed through the Hope Florida Foundation but concluded there was "no predicate to open up an intake on this" and "[n]o further action is anticipated on the matter."[4] Officials in the DeSantis administration treated the story as official confirmation that DOJ had closed an investigation into the Hope Florida scandal with Jeremy Redfern, the deputy chief of staff to Attorney General James Uthmeier, saying, "We appreciate the Department of Justice putting this sideshow to bed once and for all," and Gov. DeSantis himself saying, "The witch hunt against the Hope Florida Foundation was orchestrated by left-wing media and their RINO allies … As we've said from day one, all agency actions were appropriate and legally sound."[5]

The records CREW seeks would help explain why no one involved with the diversion of Medicaid settlement funds through the Hope Florida Foundation into a political committee overseen by a top DeSantis administration official was charged with any crime despite public reporting, supported by the findings of a state grand jury, suggesting an abundance of evidence that taxpayer money was misappropriated. The public has a vital interest in learning whether the decision not to prosecute anyone involved with the misappropriation of $10 million in taxpayer funds was motivated, even in part, by considerations apart from the sufficiency of the evidence.

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").

---

[4] Javier Manjarres, *Trump's DOJ Dismisses Complaint Against Casey DeSantis' Hope Florida and James Uthmeier*, The Floridian (February 4, 2026), https://floridianpress.com/2026/02/trumps-doj-dismisses-complaint-against-casey-desantis-hope-florida-and-james-uthmeier/.

[5] *Id.*; Preston Mizell, *DeSantis celebrates end of 'witch hunt' after Trump DOJ reportedly drops Hope Florida Foundation complaint*, Fox News (February 7, 2026), https://www.foxnews.com/politics/desantis-celebrates-end-witch-hunt-trump-doj-reportedly-drops-hope-florida-foundation-probe.

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 Matt Corley, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, P.O. Box 14596, Washington, D.C. 20044.

Sincerely,

Matt Corley,
Chief Investigator