



BY EMAIL: publicdisclosure@gov.wa.gov

May 27, 2020

Public Disclosure Officer
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002
publicdisclosure@gov.wa.gov
Fax (360) 753-4110

Re: Public Records Act Information Request

Dear Public Disclosure Officer:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (“CREW”) makes this request for records, regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics pursuant to the Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW)

Specifically, CREW seeks:

1. All communications from March 13, 2020 to April 27, 2020 between your office and the White House.
2. All communications from March 13, 2020 to April 27, 2020 between your office and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, including the Coronavirus task force.

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 email recipients who were cc’ed or bcc’ed.

If this office is not the custodian of the requested records, please forward the request to the appropriate department, office, or entity in possession or custody of the records.

If there are any fees for searching or copying these records, please inform CREW if the cost will exceed \$100. However, CREW also requests a waiver of all fees because the disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest. The public is entitled to information around what risk opening up the state poses to the public and to what extent the office sought advice from the federal government in making the decision. Further, this information is not being sought for commercial purposes.

During a press conference on Friday, March 27, President Trump directed Vice President Mike Pence, who leads the White House Coronavirus Task Force, not to cooperate with governors who he feels are not “appreciative” of the federal government’s coronavirus relief efforts.¹ Trump specifically singled out Washington Governor Jay Inslee as one of two governors who he feels have disparaged the government’s effort, specifically mentioning himself and two other entities: “When they’re not appreciative to me, they’re not appreciative to the Army Corps. They’re not appreciative to FEMA. It’s not right.”² On Inslee, Trump said to Vice President Mike Pence, “Mike, don’t call the governor of Washington. You’re wasting your time with him.”³

Trump has been known to slight political opponents or leaders who he feels have treated him unfairly. Washington was among the first states to raise alarm around coronavirus cases and take measures to respond to the crisis. The requested records will shed light on the federal government’s disaster response in Washington, and if Trump has withheld federal aid to punish a perceived political enemy.

The law requires that this request be responded to and fulfilled promptly, barring extenuating circumstances (Public Records Act (Chapter 42.56 RCW)). If access to the records CREW are requesting will take an extended period of time, please contact CREW with a written explanation that states when the requested record will be produced and specifies with particularity why the records cannot be produced.

If you have any questions about this request or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please contact me at mosuga@citizensforethics.org. CREW also welcomes the opportunity to discuss with you whether and to what extent this request can be narrowed or modified to allow for better processing within Washington state law deadlines. If you deny any

¹ Christina Wilkie and Kevin Breuninger, [Trump says he told Pence not to call governors who aren’t ‘appreciative’ of White House coronavirus efforts](https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/coronavirus-trump-told-pence-not-to-call-washington-michigan-governors.html), *CNN*, March 27, 2020, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/27/coronavirus-trump-told-pence-not-to-call-washington-michigan-governors.html>

² [Remarks by President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-13/), *The White House*, March 28, 2020, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-13/>

³ *The White House*, March 28, 2020

or all of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release the information and notify CREW of the appeal procedures available under the law.

Where possible, please produce records in electronic format. Please send the requested records to mosuga@citizensforethics.org. If the records cannot be produced electronically, please contact me and I will provide a mailing address. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miru Osuga', with a small flourish at the end.

Miru Osuga
Communications Associate
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in
Washington