



**August 1, 2025**

**VIA Electronic Delivery**

Department of Health Care Finance  
Office of the General Counsel  
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 900 South  
Washington, DC 20001  
Via online portal

**Re: Freedom of Information Act Request**

Dear DHCF FOIA Officer:

Pursuant to the District of Columbia Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, DC Code § 2-531-539. Democracy Forward Foundation submits this request for records.

***Records Requested***

Democracy Forward Foundation (“DFF”) requests that the Department of Health Care Finance (“DHCF”) produce the following within fifteen (15) business days:

All electronic communications (including email messages, complete email chains, calendar invitations, or attachments thereto, as well as any text messages or messages sent on messaging platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Skype, WhatsApp, Signal, or GChat) between (a) The DHCF officials included below and (b) the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services officials included below regarding (c) the Trump administration’s efforts to obtain data requested in CMS Deputy Administrator Drew Snyder’s May 26th letter, *Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders* and subsequent communication on the matter.<sup>1</sup>

a. DHCF Officials:

- I. Director Wayne Turnage
- II. Senior Deputy Director and State Medicaid Director Melisa Byrd
- III. Chief of Staff Melanie Williamson

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<sup>1</sup>Drew Snyder, *SUBJECT: Ending Taxpayer Subsidization of Open Borders*, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (May 27, 2025), <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/open-borders-fo-notification-states.pdf>.

b. CMS Officials:

- I. Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz
- II. Deputy Administrator and Chief of Staff Stephanie Carlton
- III. Deputy Administrator John Brooks
- IV. Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services Former Director and Deputy Administrator for the Drew Snyder
- V. Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services Interim Acting Director Caprice Knapp
- VI. Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services Deputy Director Anne Marie Costello
- VII. Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services Deputy Director Sara Vitolo

This request seeks records from May 26, 2025 until the date of the search.

***Scope of Search***

In searching for responsive records, please search for records regardless of format, including paper records, electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, data, and graphical materials. This request includes, without limitation, all correspondence, letters, emails, text messages, calendar entries, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages, and transcripts, notes, minutes, or audio or video recordings of any meetings, telephone conversations, or discussions. However, please exclude publicly available materials such as news clips that mention otherwise responsive search terms, unless the records contain additional discussion or commentary from District employees or contacts at CMS listed above.

The District of Columbia Freedom of Information Act requires agencies to disclose information, with only limited exceptions for information found within DC Official Code § 2-534. In the event that DHCF wishes to deny the right to inspect or obtain a copy of requested records, we request a written statement from DHCF of the grounds for denial, citing the laws or regulations under which access is denied. DC Official Code § 2-533(a)(1). We also reserve the right to appeal any decisions to deny inspection of records. DC Official Code § 2-537(a).

If requested records are located in, or originated in, another agency, department, office, installation or bureau, please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate entity.

To the extent that the records are readily reproducible in a searchable, electronic format, we would prefer to receive the records in that format. However, if certain records are not available in that format, we are willing to accept the best available copy of each such record.

Please respond with to this request in writing within 15 business days to set a date as required by DC Official Code § 2-532(c)(1). If all of the requested documents are not available within that

time period, we request that you provide us with all requested documents or portions of documents that are available within that time period.

### ***Request for Fee Waiver***

Democracy Forward Foundation requests a waiver of document search, review, and duplication fees associated with processing records for this request, in accordance with section DC Official Code § 2-532(b).

The requested waiver is in the public interest because providing the copy of the information sought primarily benefits the general public. Democracy Forward Foundation has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through freedom of information statutes, and based upon responses to this request may assist in publicizing records received to contribute to the public's understanding of communications DHCF may be having with individuals associated with the federal government regarding this high-profile matter.<sup>2</sup>

DFF has a demonstrated ability to disseminate information of public interest requested through FOIA. When DFF obtains materials through FOIA requests that are of significant public interest, DFF's communications staff regularly works to ensure that these materials and their contents are featured in press articles educating the public about the operation of government; many articles feature additional commentary and analysis from DFF staff about those materials and their relevance to policy issues of public interest. Indeed, records received by DFF have previously formed the basis of news reports.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ahmed Aboulenein and Kanishka Singh, *US Health Department Hands Over Medicaid Personal Data to ICE*, Reuters (Jul. 17, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-health-department-hands-over-medicaid-personal-data-ice>; Jessica Glenza, *ICE Given Access to Medicaid Data In Move Critics Call A Privacy Betrayal*, The Guardian (Jul. 17, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jul/17/ice-access-medicaid-data-personal-information>; Jude Joffe-Block, *States Sue Trump Administration For Sharing Health Data with DHS*, NPR (Jul. 1, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/01/nx-s1-5453885/medicaid-data-immigration-dhs-lawsuit>; Kimberly Kindy and Amanda Seitz, *Trump Administration Hands Over Medicaid Recipients' Personal Data, Including Addresses, to ICE*, Associated Press (Jul. 17, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-medicaid-trump-ice>.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Alexander Nazaryan, *Why did right-wing troll Charles C. Johnson meet with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross?*, Yahoo News (May 14, 2019), <https://news.yahoo.com/why-did-rightwing-troll-charles-c-johnson-want-to-meet-with-commerce-secretary-wilbur-ross-090000636.html>; Derek Kravitz and Jack Gillum, *"Happy to Do It": Emails Show Current FAA Chief Coordinated With Ex-Lobbyist Colleagues on Policy*, ProPublica (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/dan-elwell-current-faa-chief-coordinated-with-ex-lobbyist-colleagues-on-policy>; Hamid Aleaziz, *Emails Show US Border Officials Didn't Receive "Zero Tolerance" Guidance Until After the Policy Was Enacted*, Buzzfeed News (Feb. 28, 2019), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/hamedaleaziz/zero-tolerance-policy-guidance-dhs-family-separation>; Jonathan Cohn and Jeffrey Young, *Emails Show Trump Administration Was Told Obamacare Ad Cuts Could Hurt Enrollment*, Huffpost (Dec. 17, 2018), [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut\\_us\\_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trump-verma-obamacare-advertising-cut_us_5c115061e4b084b082ff8dba); Madison Pauly, *When the Biggest Prison Company Complained About a California Sanctuary Law, ICE Listened*, Mother Jones (Dec. 7, 2018), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/12/geo-memo-private-prison-california-immigration/>; Eliza Rellman, *'Just answer the question and kill this story': In internal emails, Heather Nauert criticized Rex Tillerson's refusal to deny reports that he called Trump a 'moron,'* Business Insider (Nov. 2, 2018),

## ***Conclusion***

If you need clarification as to the scope of the request, have any questions, or foresee any obstacles to releasing fully the requested records within ten business days, please contact me as soon as possible at [foia@democracyforward.org](mailto:foia@democracyforward.org).

We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Skye Perryman

President and CEO

Democracy Forward Foundation

P.O. Box 34553

Washington, D.C. 20043

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<https://www.businessinsider.com/heather-nauert-rex-tillerson-trump-moron-2018-11>; Rebecca Klein, *Lawsuit Accuses Betsy DeVos And Her Deputies Of Being Motivated By Sexism*, HuffPost (Oct. 31, 2018), [https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us\\_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9](https://m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5bd9ff6ee4b01abe6a1ad4a9); Nick Penzenstadler, *A year after Vegas shooting, ATF emails reveal blame, alarm over bump stocks*, USA Today (Oct. 1, 2018), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/10/01/year-after-vegas-shooting-atf-emails-reveal-blame-alarm-over-bump-stocks/1432137002/>; Jessica Kwong, *Ivanka Trump was more than complicit in Obama equal pay rollback she had a hand in it, watchdog alleges*, Newsweek (Aug. 29, 2018), <https://www.newsweek.com/ivanka-trump-equal-pay-complicit-obama-1093833>; Vera Bergengruen, *New Emails Show What Happens When The Pentagon Has To Scramble To Catch Up To Trump*, BuzzFeed News (July 25, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/verabergengruen/these-emails-show-what-happens-when-the-white-house-keeps>; Erin Dooley, *Exclusive: Former for-profit college executive shaped Education Department policy that could benefit former employers: Documents*, ABC News (May 15, 2017), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/exclusive-profit-college-executive-shaped-education-department-policy/story?id=55108981>; Heidi Przybyla, *Notes, emails reveal Trump appointees' war to end HHS teen pregnancy program*, NBC News (Mar. 20, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/notes-emails-reveal-trump-appointees-war-end-hhs-teen-pregnancy-n857686>; Dominic Holden, *Documents Show The Trump Administration Approved Bump Stocks Before It Opposed Them*, BuzzFeed News (Mar. 22, 2018), <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/dominicholden/trump-administration-bump-stocks>; Bernard Condon, *Trump Advisor Denies He Cheered End of Tunnel Funding Deal*, Associated Press (Feb. 13, 2018), available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2018-02-13/trump-adviser-denies-he-cheered-end-of-tunnel-funding-deal>; Celeste Katz, *Interior Department tapped wildfire preparedness funds for Ryan Zinke helicopter tour*, Newsweek (Dec. 29, 2017), <https://www.newsweek.com/ryan-zinke-interior-department-helicopters-wildfires-757857>.