

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

CENTER TO ADVANCE SECURITY
IN AMERICA
1802 Vernon Street NW
PMB 2095
Washington, D.C. 20009,

Plaintiff,

V.

Civil Case No. 1:25-cv-3194

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520,

Defendant.

COMPLAINT

1. Plaintiff Center to Advance Security in America (“CASA”) brings this action against the U.S. Department of State (“DOS” or the “Department”) under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (“FOIA”), seeking declaratory and injunctive relief to compel compliance with the requirements of FOIA.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331.

3. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

PARTIES

4. Plaintiff CASA is an unincorporated association dedicated to improving the safety and security of the American people. CASA educates and informs the American people about the

actions of their government and its officials that impact their safety; peace and security; democracy, civil rights, and civil liberties; and privacy.

5. Defendant U.S. Department of State is a federal agency within the meaning of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(f)(1). DOS has possession, custody, and control of records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

6. On September 17, 2024, CASA submitted four FOIA request to DOS seeking records related to the assassination attempt on President Donald J. Trump by Ryan Routh.

7. For each of these requests, DOS followed a similar pattern of initially acknowledging the requests and then going silent after informing CASA that a search was "in process" without any estimated production date.

8. For all four requests, DOS failed to fulfill its statutory obligations under FOIA and appears unwilling to do so absent litigation.

CASA's First Request - #F-2024-21172

9. On September 17, 2024, CASA sent its first request (attached as Exhibit A) to DOS subdivision the US Embassy in Ukraine seeking records related to Routh's assassination attempt on President Trump.

10. The release of these records is in the public interest because it would inform the public about the government's communications with Routh.

11. DOS acknowledged receipt of the request by two emails on September 17, 2024, stating that the request had been assigned tracking number #F-2024-21172 and that its status had been updated to "Received."

12. On October 11, 2024, DOS sent CASA an email stating that the request's status had been updated to "In Process."

13. DOS has since been silent regarding this request. CASA has received no further communication regarding the request's status, has not received a time estimate for when DOS will respond to the request, and has not received any responsive documents.

CASA's Second Request - #F-2024-21213

14. On September 17, 2024, CASA sent its second request (attached as Exhibit B) to DOS subdivision the Office of Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus Affairs seeking records related to Routh's assassination attempt on President Trump.

15. The release of these records is in the public interest because it would inform the public about the government's communications with Routh.

16. DOS acknowledged receipt of the request by two emails on September 17, 2024, stating that the request had been assigned tracking number #F-2024-21213 and that its status had been updated to "Received."

17. On October 9, 2024, DOS sent CASA an email formally acknowledging that the request had been received and stating that it would not be able to respond to the request within 20 days due to "unusual circumstances." DOS also sent an email to CASA stating that the request's status had been updated to "In Process."

18. DOS has since been silent regarding this request. CASA has received no further communication regarding the request's status, has not received a time estimate for when DOS will respond to the request, and has not received any responsive documents.

CASA's Third Request - #F-2024-21215

19. On September 17, 2024, CASA sent its third request (attached as Exhibit C) to DOS subdivision the Office of the Secretary seeking records related to Routh's assassination attempt on President Trump.

20. The release of these records is in the public interest because it would inform the public about the government's communications with Routh.

21. DOS acknowledged receipt of the request by two emails on September 17, 2024, stating that the request had been assigned tracking number #F-2024-21215 and that its status had been updated to "Received."

22. On October 7, 2024, DOS sent CASA an email formally acknowledging that the request had been received and stating that it would not be able to respond to the request within 20 days due to "unusual circumstances."

23. On October 9, 2024, DOS sent an email to CASA stating that the request's status had been updated to "In Process."

24. DOS has since been silent regarding this request. CASA has received no further communication regarding the request's status, has not received a time estimate for when DOS will respond to the request, and has not received any responsive documents.

CASA's Fourth Request - #F-2024-21216

25. On September 17, 2024, CASA sent its fourth request (attached as Exhibit D) to DOS subdivision the Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia seeking records related to Routh's assassination attempt on President Trump.

26. The release of these records is in the public interest because it would inform the public about the government's communications with Routh.

27. DOS acknowledged receipt of the request by two emails on September 17, 2024, stating that the request had been assigned tracking number #F-2024-21216 and that its status had been updated to “Received.”

28. On October 8, 2024, DOS sent CASA an email formally acknowledging that the request had been received and stating that it would not be able to respond to the request within 20 days due to “unusual circumstances.” DOS also sent an email to CASA stating that the request’s status had been updated to “In Process.”

29. DOS has since been silent regarding this request. CASA has received no further communication regarding the request’s status, has not received a time estimate for when DOS will respond to the request, and has not received any responsive documents.

DOS’s Failure to Fulfill Its FOIA Obligations

30. As the record above indicates, over 355 days have elapsed since the federal government received CASA’s requests, yet DOS still has not made a determination with respect to it. *See Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington v. FEC*, 711 F.3d 180 (D.C. Cir. 2013). DOS has not produced responsive documents to CASA, has not communicated to CASA the scope of the documents it intends to produce or withhold—along with the reasons for any such withholding—and has not informed CASA of its ability to appeal any adverse portion of its determination.

31. Given these facts, DOS has not met its statutory obligations to provide the requested records for the request.

32. Through DOS’s failure to make a determination within the time period required by law, CASA has constructively exhausted its administrative remedies and seeks immediate judicial review.

COUNT I – CASA’s First Request - #F-2024-21172

**Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552
Wrongful Withholding of Non-Exempt Responsive Records**

33. CASA repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 9-13 and 30-32 as if fully set forth herein.

34. CASA’s first request was a properly submitted request for records within the possession, custody, and control of DOS.

35. DOS is an agency subject to FOIA and therefore has an obligation to release any non-exempt records and provide a lawful reason for withholding any materials in response to a proper FOIA request.

36. DOS is wrongfully withholding non-exempt agency records requested by CASA by failing to produce non-exempt records responsive to its request.

37. DOS’s failure to provide all non-exempt responsive records violates FOIA.

38. Plaintiff CASA is therefore entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief requiring Defendant to promptly produce all non-exempt records responsive to its FOIA request and provide an index justifying the withholding of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption.

COUNT II – CASA’s Second Request - #F-2024-21213

**Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552
Wrongful Withholding of Non-Exempt Responsive Records**

39. CASA repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 14-18 and 30-32 as if fully set forth herein.

40. CASA’s second request was a properly submitted request for records within the possession, custody, and control of DOS.

41. DOS is an agency subject to FOIA and therefore has an obligation to release any non-exempt records and provide a lawful reason for withholding any materials in response to a proper FOIA request.

42. DOS is wrongfully withholding non-exempt agency records requested by CASA by failing to produce non-exempt records responsive to its request.

43. DOS's failure to provide all non-exempt responsive records violates FOIA. Plaintiff CASA is therefore entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief requiring Defendant to promptly produce all non-exempt records responsive to its FOIA request and provide an index justifying the withholding of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption.

COUNT III – CASA's Third Request - #F-2024-21215

**Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552
Wrongful Withholding of Non-Exempt Responsive Records**

44. CASA repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 19-24 and 30-32 as if fully set forth herein.

45. CASA's third request was a properly submitted request for records within the possession, custody, and control of DOS.

46. DOS is an agency subject to FOIA and therefore has an obligation to release any non-exempt records and provide a lawful reason for withholding any materials in response to a proper FOIA request.

47. DOS is wrongfully withholding non-exempt agency records requested by CASA by failing to produce non-exempt records responsive to its request.

48. DOS's failure to provide all non-exempt responsive records violates FOIA.

Plaintiff CASA is therefore entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief requiring Defendant to promptly produce all non-exempt records responsive to its FOIA request and provide an index justifying the withholding of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption.

COUNT IV – CASA’s Fourth Request - #F-2024-21216

**Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552
Wrongful Withholding of Non-Exempt Responsive Records**

49. CASA repeats and incorporates by reference paragraphs 25-32 as if fully set forth herein.

50. CASA’s fourth request was a properly submitted request for records within the possession, custody, and control of DOS.

51. DOS is an agency subject to FOIA and therefore has an obligation to release any non-exempt records and provide a lawful reason for withholding any materials in response to a proper FOIA request.

52. DOS is wrongfully withholding non-exempt agency records requested by CASA by failing to produce non-exempt records responsive to its request.

53. DOS’s failure to provide all non-exempt responsive records violates FOIA. Plaintiff CASA is therefore entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief requiring Defendant to promptly produce all non-exempt records responsive to its FOIA request and provide an index justifying the withholding of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption.

REQUESTED RELIEF

Center to Advance Security in America respectfully requests this Court:

- (1) Assume jurisdiction in this matter and maintain jurisdiction until Defendant complies with the requirements of FOIA and any and all orders of this Court.

- (2) Order Defendant to produce, within ten days of the Court's order, or by other such date as the Court deems appropriate, any and all non-exempt records responsive to CASA's requests and an index justifying the withholding of all or part of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption.
- (3) Award CASA the costs of this proceeding, including reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in this action, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(E).
- (4) Grant CASA other such relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: September 15, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

CENTER TO ADVANCE SECURITY
IN AMERICA

By Counsel:

/s/ Jacob William Roth

Jacob William Roth

D.D.C. Bar ID: 1673038

DHILLON LAW GROUP, INC.

1601 Forum Plaza, Suite 403

West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Telephone: 561-227-4959

JRoth@Dhillonlaw.com

Karin Moore Sweigart

D.D.C. Bar ID: CA00145

DHILLON LAW GROUP, INC.

177 Post Street, Suite 700

San Francisco, CA 94108

Telephone: 415-433-1700

KSweigart@Dhillonlaw.com

Counsel for the Plaintiff