July 1, 2020

By Electronic Mail

United States Department of Commerce Office of Privacy and Open Government 14th and Constitution Avenue NW Mail Stop 61013 Washington, DC 20230

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Sir or Madam:

On behalf of our client, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law (the "Brennan Center" or "Center" or "Requestors"), we respectfully request all records in the possession of the Department of Commerce, including any officers, employees, or divisions thereof, on the topics listed below concerning the 2020 Census, pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 ("FOIA"). By this letter we also request expedited processing pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E).

Background

On June 27, 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Trump administration's attempt to add an unprecedented citizenship question to the 2020 decennial census.¹ Soon after, on July 11, 2019, President Donald J. Trump renewed the administration's attempt to collect citizenship data via the Census Bureau by issuing Executive Order 13880, which ordered the Bureau to collect pre-existing administrative records on citizenship from other federal agencies.² During the same press conference where President Trump announced Executive Order 13880, United States Attorney General William Barr stated that the Administration "will be studying" whether the data collected via Executive Order 13880 is "relevant to" whether "illegal aliens can

¹ Dep't of Commerce v. New York, 139 S. Ct. 2551, 2576 (2019).

² 84 Fed. Reg. 33821 (July 11, 2019).

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be included for apportionment purposes."³ Several agencies have already complied with that Executive Order.⁴

Apportionment—the determination of how many seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives—is a constitutionally required, once-a-decade calculation made using the results of the decennial census. Under the U.S. Code, the Secretary of Commerce provides the state-population totals required for congressional apportionment to the President.⁵ The President then must use those state totals to calculate the congressional apportionment using a mathematical formula specified by statute and report the results to Congress.⁶ Because the administration has indicated that it may attempt to use citizenship data in some way during the process for calculating the congressional apportionment but has not revealed any details of its plans to the public, this request seeks all records related to the administration's plans for how it might use citizenship data collected by the Census Bureau for apportionment purposes.

Apportionment affects the representational rights of every person living in the United States. Accordingly, the public has a right to know how the administration intends to calculate the apportionment and whether and how citizenship data might be used in the calculation.

Records Requested

We request the following:

- 1) All records⁷ created on or after June 27, 2019, pertaining to how any of the citizenship-status data collected pursuant to Executive Order 13880 can, could, should, or may be used, incorporated, referenced, or considered in any of the following activities:
 - calculating or otherwise formulating the 2020 total national population;

⁵ 13 U.S.C. § 141(b).

⁶ 2 U.S.C. § 2a(a).

³ Remarks by President Trump on Citizenship and the Census, The White House (July 11, 2019, 5:37 p.m.), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-citizenship-census.

⁴ See Hansi Lo Wang, *To Produce Citizenship Data, Homeland Security to Share Records With Census*, NPR (Jan. 4, 2020), https://www.npr.org/2020/01/04/793325772/to-produce-citizenship-data-homeland-security-to-share-records-with-census.be.

⁷ The term "records" includes any and all codes, correspondence (including electronic mail and instant messages), digital recordings, documents, directives, examinations, guidelines, handbooks, instructions, manuals, maps, microfilms, computer tapes or disks, memoranda, notes, photographs, regulations, reports, rules, or standards, including any drafts thereof.

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- calculating or otherwise formulating the 2020 state-population totals to be used to apportion the United States House of Representatives as contemplated by 13 U.S.C. § 141(b) (hereinafter, the "2020 state-population totals");
- reporting the 2020 state-population totals to President Trump by the Secretary of Commerce as required under 13 U.S.C. § 141(b);
- reporting by President Trump to Congress the 2020 state-population totals and number of congressional representatives to which each state is entitled, as required under 2 U.S.C. § 2a(a);
- changing the Census Bureau's policy for calculating the 2020 state-population totals, which currently states the 2020 state-population totals will be calculated using the Census Unedited File⁸;
- changing the Census Bureau's policy for creating the Census Unedited File, which currently states the Census Unedited File will not contain any citizenship status data.⁹
- 2) All records created on or after June 27, 2019, pertaining to the process by which the Secretary of Commerce will report the 2020 state-population totals to President Trump, as required under 13 U.S.C. § 141(b).
- 3) All records created on or after June 27, 2019 pertaining to the process by which President Trump will report to Congress the 2020 state-population totals and number of congressional representatives to which each state is entitled thereunder, as required under 2 U.S.C. § 2a(a).
- 4) All records created on or after June 27, 2019 and relating to the 2020 Census in which there is any mention of, involvement in, or communication with any of the following persons or entities:

Persons

- Adam Korzeniewski, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Director for Policy at the U.S. Census Bureau
- Christopher C. Demuth, Sr., Hudson Institute
- Christopher J. Hajec, Immigration Reform Law Institute
- Eric W. Lee, Judicial Watch

⁸ See John M. Abowd & Victoria Velkoff, *Update on Disclosure Avoidance and Administrative Data*, U.S. Census Bureau, at 12 (Sept. 13, 2019), https://www2.census.gov/cac/sac/meetings/2019-09/update-disclosure-avoidance-administrative-data.pdf.

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- Eric Ueland, White House Office of Legislative Affairs
- Gail Gitcho, National Republican Redistricting Trust
- Guy Harrison, National Republic Redistricting Trust
- Hans von Spakovsky, Heritage Foundation
- J. Christian Adams, Public Interest Legal Foundation and Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity
- J. Justin Reimer, Republican National Committee
- Jeff Timmer, Michigan GOP
- John Fleming, White House Chief of Staff Office
- Joseph W. Miller, Restoring Liberty
- Kaylan Phillips, Public Interest Legal Foundation
- Lauren Bryan, National Republican Senatorial Committee
- Mark S. Venezia, Immigration Reform Law Institute
- Michael M. Hethmon, Immigration Reform Law Institute
- Nathaniel Cogley, Deputy Director for Policy at the U.S. Census Bureau
- Robert D. Popper, Judicial Watch
- Russ Vought, Deputy Director of Office of Management and Budget

Entities

- Allied Educational Foundation
- American Civil Rights Union
- American Legislative Exchange Council
- Citizens United
- Citizens United Foundation
- Conservative Legal Defense and Education Fund
- Eagle Forum Education & Legal Defense Fund
- English First Foundation
- Fair Lines America
- Family-PAC Federal
- Gun Owners Foundation
- Gun Owners of America, Inc.
- Heritage Foundation
- Immigration Reform Law Institute
- Judicial Watch
- National Republican Congressional Committee
- Policy Analysis Center
- Polidata

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- Public Advocate of the United States
- Public Interest Legal Foundation
- Project on Fair Representation
- Republican National Committee
- Republican State Leadership Committee
- Restoring Liberty Action Committee
- The Senior Citizens League

In searching for records that are responsive to each of the four foregoing requests, please be sure to search the electronic records (including email and text messages) and non-electronic records of each person within your agency who might have any responsive records, and, in addition, please search, in particular, the electronic records and non-electronic records of each of the following persons:

- Adam Korzeniewski, Former Advisor to the Department of Commerce¹⁰
- David Dewhirst, Formerly of Department of Commerce
- Karen Dunn Kelley, Deputy Secretary of Commerce
- Mike Walsh, Chief of Staff to the Secretary of Commerce
- Peter B. Davidson, Department of Commerce
- Nathaniel Cogley, Former Advisor to the Department of Commerce¹¹

Request for Expedited Processing

Requestors seek expedited processing of the above requests pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f) and rely on two justifications for the request.

The Department of Commerce must process requests on an expedited basis when either (1) "[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest involving questions about the Government's integrity which affect public confidence"¹² exists; or (2) "[a]n urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Federal Government activity" is made by an organization "primarily engaged in disseminating information."¹³ Both bases are satisfied by this request.

¹⁰ See Michael Wines, Census Bureau Adds Top-Level Political Posts, Raising Fears for 2020 Count, N.Y. Times (June 23, 2020), https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/23/us/census-bureau-cogley-korzeniewski.html.

¹¹ See id.

¹² 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(iii).

¹³ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(iv).

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First, the records requested concern a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest. There has been a plethora of reporting about how the Trump Administration plans to collect citizenship data¹⁴ in conjunction with the 2020 Census reporting.¹⁵ Such news reporting discusses the nexus between Executive Order 13880 and the census generally, as well as focuses on how the Bureau is preparing citizenship data and how states might use that data for apportioning their legislatures and/or redrawing their electoral districts.¹⁶ Census Bureau policy instructs that the file used to calculate apportionment counts "does not contain any citizenship data."¹⁷ Nevertheless, Attorney General Barr stated that the Administration "will be studying" whether the data collected via Executive Order 13880 is "relevant to" whether "illegal aliens can be included for apportionment purposes."¹⁸ A challenge by the Trump Administration to the Census Bureau's well-settled policy raises "questions about the Government's integrity which affect public confidence."¹⁹

Second, there is an "urgency to inform the public" about any past, present, or future actions taken by the federal government with regard to using citizenship data to calculate the apportionment.²⁰ Such urgency exists because any action taken by the government to incorporate citizenship status into the calculations for apportioning congressional seats would violate the clear command of the U.S. Constitution, mark a monumental shift in methodology for

¹⁴ See Abowd & Velkoff, *supra* note 8, at 12 ("[T]he President's Executive Order 13880 commit[s] the Census Bureau to releasing Citizen Voting-Age Population (CVAP) data by combining administrative data from a number of federal, and possibly state, agencies into a separate micro-data file that will contain a 'best citizenship' variable for every person in the 2020 census.").

¹⁵ See, e.g., Katie Rogers et al., *Trump Says He Will Seek Citizenship Information From Existing Federal Records, Not the Census*, N.Y. Times (July 11, 2019), https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/11/us/politics/census-executiveaction.html; Wang, *supra* note 4.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Brendan A. Shanahan, *Counting Everyone—Citizens and Non-Citizens—in the 2020 Census is Crucial*, Wash. Post (Mar. 12, 2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/03/12/counting-everyone-citizens-noncitizens-2020-census-is-crucial; Adam Boyd, *How Census Is Building a Citizenship Database Covering Everyone Living in the U.S.*, Nextgov (Apr. 1, 2020), https://www.nextgov.com/analytics-data/2020/04/how-census-buildingcitizenship-database-covering-everyone-living-us/164275. A dispute is also currently ongoing involving whether non-citizens can be excluded from the population totals used for congressional apportionment. *See Alabama v. Dep't of Commerce*, No. 18-CV-00772 (N.D. Ala. May 21, 2018) (Complaint).

¹⁷ See Abowd & Velkoff, supra note 8, at 9.

¹⁸ *Remarks by President Trump on Citizenship and the Census*, The White House (July 11, 2019, 5:37 p.m.), available at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-citizenship-census.

¹⁹ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(iii).

²⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(iv).

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apportioning Congress, and contravene the Census Bureau's current policy.²¹ Modeling shows how significantly the use of citizenship data would affect apportionment.²²

The federal government's actual or alleged activity includes at least the following:²³ First, the government is collecting citizenship data in conjunction with the 2020 Census. President Trump signed Executive Order 13880, requesting that citizenship data be sent to the Census Bureau. Several agencies have already complied with that Order.²⁴ Second, Attorney General Barr has stated that the Justice Department would study how that data could be used in calculating apportionment. And yet, little else is known of the government's plans and whether other non-government entities may be influencing those plans. As the census is currently ongoing and the statutory deadline for calculating the apportionment is rapidly approaching, processing this request is urgent to inform the public about how the federal government is affecting their representational rights.

The Brennan Center is an organization "primarily engaged in the dissemination of information."²⁵ The Brennan Center is a think tank and public interest law center that regularly writes and publishes reports and articles and makes appearances in various media outlets regarding census-related subjects, including efforts to ensure that all people participate in the census. The opportunity to explain to the public how citizenship data may be used to calculate the apportionment is the best tool to mitigate any public fears of government abuses and thereby increase census participation. The records and communications requested are essential to that goal.

The Brennan Center certifies that the above explanation is true and correct to the best of its knowledge and belief.²⁶

²⁶ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(vi) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(3).

²¹ See U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 2 (mandating that "[r]epresentatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state"); Abowd & Velkoff, *supra* note 8, at 9; *cf. Wisconsin v. City of New York*, 517 U.S. 1, 11–12 (1996) (approving of the Secretary's findings that "small changes in adjustment methodology would have a large impact upon apportionment" and that any adjustment "might open the door to political tampering in the future."). Efforts to use citizenship data in light of the Census Bureau's policy raises the specter of political tampering.

²² See States Gaining/Losing Seats Based Upon Citizen VAP Projected to 2020, Polidata.org, https://www.polidata.org/census/ST017KCA.pdf (last accessed May 17, 2020).

²³ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(iv).

²⁴ See Wang, supra note 4.

²⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(iv). Requestors are "a cutting-edge communications hub, shaping opinion by taking our massage directly to the press and public." *Mission & Impact*, Brennan Ctr., https:// www.brennancenter.org/about/mission-impact (last accessed May 17, 2020).

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Pursuant to the applicable statute and regulations, Requestors expect the determination regarding expedited processing to be made within 10 days.²⁷

Request for Fee Waiver or Limitation on Fees

Requestors seek a waiver of all document search, review, and duplication fees because disclosure "is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government" and "is not primarily in the commercial interest of" the Brennan Center.²⁸ If the fee waiver request is not granted, the Brennan Center asks that fees be limited to reasonable standard charges for document duplication because the Center qualifies as a noncommercial scientific institution, an educational institution, and a representative of the news media.²⁹

A. Disclosure Is in the Public Interest

The records requested satisfy the two factors used by the Department of Commerce when determining whether to waive fees: (i) disclosure "is in the public interest"; and (ii) disclosure "is not primarily in the commercial interest of" the Brennan Center.³⁰

The information requested satisfies the Department of Commerce's four factor "public interest" test: (i) the records requested concern the operations or activities of the government; (ii) disclosure is likely to contribute to an understanding of government operations or activities; (iii) disclosure will contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject; and (iv) disclosure is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of government operations or activities.³¹

First, the records requested "concern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal Government"³² because they relate to: (1) compilation of citizenship data by the Department of Commerce pursuant to Executive Order 13880; (2) reporting of the 2020 Census results by the Secretary of Commerce and the President; and (3) communications involving employees of the Department of Commerce, Department of Justice, or outside organizations concerning details about the 2020 Census.

²⁷ See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(ii)(I) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.6(f)(4).

²⁸ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(l)(1)(i)–(ii).

²⁹ See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(c)(1)(ii)–(iii), (d)(1).

³⁰ 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(l)(1)(i)–(ii).

³¹ See id. § 4.11(l)(2)(i)–(iv).

^{32 15} C.F.R. § 4.11(1)(2)(i).

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Second, disclosure would be "meaningfully informative about Government operations or activities"³³ because the records requested will provide firsthand evidence about how the federal government plans to use citizenship data in apportionment and which groups or individuals outside the government it has consulted in forming those plans.

Third, disclosure will "contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject," because the Department of Commerce "presumes that a representative of the news media," such as the Brennan Center, "satisfies this consideration."³⁴ As discussed in more detail below, the Brennan Center qualifies as a representative of the news media because it broadly disseminates information to the public about issues affecting justice and democracy, including the census. Through articles on its frequently visited website, brennancenter.org, and through its widely read research reports,³⁵ the Brennan Center is an "entity that [] gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work and distributes that work to an audience."³⁶ Even if the Brennan Center were not a representative of the news media, this third factor would be satisfied because apportionment affects every single person living in the United States. Information about how citizenship data might be used in apportionment will therefore contribute to the understanding of members of the American public whose representational rights are directly impacted by apportionment.

Fourth, the public's understanding of how the federal government plans to use citizenship data for apportionment purposes will be "significantly enhanced by the disclosure" because, aside from Attorney General Barr's brief remarks about using citizenship data for apportionment purposes, little is known about how the federal government plans to use data gathered under Executive Order 13880 for apportionment purposes or whether groups outside the government have been involved in discussions about how to use that data.

Requestors also satisfy the "commercial interest" condition for a fee waiver because disclosure of the records requested "is not primarily in the commercial interest of" the Brennan Center.³⁷ The Brennan Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and does not seek the requested records for commercial use.³⁸ Instead, the Center plans to analyze, publish, and

³⁶ 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(a)(6).

³⁷ *Id.* § 4.11(1)(3).

³⁸ See Financial & Legal Information, Brennan Ctr., https://www.brennancenter.org/about/financial-legalinformation (last accessed May 18, 2020).

³³ *Id.* § 4.11(1)(2)(ii).

³⁴ Id. § 4.11(1)(2)(iii).

³⁵ See, e.g., Kelly Percival, *Federal Laws that Protect Census Confidentiality*, Brennan Ctr. (Feb. 20, 2019), https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/federal-laws-protect-census-confidentiality.

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publicly disseminate the information requested at no cost. Moreover, the Department of Commerce "ordinarily shall presume that if a news media requester has satisfied the public interest standard, the public interest is the primary interest served by disclosure to that requester[,]" not commercial use.³⁹ As explained above, the Brennan Center is a representative of the news media and has satisfied the public interest standard.

For these reasons, the Brennan Center's request for a fee waiver should be granted.

B. The Brennan Center is a Noncommercial Scientific Institution

Even if the Brennan Center's request for a fee waiver is not granted, fees should be limited to standard charges for document duplication because the Center qualifies as a noncommercial scientific institution.⁴⁰ The Brennan Center is a noncommercial scientific institution because it conducts social scientific research into the American justice system and American democracy, the results of which are intended to inform the American public, not "promote any particular product or industry."⁴¹ As stated on its website, the Center is "an independent, nonpartisan law and policy organization" that conducts "rigorous research to identify problems and provide in-depth empirical findings and compelling analyses of pressing legal and policy issues."⁴²

C. The Brennan Center is an Educational Institution

If the Brennan Center's request for a fee waiver is not granted, fees should be limited to standard duplication fees because the Center also qualifies as an educational institution.⁴³ The Brennan Center qualifies as an educational institution because it is affiliated with the New York University School of Law, which is an "institution of graduate higher education" falling under the Department of Commerce's definition of an "[e]ducational institution."⁴⁴

⁴³ See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(c)(1)(ii).

⁴⁴ 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(b)(4).

³⁹ 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(l)(3)(ii).

⁴⁰ See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(c)(1)(ii).

⁴¹ 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(b)(5).

⁴² *Research & Reports*, Brennan Ctr, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports (last accessed May 18, 2020). *See, e.g.*, Laura Royden & Michael Li, *Extreme Maps*, Brennan Ctr. (May 9, 2017), https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/extreme-maps; Ames Grawert, *Crime Trends: 1990-2016*, Brennan Ctr. (Apr. 18, 2017), https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/crime-trends-1990-2016 (examining crime statistics at the national and city level during the last quarter century).

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D. The Brennan Center is a Representative of the News Media

Finally, if fees are not waived, they should be limited to standard duplication fees because the Brennan Center also qualifies as a representative of the news media.⁴⁵ Representatives of the news media are not limited only to traditional media outlets like newspapers and periodicals.⁴⁶ Rather, a representative of the news media is defined as "any person or entity that [] gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work and distributes that work to an audience."⁴⁷ Moreover, posting content to a public website can qualify as a means of distributing it for the purposes of qualifying as a representative of the news media.⁴⁸

The Brennan Center regularly publishes news articles and research reports on its website, brennancenter.org, which was visited by 1.9 million people in 2019.⁴⁹ The Center gathers information about the American political system, synthesizes that research, and reports that information to the public. It therefore plainly falls within the definition of a representative of the news media and should be exempt from all fees associated with this request except for standard duplication fees.

In the event you deny our waiver request, please contact us if you expect the costs to exceed the amount of \$500.00.

* * *

To the extent that some of the requested records may be available before other records, please provide responsive records on a rolling basis as they become available.

If you determine that any requested record or portion of a requested record is exempt from disclosure, please identify each such record or portion of such record and the basis for the asserted exemption by reference to specific exemptions of FOIA. We expect release of all nonexempt records and segregable portions of otherwise exempt records. We reserve the right to appeal a decision to withhold any information.

⁴⁵ See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(c)(iii).

⁴⁶ See Cause of Action v. FTC, 799 F.3d 1108, 1119-1120 (D.C. Cir. 2015) (citing Nat'l Sec. Archive v. Dep't of Def., 880 F.2d 1381 (D.C. Cir. 1989)).

⁴⁷ 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii) and 15 C.F.R. § 4.11(b)(6).

⁴⁸ See Cause of Action, 799 F.3d at 1123.

⁴⁹ See 2019 Annual Report 15, Brennan Ctr, (2019), https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/2019__AnnualReport.pdf.

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Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please copy all responsive records and furnish copies in <u>electronic format</u> by email or U.S. mail to undersigned counsel for the Requestors at:

Jared V. Grubow Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP 7 World Trade Center 250 Greenwich Street, 42nd Floor New York, NY 10007 jared.grubow@wilmerhale.com

As indicated above, we are applying for expedited processing of this request. Notwithstanding your determination of expedited processing, we would appreciate a response within twenty days of receipt of this request consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i).

Respectfully,

/s/ Patrick Carome Patrick Carome Mikayla C. Foster Jared V. Grubow Christian Ronald Rieko H. Shepherd *Counsel for Requestors*