

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

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Submitted Via: FOIA.GOV

May 7, 2026

Sharon Deshield,
FOIA Officer
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Mail Stop 1181
Washington, DC 20229-1181

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Ms. Deshield

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, and the implementing FOIA regulations of the Department of Homeland Security, I respectfully request the following records from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection:

1. Records sufficient to show the number of aliens that have self-deported via the CBP Home mobile application.
2. Records sufficient to show the amount of money the Department of Homeland Security has spent in “stipends” and/or “exit bonuses” to aliens who have self-deported using the CBP Home mobile application.¹

¹ See, Press Release, *Celebrating One Year of Trump: DHS Now Offering \$2,600 Stipend Via the CBP Home App for Illegal Aliens to Leave Now*, U.S. Dep’t of Homeland Security (Jan. 21, 2026) <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2026/01/21/celebrating-one-year-trump-dhs-now-offering-2600-stipend-cbp-home-app-illegal>.

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT

Search Instructions

For any responsive documents, please include the entire communications chain, and all file attachments.

To further narrow down the scope of the request, requester does not seek correspondence that merely forwards press clippings, such as news accounts or opinion pieces, newsletters, and published or docketed materials, if that correspondence has no comment added by any party in the thread. For any responsive documents, please provide the entire communications chain, and all attachments. Please explicitly search all email inboxes assigned to the custodian, regardless of classification level (unclassified, secret, and top-secret inboxes).

The terms “pertaining to,” “referring,” “relating,” or “concerning” with respect to any given subject means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflects, identifies, states, refers to, deals with, or is in any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject.

The term “record” means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records, notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, inter-office and intra-office communications, electronic mail (emails), MMS or SMS text messages, instant messages, messaging systems (such as iMessage, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Google Chat, Twitter direct messages, Lync, Slack, and Facebook Messenger), contracts, cables, telexes, notations of any type of conversation, telephone call, voicemail, meeting or other communication, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT

pictures), and electronic, mechanical, and electronic records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape or otherwise. A record bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate record. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate record within the meaning of this term. By definition a “communication” (as that term is defined herein) is also a “record” if the means of communication is any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any sort whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy.

The terms “and” and “or” should be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The terms “all,” “any,” and “each” should each be construed as 'encompassing any and all. The singular includes the plural number, and vice versa. The present tense includes the past and vice versa. The masculine includes the feminine and neuter genders.

The term “communication” means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information (in the form of facts, ideas, inquiries, or otherwise), regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether in an in-person meeting, by telephone, facsimile, e-mail (desktop or mobile device), text message, MMS or SMS message, messaging systems (such as iMessage, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Google Chat, Twitter direct messages, Lync, Slack, and Facebook Messenger), regular mail, telexes, releases, or otherwise.

“Communications with,” “communications from,” and “communications between” means any communication involving the related parties, regardless of whether other persons were involved in the communication, and includes, but is not limited to, communications where one party is cc'd or bcc'd, both parties are cc'd or bcc'd, or some combination thereof.

Please consider all members of a document “family” to be responsive to the request if any single “member” of that “family” is responsive, regardless of whether the “family member” in question is “parent” or “child.”

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT

In the interest of expediency and to minimize the research and/or duplication burden on your staff, please send records electronically if possible. If this is not possible, please notify me before sending to the mailing address listed below. If access to this request will take longer than twenty business days, please let me know when I might receive records or be able to inspect the requested records. Please produce responsive documents as soon as they become available. In all cases, please communicate with me at the below email address.

Please comply fully with 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). Accordingly, without limitation to the foregoing, if any portion of this request is denied for any reason, please provide written notice of the records or portions of records that are being withheld and cite each specific exemption of the Freedom of Information Act on which the agency relies. Moreover, to the extent that responsive records may be withheld in part produce all reasonably segregable portions of those records. Additionally, please provide all responsive documents even if they are redacted in full.

Fee Waiver Request

The Oversight Project requests a waiver of all fees associated with processing this request. Under the FOIA statute, fees will be waived if “disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); *see also* 24 C.F.R. Part 15.106(k). This request meets both requirements for a fee waiver.

The Oversight Project is a 501(c)(4) non-profit dedicated to critical examination of government actions. Given The Oversight Project’s purpose and that this request is primarily and fundamentally for furthering that non-commercial purpose, a fee waiver is appropriate here because disclosure is likely to contribute to the public’s understanding of government operations in a meaningful way.

The Oversight Project is a member of the Mass Deportations Coalition (“MDC”).² The MDC is a coalition of immigration law and policy experts, former senior and rank

² *See*, Mass Deportations Coalition, *Coalition Partners*, <https://massdeportationcoalition.org/#coalition-partners> (last visited Apr. 15, 2026).

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT

and file law enforcement officials, advocates, and supporters who support President Trump's promise to conduct the largest deportation operation in American history.³ The MDC is united on five core principles, including the importance of the public receiving an unambiguous and transparent understanding of data surrounding immigration enforcement.⁴ We recently published a Playbook on how the Administration could operationalize and perform a true mass deportation operation.⁵ The release of the Playbook received widespread media attention.⁶

In our addition to our work in MDS, the Oversight Project uses the information requested and analyzes it in order to educate the public through the creation and distribution of unique editorial content on social media⁷, and its website.⁸ Examples of this content include distribution of records and analysis of President Joseph R. Biden's use of autopens;⁹ distribution of records and analysis of the Small Business Administration's implementation of Executive Order 14019;¹⁰ and distribution of records and analysis of false statements made by former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas regarding now-debunked allegations that Customs and Border Protection agents whipped migrants crossing the Rio Grande River.¹¹ In addition

³ Mass Deportation Coalition, *Purpose*, <https://massdeportationcoalition.org/#purpose> (last visited Apr. 15, 2026).

⁴ Mass Deportation Coalition, *Principles*, <https://massdeportationcoalition.org/#principles> (last visited Apr. 15, 2026).

⁵ Mass Deportation Coalition, *Playbook*, <https://massdeportationcoalition.org/playbook/> (Mar. 30, 2026).

⁶ See, e.g., Samuel Benson, *Trump's MAGA allies have a new plan for mass deportations. It could splinter the coalition*, Politico (Apr. 1, 2026), <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/04/01/trump-maga-immigration-raids-worksites-00853334>; Brittany Gibson, *MAGA allies say Trump is going soft on deportations*, Axios (Apr. 13, 2026) <https://www.axios.com/2026/04/13/republicans-trump-immigration-mass-deportations>.

⁷ Oversight Project (@ItsYourGov), X, <https://x.com/ItsYourGov> (last visited Apr 9, 2026).

⁸ Oversight Project - It's Your Government, Oversight Project, <https://itsyourgov.org/> (last visited Apr. 9, 2026).

⁹ *Trump Reacts to Autopen Controversy*, Oversight Project (Mar. 13, 2025), <https://itsyourgov.org/trump-reacts-to-autopen-controversy/> (last visited Apr 2, 2025).

¹⁰ *Oversight Project Exposes Biden Administration's Attempts to Mobilize Federal Resources to Juice Democratic Turnout in Michigan*, Oversight Project (May 15, 2024), <https://itsyourgov.org/litigation/oversight-project-exposes-biden-administrations-attempts-to-mobilize-federal-resources-to-juice-democratic-turnout-in-michigan/> (last visited Apr. 2, 2025).

¹¹ *Oversight Project Exposes Secretary Mayorkas Lied about CBP Agents "Whipping" Migrants in Del Rio, TX*, Oversight Project (Oct. 12, 2022), <https://itsyourgov.org/litigation/oversight-project-exposes-secretary-mayorkas-lied-about-cbp-agents-whipping-migrants-in-del-rio-tx/> (last visited Apr. 2, 2025).

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

IT'S YOUR GOVERNMENT

to the work published on our website and social media, employees of The Oversight Project regularly contribute to other traditional and non-traditional media.¹²

As the foregoing demonstrates, The Oversight Project qualifies for a fee waiver. If, however, you deny this request for a fee waiver, please advise me in advance of the estimated charges exceeding \$50. Please send me a detailed and itemized explanation of those charges.

Thank you in advance for considering my request. If you have any questions, or feel you need clarification of this request please contact me at foia@itsyourgov.org.

Sincerely,

Mike Howell
President
The Oversight Project
211 North Union Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

¹² N.P.R. Staff, *TRANSCRIPT: NPR's Interview with the Heritage Foundation's Oversight Project*, National Public Radio, May 10, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/05/10/1250252668/transcript-npr-interview-heritage-foundation-oversight-project> (last visited Apr 2, 2025); Tony Perkins, *Kyle Brosnan Identifies how Biden's Staff May Have Abused the Autopen*, YouTube (Mar. 17, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ay6li3qEmYI> (last visited Apr 2, 2025).