

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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February 24, 2022

The Honorable David S. Ferriero
Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Administration
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Mr. Ferriero:

The Oversight Committee is seeking additional documents about former President Donald Trump's removal of classified documents and presidential records from the White House, President Trump's attempt to destroy records by tearing them into pieces, and other presidential records from the Trump Administration that are missing. In response to a request from the Committee, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) provided new details of what appear to be the largest-scale violations of the Presidential Records Act since its enactment. I am deeply concerned that former President Trump may have violated the law through his intentional efforts to remove and destroy records that belong to the American people. This Committee plans to get to the bottom of what happened and assess whether further action is needed to prevent the destruction of additional presidential records and recover those records that are still missing.

On February 9, 2022, the Committee sought information related to the 15 boxes of presidential records recovered from the former president's Mar-a-Lago residence and recent reports that Mr. Trump attempted to destroy documents while serving as president.¹ On February 18, 2022, you sent two letters constituting a partial response and identifying significant potential violations of the Presidential Records Act and other federal laws governing the preservation of federal records, but you did not provide all the information the Committee requested.²

¹ Letter from Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Committee on Oversight and Reform, to David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States (Feb. 9, 2022) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2022-02-09.CBM%20to%20Ferriero-NARA%20re%20Trump%20Mar-a-Lago%20FINAL.pdf>).

² Letter from David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, to Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Committee on Oversight and Reform (Feb. 18, 2022) (responding in part to the Committee's February 9, 2022, letter) (online at www.archives.gov/files/foia/ferriero-response-to-02.09.2022-maloney-letter.02.18.2022.pdf); Letter from David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, to Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Committee on Oversight and Reform (Feb. 18, 2022) (describing the Trump Administration's failure to capture social media records) (online at www.archives.gov/files/foia/ferriero-letter-to-maloney-on-trump-presidential-records-on-social).

Your response confirmed that “NARA has identified items marked as classified national security information within the boxes” recovered at Mar-a-Lago, and that “NARA staff has been in communication with the Department of Justice” regarding this discovery. In response to the Committee’s request for an inventory of the contents of the 15 boxes, you stated the inventory should be completed by February 25 and that the Committee could request the inventory under Section 2205(2)(C) of the PRA.³

Your response also provided concerning new information about Mr. Trump’s destruction or attempted destruction of documents while serving as president. You stated that following press reports in 2018 that President Trump was tearing up records, NARA wrote to the Deputy Counsel for the President requesting information and that “[t]he White House Counsel’s Office indicated that they would address the matter.” However, you wrote that after this incident, “NARA learned that additional paper records that had been torn up by former President Trump were included in the records transferred to us.” You also wrote that White House staff had “taped together some of the torn-up records” but that “a number of other torn-up records that were transferred had not been reconstructed by the White House.”⁴

Your response also indicated that the Trump Administration failed to preserve other presidential records, and that NARA is continuing to search for missing records from the Trump Administration. You explained:

NARA has identified certain social media records that were not captured and preserved by the Trump Administration. NARA has also learned that some White House staff conducted official business using non-official electronic messaging accounts that were not copied or forwarded into their official electronic messaging accounts, as required by section 2209 of the PRA.⁵

On February 18, 2022, you also sent me a detailed description of the Trump Administration’s failure to capture and preserve presidential records on social media platforms. Among other information, your letter indicated that:

- The Trump Administration failed to adequately capture and preserve all tweets that the former president posted in the course of his official duties, including deleted tweets, despite being warned by NARA as far back as March 2017;
- The Trump Administration failed to preserve deleted content from the former president’s other social media accounts, and failed to preserve the former president’s Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat accounts after he was suspended or banned from those platforms;

media-platforms.02.18.2022.pdf).

³ 44 U.S.C. § 2205(2)(C).

⁴ Letter from David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States, to Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney, Committee on Oversight and Reform (Feb. 18, 2022) (responding in part to the Committee’s February 9, 2022, letter) (online at www.archives.gov/files/foia/ferriero-response-to-02.09.2022-maloney-letter.02.18.2022.pdf).

⁵ *Id.*

- The Trump Administration appears to have failed to preserve the former president's direct or private messages on social media accounts; and
- The Trump Administration failed to capture presidential records from the Twitter accounts of seven White House aides, including Ivanka Trump, Mark Meadows, Peter Navarro, and others.⁶

The information in your response suggests that former President Trump and his senior aides may have repeatedly violated the Presidential Records Act and other federal laws, which could severely impact the preservation of records from the Trump Administration. The Committee needs additional documents and information uniquely available from NARA to investigate the full extent of this conduct and determine what additional steps, including potential legislative reforms, may be needed to ensure the preservation of presidential records for the American people.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. The Committee has legislative jurisdiction over the Presidential Records Act and the Federal Records Act and has a long history of conducting oversight related to compliance with these laws.⁷

For all these reasons, pursuant to the Presidential Records Act,⁸ please provide by March 10, 2022:

1. A detailed description of the contents of the boxes recovered from Mar-a-Lago, including any inventory prepared by NARA of the contents of the boxes, and identification of any items that are classified and the level of classification including, if necessary, a classified index;

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ See, e.g., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Press Release: Chaffetz, Cummings Urge Compliance with Federal Recordkeeping Laws* (Mar. 17, 2017) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/chaffetz-cummings-urge-compliance-with-federal-recordkeeping-laws>); Letter from Chairman Trey Gowdy and Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Donald F. McGahn II, White House Counsel (Sept. 25, 2017) (online at <https://republicans-oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/2017-09-25-TG-EEC-to-McGahn-WH-Presidential-Records-Act-due-10-9.pdf>); Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: Committee Approves Subpoena to White House for Emails Sent on Personal Accounts in Violation of Federal Law* (July 25, 2019) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/committee-approves-subpoena-to-white-house-for-emails-sent-on-personal-accounts>); Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: Chairwoman Maloney Seeks Details from National Archives on the Trump Administration's Compliance with Presidential Records Act* (Dec. 21, 2020) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/chairwoman-maloney-seeks-details-from-national-archives-on-the-trump>); Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Hearing on Examining Preservation of State Department Federal Records*, 114th Cong. (Sept. 13 and Sept. 22, 2016) (H. Rept. 114-161) (online at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-114hhr26120/pdf/CHRG-114hhr26120.pdf).

⁸ 44 U.S.C. § 2205(2)(C).

2. A detailed description of any reviews conducted by other federal agencies of the information in the recovered boxes since the boxes were obtained by NARA, including with respect to classified information; the findings from these reviews; and the anticipated completion date of any reviews that are ongoing;
3. All presidential records transferred to NARA that NARA learned former President Trump had torn up, destroyed, mutilated, or attempted to tear up, destroy, or mutilate;
4. Any written responses from Deputy Counsel to the President Stefan Passantino, or any other White House official to NARA's June 14, 2018, letter to the Trump Administration; and
5. All letters sent by NARA to the Trump Administration related to the Presidential Records Act not already provided to the Committee and any responses from the Trump Administration to those letters.

In addition, pursuant to the Presidential Records Act,⁹ the Committee requests that you produce by March 17, 2022, the following documents from the records of President Donald Trump's Executive Office of the President (EOP) in your possession, custody, or control:

1. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to the use of personal messaging accounts for official business;
2. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to the attempted or actual destruction, tearing up, taping together, relocation, or removal of any presidential records or materials;
3. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to communications with former President Trump about the Presidential Records Act or White House policies on recordkeeping;
4. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to White House employees or contractors finding paper in a toilet in the White House, including the White House residence;

⁹ 44 U.S.C. § 2205(2)(C).

5. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to missing records; and
6. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2020, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to determinations of whether to transfer records to NARA.

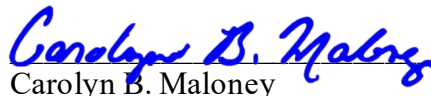
For requests 1 through 6, please prioritize producing records from the following custodians: Pat Cipollone; John Kelly; Nicholas Luna; Derek Lyons; Don McGahn; Mark Meadows; Stefan Passantino; Robert Porter; Reince Priebus; and Madeleine Westerhout.

7. Documents and communications received, prepared, or sent between January 20, 2017, and January 20, 2021, by employees or officials of EOP or any of its components, offices, or directorates, relating to the preservation or destruction of records from social media accounts, including direct messaging on social media accounts.

For request seven, please prioritize producing records from the following custodians: Andrew Giuliani, Chad Gilmartin, Ivanka Trump, Kayleigh McEnany, Kellyanne Conway, Mark Meadows, and Peter Navarro. Please also prioritize producing records related to methods of archiving social media accounts, including records related to the disconnection of the account @realDonaldTrump from ArchiveSocial.

An attachment to this letter provides additional instructions for responding to the Committee's request. Please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5051 if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,


Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Ranking Member