



Refer to: Request Number **2023-00613-FOIA-PHS**

**March 27, 2023**

***Sent via email:***

Reed Rubinstein

**foia@aflegal.org**

Dear Reed Rubinstein:

This acknowledges receipt of your March 23, 2023, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), FOI/Privacy Acts Division concerning “[America First Legal Foundation (AFL)] requests...

A. All records of communications, including e-mail and Microsoft Teams messages, to or from Rachel Levine, containing the following terms: Vanderbilt University, Boston Children’s Hospital, Seattle Children’s Hospital, Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Tavistock, University of Virginia, Connecticut Children’s and/or Washington University Transgender Center.

The timeframe for this item is October 19, 2021, to the date this item is fully processed.

B. All records of communications, including e-mail and Microsoft Teams messages, to or from Rachel Levine, containing the following terms: “gender affirming care,” “puberty blockers,” “testosterone,” “hormone replacement therapy,” “HRT,” “transgender clinics,” “gender dysphoria,” “transition surgery,” “gender identity,” “detransitioning,” “detransitioned,” “destransitioner,” “medically transitioned,” “suicide prevention care,” “supportive adult(s),” “gag rule,” “medically necessary,” “parental rights,” “anti-LGBTQIA legislation,” “anti-trans legislation,” “anti-trans bills,” “transgender clinic(s),” “mastectomies,” “vaginoplasty,” “phalloplasty,” “access to bathrooms,” “parental consent,” “Title IX,” “access to sports,” “metoidioplasty,” “transgender youth,” “WPATH,” and/or “Protect Children’s Innocence Act.”

The timeframe for this item is October 19, 2021, to the date this item is fully processed.

III. Custodians A. Rachel Levine, Assistant Secretary for Health (Date Range for Record Search: From 10/19/2021 To 3/23/2023)”. We received your request, on March 23, 2023.

Because you seek records which require a search in another office, “unusual circumstances” apply to your request, automatically extending the time limit to respond to your request for ten additional days. See 5 U.S.C. 552 § (a)(6)(B)(i)-(iii) (2012 & Supp. V. 2017). Further, we estimate needing more than 10 additional days to respond to your request and so, in the next paragraph of this letter we are offering you an opportunity to narrow your request, in case narrowing the request would enable us to respond to the request sooner. The actual time needed to process your request will depend on the complexity of our records search and on the volume and complexity of any material located. For your information, this Office assigns incoming requests to one of three tracks: simple, complex, or expedited. Each request is then handled on a first-in, first-out basis in relation to other requests in the same track. Our current workload is approximately 3,000 cases.

Your request is assigned to the complex track. In an effort to speed up our records search, you may wish to narrow the scope of your request to limit the number of potentially responsive records or agree to an alternative time frame for processing, should records be located. You may also wish to await the completion of our records search to discuss either of these options.

I regret the necessity of this delay, but I assure you that your request will be processed as soon as possible. If you have any questions or wish to discuss reformulation or an alternative time frame for the processing of your request, you may contact the analyst handling your request, Kathy Hill at [kathy.hill@hhs.gov](mailto:kathy.hill@hhs.gov).

If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the processing and handling of this request, you have the right to seek dispute resolution services from:

HHS FOIA/PA Public Liaison  
FOI/Privacy Acts Division  
Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (ASPA)  
Office of the Secretary (OS)  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Telephone: (202) 690-7453  
E-mail: [HHS\\_FOIA\\_Public\\_Liaison@hhs.gov](mailto:HHS_FOIA_Public_Liaison@hhs.gov)

and/or:

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
Telephone: 202- 741-5770  
Toll-Free: 1-877-684-6448  
E-mail: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)

If you are not already submitting your requests through our Public Access Link (PAL), we recommend all future requests and appeals be submitted through PAL - <https://requests.publiclink.hhs.gov/>. Submitting requests through PAL automatically logs your requests into our tracking system and provides you with a tracking number. Your PAL account will allow you to track the progress of your request, receive your documents directly through the portal, and securely submit privacy-sensitive or business-sensitive documents.

Sincerely yours,



Arianne Perkins  
Director, Initial FOIA Requests  
FOI/Privacy Acts Division