

Narrowed Request in Response to January 14, 2026 Letter FOIA Request No. 77736 AG-Governor Communications on Prosecutorial Decisions

Dear Ms. Ptacek: I write in response to your January 14, 2026 letter requesting that True Signal Media narrow FOIA Request No. 77736. Your letter suggested "limiting your request to a specific matter and with specific staff members of the Governor's office."

TSM provides this narrowed request in accordance with your suggestion.

****I. TECHNICAL ISSUE RESOLVED**** Your letter stated: "the staff of the Governor's office use the same e-mail suffix as many other state agencies so that it is not possible to conduct an automated search for e-mail communications conducted solely with that office."

****This technical obstacle is readily solvable.**** The State of Illinois maintains a public telephone directory at <http://cmsapps.illinois.gov/TeleDirectory> listing all Governor's office personnel.

I have attached the current directory showing Governor's office staff members, their titles, and contact information. Your office can now search for communications with these specifically identified individuals rather than attempting a generic domain search. This resolves the technical difficulty you cited.

****II. NARROWED REQUEST**** Pursuant to your suggestion to limit the request to specific matters and specific staff members, True Signal Media narrows FOIA Request No. 77736 as follows:

****RECORDS REQUESTED:**** ALL communications between the Attorney General's Office and the following six members of the Governor's Office:

1. ****JB Pritzker**** - Governor
2. ****Dan Hynes**** - Chief of Staff
3. ****Ann Spillane**** - General Counsel
4. ****Sol Flores**** - Deputy Governor
5. ****Jesse Ruiz**** - Deputy Governor
6. ****Emily Bittner**** - Deputy Chief of Staff

For Communications Concerning the following three specific matters:

****A. Jenny Thornley**** - Criminal prosecution - Charging decisions (specifically the decision to charge only one count vs. multiple counts) - Plea negotiations (specifically the acceptance of single-count plea) - Sentencing recommendations - Restitution amount (\$10,000 vs. \$67,000+ actual theft) - Workers' compensation fraud allegations - Decision not to prosecute workers' compensation fraud

****B. Emily Fox and People ex rel. Fox v. State of Illinois, et al.**** - The qui tam whistleblower lawsuit - Decision to file Motion to Dismiss - Litigation strategy - Evaluation of Emily Fox's allegations - Cost-benefit analysis referenced in dismissal motion - Political considerations, if any, in dismissal decision - Settlement discussions, if any - Appellate strategy

****C. Workers' Compensation Fraud - Prosecutorial Decisions**** - Referral from Illinois Department of Insurance concerning Jenny Thornley workers' compensation fraud - Decision not to prosecute workers' compensation fraud case - Rationale for declining prosecution - Alternative referrals (claimed referral to State's Attorneys Appellate Prosecutor)

****DEFINITION OF "COMMUNICATIONS":**** Emails, text messages, letters, memoranda, meeting notes, agendas, summaries of meetings or phone calls, briefing materials, and calendar entries documenting information exchange on these matters.

****TIME PERIOD:**** January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2025

****III. SUBSTANTIAL NARROWING ACCOMPLISHED**** ****Original Request Scope:**** - All Governor's office staff (approximately 15-20 personnel based on directory) - Six broad categories of matters - Six-year time period through present

****Narrowed Request Scope:**** - Six specifically identified senior officials - Three specific matters (eliminated three categories: Merit Board generally, Jack Garcia specifically, McGuireWoods investigation generally) - Reduced to five-year completed time period

****This represents approximately a 60% reduction in scope:**** - Personnel: Narrowed from ~20 staff to 6 senior officials - Subject matter: Eliminated 50% of categories (3 of 6 matters) - Time period: Reduced from 6 years ongoing to 5 completed years

****IV. THE 2,000 EMAIL CLAIM IS NOW INAPPLICABLE**** Your letter cited the same "over 2,000 e-mails" figure from FOIA Request 77737, which sought ALL AG records on ALL five parts of that request. Request 77737 sought the complete Attorney General's case files, litigation files, internal AG communications, and decision-making records concerning multiple matters.

****FOIA Request 77736 is fundamentally different.**** This request seeks only AG-Governor communications—not internal AG office records. The vast majority of those 2,000 emails were: - Internal AG office communications (attorney-to-attorney) - AG communications with defendant agencies (not Governor's office) - AG communications with courts, opposing counsel, etc. - AG litigation files and case management records

****Communications specifically between the AG's office and the six named Governor's office officials represent a small subset of AG records on these matters.**** The 2,000 email figure for ALL AG records cannot credibly be used to claim burden for the narrow subset of AG-Governor communications involving just six specific officials.

****V. PUBLIC INTEREST REMAINS OVERWHELMING**** The narrowed request focuses on the core public interest question: ****Did the Governor's office coordinate with or influence the Attorney General's exercise of prosecutorial discretion?*****

****Jenny Thornley Case:**** A state employee defrauded the state of over \$67,000. The AG's office: - Charged only one count (not multiple counts reflecting full theft) - Accepted plea to single count - Sought only \$10,000 restitution (not full \$67,000+) - Declined to prosecute workers' compensation fraud

****Was this prosecutorial leniency coordinated with the Governor's office? The public has a right to know.****

****Emily Fox Case:**** Emily Fox filed a qui tam whistleblower lawsuit alleging fraud against the State of Illinois and agencies within the Governor's administration. The AG's office which has a statutory duty to investigate fraud against the state moved to dismiss the case, citing a "cost-benefit analysis."

****Was the Governor's office involved in the AG's decision to dismiss fraud allegations against the Governor's own administration? The public has a right to know.****

****Workers' Compensation Fraud:**** The AG declined to prosecute workers' compensation fraud allegedly committed by a state employee against the state.

****Was this declination coordinated with the Governor's office? The public has a right to know.****

****These are not hypothetical questions. They concern the exercise of prosecutorial discretion by the state's chief law enforcement officer potentially in coordination with the chief executive whose administration was implicated in the matters.****

****VI. THE SIX NAMED OFFICIALS ARE PRECISELY THOSE WHO WOULD COORDINATE****

The narrowed request targets the six Governor's office officials most likely to coordinate with the AG on prosecutorial and legal matters:

- **Chief of Staff (Hynes)**: Coordinates major decisions across administration
- **General Counsel (Spillane)**: Handles legal coordination between offices
- **Governor (Pritzker)**: Ultimate decision-maker
- **Deputy Governors (Flores, Ruiz)**: Senior advisors on major matters
- **Deputy Chief of Staff for Communications (Bittner)**: Coordinates messaging on sensitive matters

If coordination occurred, it occurred with these six individuals. If coordination did NOT occur, then the search will quickly reveal minimal or no responsive records, and the AG can produce them without burden.

The AG cannot simultaneously claim:

1. That six senior officials would generate burdensome email volume, AND
2. That the AG's office did not coordinate with the Governor's office on these matters **Either coordination occurred (records exist and should be disclosed) or it didn't (minimal records, minimal burden).**

VII. SCOPE CLARIFICATION ON PRIVILEGE As stated in the original request: These records document coordination between two separate constitutional offices regarding prosecutorial decisions and investigations. They are not:

- **Attorney-client privileged**: The Governor's office is not the client of the AG's office in prosecutorial matters. The People of the State of Illinois are the AG's client in criminal prosecutions. The State agencies were the AG's clients in the Fox litigation.
- **Attorney work product**: These are communications BETWEEN offices, not internal AG litigation preparation. Work product protects attorney mental impressions and litigation strategy prepared internally. It does not protect coordination between separate government offices.
- **Executive privilege**: Illinois does not recognize a broad executive privilege for routine inter-office coordination. Any such claim would require specific justification, not blanket assertion.

To the extent the AG claims any communications are exempt, Illinois FOIA requires a document-by-document privilege log specifying the exemption and explaining why disclosure would be harmful. 5 ILCS 140/7, 140/9.

VIII. THIS NARROWING ELIMINATES THE AG'S STATED OBJECTIONS

AG's Objection #1: "Cannot search by email domain"

TSM Response: Public directory attached. Search by these six specific individuals' names and email addresses.

AG's Objection #2: "Request is unduly burdensome"

TSM Response: Request narrowed by 60%—six specific officials, three specific matters, five completed years. This targets the precise records of greatest public interest. **AG's Objection #3: "Would require manual review of 2,000 emails"**

TSM Response: That figure was for ALL AG records on ALL matters in Request 77737. This request seeks only AG-Governor communications—a small subset—involving just six named individuals.

AG's Objection #4: "Public interest outweighed by burden"

TSM Response: Public interest in Governor-AG coordination on prosecutorial discretion is at its zenith. Narrowed scope eliminates burden excuse.

The AG's stated objections have been addressed. The request is now specific, targeted, and manageable.

****IX. DEMAND FOR PROCESSING**** True Signal Media has narrowed the request precisely as the Attorney General suggested: specific matters, specific Governor's office staff members. The technical search difficulty has been resolved by providing the public directory. The burden claim is no longer tenable given the 60% reduction in scope.

****The Attorney General must now either:****

1. ****Process the narrowed request**** and produce responsive AG-Governor communications (with exemption log for any withheld records), OR
2. ****Issue a formal denial**** with specific legal basis and appeal rights ****The AG cannot continue indefinite delay through repeated requests for further narrowing.**

**** TSM has cooperated fully. The request is now specific, targeted, and addresses the AG's stated concerns.**

****X. TIMELINE FOR RESPONSE**** Under Illinois FOIA, the AG had 5 business days (extended to 10) to respond to the original December 30, 2025 request. That deadline has passed.

The narrowed request should be processed expeditiously given:

- Substantial narrowing eliminates burden
- Public directory resolves search issues
- Request targets core public interest question
- Political sensitivity (4 press secretaries CC'd) does not justify delay TSM requests production of responsive records within 10 business days, or formal denial with appeal rights if the AG refuses.

****XI. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS****

If the Attorney General refuses to process this narrowed request or continues procedural delay tactics, True Signal Media reserves all rights under Illinois FOIA, including:

- Appeal to the Public Access Counselor
- Petition for judicial review under 5 ILCS 140/11
- Request for attorney's fees and costs under 5 ILCS 140/11(i)
- ****Publication of the AG's obstruction as part of TSM's investigative reporting on whether Governor Pritzker's office coordinated with AG Raoul on prosecutorial decisions involving the Governor's administration****

****The latter is not a threat—it is TSM's core investigative mission.****

Whether the AG produces records showing coordination or continues obstruction to prevent disclosure, both are newsworthy. TSM will report what the evidence shows.

****XII. CONCLUSION**** True Signal Media has provided the specific, targeted narrowing the Attorney General requested. The public has a compelling interest in understanding whether and how the Governor's office coordinated with the AG on prosecutorial decisions involving:

- Lenient treatment of a state employee who defrauded the state
- Dismissal of fraud allegations against the Governor's administration
- Declination to prosecute workers' compensation fraud

****These records either exist or they don't. If they exist, they should be disclosed. If they don't exist, the search will quickly reveal that and the AG can so certify.****

The time for procedural gamesmanship has ended. TSM expects compliance with this narrowed request. Respectfully submitted, David Burger Investigations Editor True Signal Media TSM-FOIA@truesignalmedia.news 328 South 4th Street Chillicothe, Illinois 61523

Date: January 19, 2026

****ATTACHMENT:**** State of Illinois Telephone Directory - Governor's Office Employee Listing (2 pages)