



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ILLINOIS

KWAME RAOUL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

January 27, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. David Burger
True Signal Media
328 South 4th Street
Chillicothe, Illinois 61523
TSM-FOIA@truesignalmedia.news

RE: Freedom of Information Act Request
2025 FOIA 077858

Dear Mr. Burger:

Thank you for writing to the Office of the Illinois Attorney General with your request for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.*).

In a request received via our Public Records Center on December 30, 2025, and assigned FOIA File No. 77736 you requested the following:

[A]ccess to communications between the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Governor concerning whistleblower allegations, prosecutorial decisions, and related investigations.

RECORDS REQUESTED:

ALL communications between the Attorney General's Office and the Governor's Office concerning:

- Jenny Thornley
- Criminal prosecution
 - Charging decisions

500 South 2nd Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701
(217) 782-1090 • Fax: (217) 782-7046

115 South LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603
(312) 814-3000 • Fax: (312) 814-3806

1745 Innovation Drive, Suite C
Carbondale, Illinois 62903
(618) 529-6400 • Fax: (618) 529-6416

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

- Plea negotiations
- Sentencing recommendations
- Workers' compensation fraud allegations
- Employment status
- Any matters related to Jenny Thornley

Emily Fox and People ex rel. Fox v. State of Illinois, et al.

- The qui tam lawsuit
- Motion to dismiss
- Litigation strategy
- Emily Fox's whistleblower allegations
- Settlement discussions
- Any matters related to Emily Fox or the lawsuit

Illinois State Police Merit Board

- Merit Board proceedings
- Investigations
- Referrals to Attorney General's Office
- Coordination on cases
- Any matters related to Merit Board activities

Jack Garcia

- Allegations involving Jack Garcia
- Investigations concerning Jack Garcia
- Merit Board proceedings involving Jack Garcia
- Any matters related to Jack Garcia

Workers' Compensation Fraud Investigations

- Referrals from Illinois Department of Insurance
- Investigation decisions
- Prosecutorial decisions
- Case declinations
- Any matters related to workers' compensation fraud

McGuireWoods Investigation

- The McGuireWoods investigation of State Police
- Coordination on investigation findings
- Response to investigation
- Implementation of recommendations
- Any matters related to the McGuireWoods investigation

DEFINITION OF "COMMUNICATIONS": For purposes of this request, "communications" includes but is not limited to:

- Emails, text messages, instant messages, and other electronic communications
- Letters, memoranda, and written correspondence
- Meeting notes, agendas, and summaries of meetings or phone calls
- Briefing materials prepared for meetings between the offices
- Calendar entries showing meetings between the offices on these topics
- Any other records documenting information exchange between the two offices

SCOPE OF OFFICES: This request includes communications between any staff member of the Attorney General's Office and any staff member of the Governor's Office, including but not limited to:

- Attorney General Kwame Raoul and Governor J.B. Pritzker
- Deputy Attorneys General and Deputy Governors
- Communications staff between both offices
- Legal counsel in both offices
- Chiefs of Staff and senior advisors
- Any other personnel in either office

TIME PERIOD: January 1, 2020 through present

SCOPE CLARIFICATION: This request seeks records documenting coordination, information sharing, or consultation between two constitutional offices on matters involving whistleblower allegations, prosecutorial decisions, and investigations. These are not attorney-client privileged communications as the Governor's Office is not the client of the Attorney General's Office in these matters, nor are they attorney work product as they concern coordination between separate government offices rather than litigation preparation. The public has a paramount interest in understanding whether and how political considerations from the Governor's Office influenced the Attorney General's exercise of prosecutorial discretion and handling of whistleblower allegations against the Governor's administration. (Capitalization in original.)

On January 7, 2026, we extended the time to respond to your request by five business days pursuant to section 3(e)(iv) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/3(e)(iv)) because the requested records had not been located in the course of routine search and additional efforts were being made to locate them.

On January 14, 2026, this office advised you that it had conducted a search and we had determined your request was unduly burdensome under section 3(g) of the FOIA (5 ILCS 140/3(g)). Your request sought all communications between this office and the Governor's Office concerning any workers' compensation investigations and any Illinois State Police Merit Board investigations or proceedings over a six-year period, as well as all such communications concerning Jenny Thornley and a qi tam lawsuit related to Ms. Thornley. As we advised in response to your prior request, this office possesses over 2,000 e-mails (exclusive of any other written correspondence) that pertain to Jenny Thornley. These records relate to litigation conducted in our General Law and Special Litigation bureaus, a Workers Compensation claim, at least one appeal, and potential referrals for prosecution. Moreover, the staff of the Governor's office uses 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. Accordingly, we informed you that in order to locate records responsive to your request staff would be required to manually review at least 2,000 e-mail communications to identify responsive records. Assuming it took only 1 minute to review each file and make copies of any responsive records, it would take over 30 hours to compile records responsive to just those portions of your request. Additionally, staff would then be required to review and redact information from all responsive records in order to protect against the release of exempt information. *See* 5 ILCS 140/7(1)(b), (c), (d)(iv).

Accordingly, we requested that you narrow the scope of your request to bring it within manageable proportions pursuant to section 3(g) of FOIA. 5 ILCS 140/3(g). A suggestion for narrowing your request included limiting your request to a specific matter and with specific staff members of the Governor's office.

In a narrowed request received via our Public Records Center on January 20, 2026, and assigned FOIA File No. 77858 you requested the following:

****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[.] (Capitalization in original.)

In a follow up message received via our Public Records Center on January 20, 2026, you stated the following:

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Subject: Clarification Requested - Tracking Number Assignment for Narrowed FOIA 77736 Dear FOIA Officer, I am writing to request clarification regarding the two FOIA matters (F077857-012026 and F077858-012026) that were generated following my January 19, 2026 response narrowing FOIA request F077736-122025. My January 19 submission was a clarification and narrowing of an existing request in response to your January 14 request to narrow, not the submission of new FOIA requests. However, the FOIA portal reflects that the narrowed scope has been split into two separate requests and designated as new matters with new receipt dates (January 20, 2026), with no explanation provided for the split. Please confirm in writing whether tracking numbers F077857-012026 and F077858-012026 are continuations of FOIA F077736-122025 for purposes of statutory response deadlines. If the Department considers these to be new requests, please identify the statutory basis for resetting the receipt date following a requester-initiated narrowing submitted in response to your January 14 letter. To avoid any procedural misunderstanding, I respectfully request written clarification within five (5) business days of this message. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response. Sincerely, David Burger True Signal Media

As an initial matter, please be advised that this office opened a new FOIA request and generated a new FOIA file number in order to initiate a new search according to the clarified guidelines that you provided in your January 19, 2026, communication. That narrowed request must be distinguished from your original request in order to be processed in accordance with the requirements of section 3(d) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/3(d) ("Each public body shall, promptly, either comply with or deny a request for public records within 5 business days after its receipt of the request, unless the time for response is properly extended under subsection (e) of this Section.")). Please be further advised that as January 19, 2026, was a holiday, your modified request was opened on the first business day when it was received, January 20, 2026. *See* 5 ILCS 70/1.11 ("The time within which any act provided by law is to be done shall be computed by excluding the first day and including the last, unless the last day is Saturday or Sunday or is a holiday as defined or fixed in any statute now or hereafter in force in this State[.]").

Please be advised that we are extending the time within which to respond to your request by five business days as allowed by section 3(e)(iv) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/3(e)(iv)) because:

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(iv) the requested records have not been located in the course of routine search and additional efforts are being made to locate them[.]

Very truly yours,



ELIZABETH J. PTACEK
Assistant Attorney General
FOIA Officer

EJP:ga

cc: Annie Thompson, Senior Press Secretary
Office of the Illinois Attorney General

Andrew Hill, Deputy Press Secretary
Office of the Illinois Attorney General

April McLaren, Deputy Press Secretary
Office of the Illinois Attorney General

Jamey Dunn-Thomason, Press Secretary
Office of the Illinois Attorney General