

In Reply Refer To: **FOIA Request 26-10710-F**

March 4, 2026

David Burger  
True Signal Media  
investigations@truesignalmedia.news

Dear Mr. Burger:

This letter acknowledges receipt of your January 27, 2026 request, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Central Office FOIA Office requesting the following records:

To: Department of Veterans Affairs  
VA FOIA Service (and Minneapolis VA Health Care System FOIA Officer)

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552, I request access to records described below.

This request seeks records sufficient to confirm employment status and role held by Alex Pretti at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System prior to January 24, 2026.

Records Requested

I request records sufficient to show:

Dates of employment for Alex Pretti at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

Position title(s) and department(s) in which he was employed.

Employment status as of January 24, 2026 (active, inactive, separated).

The manner of separation, if applicable (e.g., resignation, termination, retirement), including the effective date.

This request does not seek personnel evaluations, disciplinary files, performance reviews, medical information, or other sensitive personnel records. Redactions may be applied as required by law; however, all reasonably segregable, non-exempt portions must be released.

Formats and Search Parameters

This request includes records maintained in electronic or paper form, including employment verification records, HR status records, or other administrative records sufficient to confirm employment status.

#### Certification if No Records Exist

If no responsive records exist, please provide a written certification to that effect.

#### Statutory Requirements

If any portion of this request is denied, please cite the specific statutory exemption relied upon and describe how it applies.

Please provide records electronically where possible.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. (Date Range for Record Search: From 01/01/2020 To 01/24/2026)

#### **Request Procedural History**

Your FOIA request was received in my office on January 28, 2026. Your FOIA request was assigned the tracking number at the top of this letter. Please include the tracking number in all future communications concerning this FOIA request. This office apologizes to the administrative oversight regarding the late correspondence related to your request.

As expressly authorized under the FOIA, the VA processes requests using multitrack processing which allows us to process requests on a first-in, first-out basis in either a simple or complex processing track. This allows us to respond to relatively simple requests more quickly than requests involving complex and/or voluminous records. Your request was placed in the Simple processing category.

#### **Expedited Processing**

In your request letter, you asked for expedited processing of your FOIA request. Upon review of the submitted information, I am denying your request for expedited processing. The FOIA provides that an agency shall process a FOIA request on an expedited basis if the individual making the FOIA request demonstrates a compelling need for the information requested or the agency otherwise determines that the expedited processing request should be granted (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i)).

The FOIA states that a “compelling need” may exist in either of two situations. First, a compelling need exists when a FOIA requester’s failure to obtain records on an expedited basis “could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual,” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(I). Under this test, the FOIA requester must demonstrate how failure to receive the requested records on an expedited basis places an identified individual at immediate risk of death or physical

harm. Second, a compelling need may exist where, “with respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity” (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(v)(II)).

Your expedited processing request fails to demonstrate how failure to obtain the requested records on an expedited basis poses an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual. Nor did your FOIA request qualify for expedited processing under the second test as you have failed to demonstrate why there is an urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal Government activity. For these reasons, I have denied your request for expedited processing of your FOIA request.

### **Fee Waiver**

In your request you asked for a fee waiver as you are categorized as a news media entity that request is moot.

### **Fee Category Determination**

The FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii), places all FOIA requesters in one of three categories for fee purposes. The three categories of FOIA requesters are (1) commercial use requesters; (2) educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions and representative of the news media; and (3) all other requesters. I have determined your request to be in the category of News Media.

As a News Media, VA FOIA implementing regulations found at 38 C.F.R. §1.561(f) state that the requester will be charged for the cost of reproduction of the records only, excluding the charges for the first 100 pages. In addition, VA FOIA regulation 38 C.F.R. § 1.561(h)(1) states that the VA will not charge the requester if the fee is \$25 or less. Moreover, the News Media requester will be charged the cost of reproduction of the records even if there is ultimately no disclosure of records.

### **Appeal**

Please be advised you may appeal the denial for expedited processing made in this letter to:

Office of the General Counsel (024)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20420  
Fax: 202-273-6388  
[ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov](mailto:ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov)

If you should choose to file an appeal, your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted no later than ninety (90) calendar days from the date of this letter. Please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly state why you disagree with the determinations set forth in this response.

You may also seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services for any other aspect of your FOIA request from VHA's FOIA Public Liaison and/or Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) as provided below:

VHA FOIA Public Liaison:

[vhafoiahelp@va.gov](mailto:vhafoiahelp@va.gov)

Phone: 833-880-8500

Office of Government Information Services  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
[ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)

Your request has been assigned to Gregory Cason of my staff. If you have any questions about your request, you may contact Gregory Cason at [gregory.cason@va.gov](mailto:gregory.cason@va.gov).

Sincerely,



Barbara Swailes, M.H.A., CIPP-US, CIPP-G,  
Director, VHA FOIA Office