

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

JUDICAL WATCH, INC.,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	Civ. No. 26-00149(CKK)
)	
v.)	
)	
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION,)	ANSWER
)	
Defendant.)	
)	

DEFENDANT FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION’S ANSWER

Defendant Federal Election Commission (“FEC”) submits this answer to the Complaint filed by plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. (“Judicial Watch”). Any allegation not specifically responded to below is DENIED.

COMPLAINT¹

The paragraph summarizes plaintiff’s complaint, the allegations of which speak for themselves and require no response. To the extent a response is required, ADMIT that this case is an action under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) to compel the production of certain agency records requested by plaintiff. DENY that any records have been improperly withheld.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. ADMIT that this Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. ADMIT that venue is proper in this district.

¹ The FEC has included the headings from the Complaint for the sole purpose of assisting in the reading of this answer and does not admit the accuracy of those headings.

PARTIES

3. The FEC is without knowledge or information sufficient to admit or deny the allegations in this paragraph.

4. ADMIT that the FEC is an agency subject to FOIA.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

5. ADMIT that plaintiff submitted a FOIA request dated September 18, 2025. The remainder of this paragraph contains plaintiff's characterization of and quotations from its September 18, 2025 FOIA request, which speaks for itself, and to which no response is required.

6. ADMIT.

7. DENY to the extent that the FEC provided the plaintiff with an interim response on February 20, 2026, apprising plaintiff that the FEC is complying with the request, continuing to process potentially responsive documents, and that the request has been partially granted and partially denied. Additionally, DENY to the extent that the interim response also advised plaintiff of rights to appeal any adverse FOIA determination and stated that it would complete the request as soon as possible.

**COUNT ONE
(Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)**

8. The FEC incorporates its responses to paragraphs 1-7.

9. DENY.

10. DENY

11. ADMIT that plaintiff is deemed to have exhausted its administrative remedies.

The remainder of this paragraph is a legal conclusion to which no response is required.

Requested Relief: DENY that plaintiff is entitled to the relief requested in paragraphs 1-11.

AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

Defendant FEC reserves the right to amend, alter, and supplement the defenses contained in this Answer as the facts and circumstances giving rise to this Complaint become known to the FEC through the course of this litigation.

FIRST AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE

Some of the information sought by plaintiff may be exempt from release under one or more FOIA exemptions.

SECOND AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE

Plaintiff is neither eligible for nor entitled to attorneys' fees or costs.

THIRD AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSE

The Court lacks jurisdiction to award relief that exceeds that authorized under FOIA.

Lisa J. Stevenson (D.C. Bar No. 457628)
Acting General Counsel
l Stevenson@fec.gov

James D. McGinley (D.C. Bar No. 1017536)
Associate General Counsel
jmcginley@fec.gov

Shaina Ward (D.C. Bar No. 1002801)
Acting Assistant General Counsel
sward@fec.gov

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Sophia Golvach
Sophia Golvach (D.C. Bar No.
1656365)
Attorney
sgolvach@fec.gov

Greg J. Mueller (D.C. Bar No. 462840)
Attorney
gmueller@fec.gov

COUNSEL FOR DEFENDANT
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
1050 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20463
(202) 694-1650

February 27, 2026