

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS FUND,

Plaintiff,

V.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
JUSTICE,

Defendant.

Civil Action No. 26-1072 (LLA)

JOINT STATUS REPORT

Pursuant to the Court’s Minute Order entered on June 12, 2026, Plaintiff, Democracy Defenders Fund (“DDF”), and Defendant, the United States Department of Justice (“the Department”), by and through undersigned counsel, hereby provide the Court with the following Joint Status Report.

1. On March 30, 2026, Plaintiff filed its Complaint pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, seeking records pursuant to its February 3, 2026 FOIA request. ECF No. 1. The Department filed its Answer on June 8, 2026. ECF No. 9.
2. On June 12, 2026, the Court issued a Minute Order ordering the parties to meet and confer, and to file a joint status report addressing: “(1) the status of Plaintiff’s FOIA request; (2) the anticipated number of documents responsive to Plaintiff’s FOIA request; (3) the anticipated date(s) for release of the documents requested by Plaintiff; (4) whether a motion for a stay is likely under *Open America v. Watergate Special Prosecution Force*, 547 F.2d 605 (D.C. Cir. 1976); (5) whether a *Vaughn* index will be required in this case; (6) whether

and when either party anticipates filing a dispositive motion; and (7) any other pertinent issues.” ECF No. 11.

3. The parties report as follows:

- a. **CRM:** The Department’s Criminal Division (“CRM”) is awaiting the results of its initial search for records potentially responsive to Plaintiff’s FOIA request and anticipates its search will be completed on or about August 7, 2026. Upon completion of its initial search, OIP will conduct its initial responsiveness review and de-duplication process, and may confer with Plaintiff, where applicable, regarding potential scoping and/or narrowing agreements.
- b. **EOUSA:** The Executive Office of United States Attorneys (“EOUSA”) has completed the search from the District Office for the plaintiff’s FOIA Request. EOUSA is currently conducting its review of the search results for potentially responsive records.
- c. **JMD:** the Department’s Justice Management Division (JMD) conducted searches within JMD and located records that are potentially responsive to Plaintiff’s request. JMD conducted an initial responsiveness review and identified records that may be responsive and contain information of interest to other agencies and Department components. Those components are currently reviewing, and JMD can respond only after consulting with these agencies regarding their information. See 28 C.F.R. § 16.4(d)(1). Once their review is complete, JMD will provide our response.
- d. **OIP:** The Department’s Office of Information Policy (“OIP”) is awaiting the results of its initial search for records potentially responsive to Plaintiff’s FOIA request

and anticipates its search will be completed on or about August 14, 2026. Upon completion of its initial search, OIP will conduct its initial responsiveness review and de-duplication process, and may confer with Plaintiff, where applicable, regarding potential scoping and/or narrowing agreements.

4. Given that the search for and/or processing of responsive records remains ongoing, and that the Department intends to further communicate with Plaintiff regarding potential scoping and/or narrowing agreements, it is not yet possible to determine the volume of potentially responsive records, nor can the Department yet determine whether an *Open America* stay is likely.
5. Furthermore, given the current status of Plaintiff's FOIA request and that Defendant's searches for records responsive to Plaintiff's requests are not yet completed, it is impractical to determine an anticipated date for release of responsive records, to determine whether summary judgment briefing or a *Vaughn* Index will be necessary, and for the parties to propose a schedule for dispositive motions at this time. Once all Department components have issued their final responses, the parties intend to cooperatively work together to narrow or resolve any substantive issues of disagreement, and if necessary, propose a briefing schedule.
6. Accordingly, the parties respectfully request that the Court allow the parties to file a further Joint Status Report on or before Friday, September 4, 2026, updating the Court of the parties' discussions and, if necessary, proposing a briefing schedule.

Dated: July 6, 2026 Kevin H. Bell, DC Bar # 90015600 kevin@freeinformationgroup.com	Respectfully submitted, JEANINE FERRIS PIRRO United States Attorney
Ginger McCall, DC Bar # 1001104	

