

White House Voluntary Disclosure Policy Visitor Access Records

September 4, 2009

The President has decided to increase governmental transparency by implementing a voluntary disclosure policy governing White House visitor access records. The White House will release, on a monthly basis, all previously unreleased WAVES and ACR access records that are 90 to 120 days old. For example, records created in January 2010 will be released at the end of April 2010. The short time lag will allow the White House to continue to conduct business, while still providing the American people with an unprecedented amount of information about their government. No previous White House has ever adopted such a policy.

The voluntary disclosure policy will apply to records created after September 15, 2009, and the first release of records (covering the month of September) will occur at the end of the year, on or about December 31, 2009. We expect that each monthly release will include tens of thousands of electronic records. Since the White House considers these records to be subject to the Presidential Records Act, it will continue to preserve them accordingly.

The White House voluntary disclosure policy will be subject to the following exceptions:

1. The White House will not release fields within the access records that implicate personal privacy or law enforcement concerns (*e.g.*, dates of birth, social security numbers, and contact phone numbers); records that implicate the personal safety of EOP staff (their daily arrival and departure); or records whose release would threaten national security interests.
2. The White House will not release access records related to purely personal guests of the first and second families (*i.e.*, visits that do not involve any official or political business).
3. The White House will not release access records related to a small group of particularly sensitive meetings (*e.g.*, visits of potential Supreme Court nominees). The White House will disclose each month the number of records withheld on this basis, and it will release such records once they are no longer sensitive.
4. Visitor information for the Vice President and his staff at the White House Complex will be disclosed pursuant to the policy outlined above. It is not possible, however, to release visitor information for the Vice President's Residence in an identical format to the White House Complex at this time because the Residence is not equipped with the WAVES and ACR systems that are in place at the White House Complex. The Office of the Vice President will, instead, release the guest lists for official events at the Residence and will also review the Vice President's and Dr. Biden's daily schedules and release the names and dates of visitors to the Residence who appear on those schedules. The Vice President's staff is working with the Secret Service to upgrade the visitor records system at the Residence. When the electronic update is complete, visitor information for the White House Complex and the Residence will be released in a common format.

WAVES and ACR records created between January 20 and September 15, 2009 will not be subject to the voluntary disclosure policy. Instead, the White House will respond voluntarily to individual requests submitted to the Counsel's Office that seek records during that time period, but only if the requests are reasonable, narrow, and specific (*e.g.*, requests that list specific possible visitors). Responses to reasonable requests will be subject to the four exceptions described above.