



OFFICE *of* GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

May 11, 2016—Sent via U.S. mail

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: Case No.: 201600671
NG: HK: CM

NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
and RECORDS
ADMINISTRATION

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OGIS
COLLEGE PARK, MD
20740-6001

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e-mail: ogis@nara.gov
phone: 202-741-5770
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Dear [REDACTED]:

This responds to your request for assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), which we received on March 21, 2016 via U.S. mail. Your request for assistance pertains to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

Congress created OGIS to complement existing FOIA practice and procedure; we strive to work in conjunction with the existing request and appeal process. The goal is for OGIS to allow, whenever practical, the requester to exhaust his or her remedies within the agency, including the appeal process. OGIS has no investigatory or enforcement power, nor can we compel an agency to release documents. OGIS serves as the Federal FOIA Ombudsman and our jurisdiction is limited to assisting with the FOIA process.

I understand that you made a request for the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. USPS responded to your request, withholding [REDACTED] pursuant to FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6). You appealed that response, and USPS upheld the agency's initial action on your request. In your submission to OGIS, you describe your frustration and the importance of the information you seek.

In response to your submission, we contacted USPS to inquire about the agency's action on your request and appeal. USPS affirmed its position that the information you seek must be withheld. In cases such as this where an agency is firm in its position, there is little for OGIS to do beyond providing more information about the agency's actions.

It may be helpful to know that not all records are releasable under the FOIA. Congress established categories of information that agencies are not required to release in response to FOIA requests because their release would harm governmental or private interests. These categories are called "exemptions." As USPS explains in its [REDACTED] response to your appeal, FOIA Exemption 6 protects information from release that would be a "clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." Courts have found that individuals have privacy interests in their name, address, date of birth, place of birth, employment history, and other personal information, and that the privacy interest in protecting the information outweighs the public interest in the release of the information.



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While some information about individual Federal employees is considered public, courts have agreed that some Federal employees, specifically those who may have a greater interest in protecting their privacy due to the nature of their employment, do not “waive all privacy interests.” Further, courts agree that lower-level Federal employees have a more significant privacy interest than those in leadership positions.

Although I understand that this is not the outcome for which you hoped, I hope you find this information useful in understanding why USPS withheld the material it did in response to your request. At this time, there is no further assistance OGIS can offer. Thank you for bringing this matter to OGIS. We will close your case.

Sincerely,

/s/

JAMES V.M.L. HOLZER
Director

cc: USPS FOIA

We appreciate your feedback. Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OGIS> to take a brief anonymous survey on the service you received from OGIS.