

Russ Carnahan

3RD DISTRICT, MISSOURI

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, DC

September 7, 2010

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Ed Martin
c/o Ed Martin Campaign Headquarters
6037 Hampton Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63109
VIA: E-MAIL

Dear Mr. Martin:

I'm writing in response to the request you faxed to our office on Friday, September 3. Allow me to respond to your inquiries one at a time.

First, office budget information for all Members of Congress is publicly available -- and has been since 1964. You can visit <http://disbursements.house.gov> for records dating to July, 2009. Copies of reports prior to July 2009 are available, free of charge, at all Federal Depository Libraries; a full list of Missouri libraries that fit this description can be found at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/library/reference/feddocs/fedwblist.asp>. My cursory examination reveals there are nine such libraries here in the St. Louis area.

Second, while we are always committed to being responsive, we are also fully committed to protecting constituents' confidential and personal information in the process. I'm sure you can understand why your request for the email address of every constituent who has contacted our office, any personal financial documents they have shared with us, their expression of opinions which they may not want to share with the public, and confidential correspondence and/or meetings related to personal difficulties presents numerous questions. Indeed, according to House Ethics rules, all communications with constituents are considered confidential, which is why Congress is not subject to FOIA.

Despite these fundamental flaws with your inquiry, we are referring your request to the General Counsel of the House of Representatives for guidance. We will be sure to contact you as soon as we receive recommendations for how to proceed.

I hope this information is helpful. Given that several years have passed since your own unfortunate experience with FOIA and sunshine requests as former Governor Matt Blunt's Chief of Staff, your confusion about this process is understandable. Nevertheless, I applaud your new-found appreciation for transparency in government.

Sincerely,


Caroline Battles

Chief of Staff
Congressman Russ Carnahan