



NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES

June 14, 2018

Stefan Passantino  
Deputy Counsel to the President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20501  
By Email

Dear Mr. Passantino:

A June 11, 2018, article in Politico, entitled “Meet the guys who tape Trump’s papers back together,” states that two former White House employees were responsible for taping together textual documents that were torn up by President Trump. To the extent that this Politico article and related news stories is accurate in the assertion that documents were torn up and that these items are Presidential records as defined in the Presidential Records Act (PRA), I am writing to request information on how the White House is addressing this issue.

The Politico article states that “White House aides realized early on that they were unable to stop [President] Trump from ripping up paper after he was done with it and throwing it in the trash or on the floor, according to people familiar with the practice. Instead, they chose to clean it up for him, in order to make sure that the president wasn’t violating the law.” The article goes on to state that, “[d]espite the president’s apparent disregard of the Presidential Records Act, sources said, aides around him have tried to take an overly inclusive approach to what would be considered a presidential record.”

In accordance with the requirements of the PRA and our mutual interest in ensuring that all Presidential records are properly managed, preserved, and available for transfer to the National Archives at the end of the Administration, please let us know the extent of the problem and how it is being addressed. For example: How many records have been torn up? Have any records been destroyed or were in a state that they cannot be recovered? What steps are taken to recover any records that have been torn up? Is training about the requirements of the PRA and as it applies to this issue provided to White House personnel who may encounter the problem, including in the Oval Office and the residence? Is there a protocol to copy or scan all records, including correspondence, before they are presented to the President? NARA would also be happy to provide guidance on best practices for restoring damaged records.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and*  
RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

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[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

GARY M. STERN  
GENERAL COUNSEL

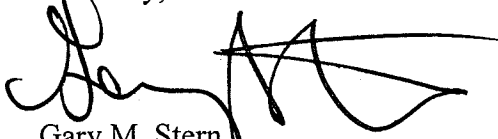
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[garym.stern@nara.gov](mailto:garym.stern@nara.gov)

Thank you in advance for addressing our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary M. Stern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gary M. Stern  
General Counsel