

To: Fine, Steven[fine.steven@epa.gov]
From: Reeder, John
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 1:45:08 PM
Subject: FW: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

Forgot you on this note. Can I call you now?

From: Reeder, John
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2017 8:44 AM
To: Schnare, David <schnare.david@epa.gov>; Actadmmccabe, Catherine17 <actadmmccabe.catherine17@epa.gov>; Flynn, Mike <Flynn.Mike@epa.gov>; Benton, Donald <benton.donald@epa.gov>
Cc: Minoli, Kevin <Minoli.Kevin@epa.gov>; Hull, George <Hull.George@epa.gov>; Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

Good morning,

David, after receiving your note yesterday I explored options for responding. It's particularly
(b) (5) DPP



I know that Don has asked Steve a question about this too, so we may want to get the right folks in a room to talk over potential next steps.

The people that I've involved informally so far include Kevin Minoli, George & Nancy, and Steve Fine. Catherine and Mike are aware of the issue, but haven't been provided any updates/details as yet.

Let me know if you'd like to find some time this morning to gather a group.

EPA-119

John R

564 6082

From: Schnare, David
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 8:20 AM
To: Actadmmccabe, Catherine17 <Actadmmccabe.catherine17@epa.gov>; Flynn, Mike <Flynn.Mike@epa.gov>; Benton, Donald <benton.donald@epa.gov>; Reeder, John <Reeder.John@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

Career SES needs to address this with gravity and speed. It needs to be done at the Division Director level.

dschnare

From: POLITICO Pro <politicoemail@politicopro.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 1, 2017 8:12 PM
Subject: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

By Andrew Restuccia, Marianne LeVine and Nahal Toosi

02/01/2017 08:05 PM EDT

Federal employees worried that President Donald Trump will gut their agencies are creating new email addresses, signing up for encrypted messaging apps and looking for other, protected ways to push back against the new administration's agenda.

Whether inside the EPA, within the Foreign Service, on the edges of the Labor Department or beyond, employees are using new technology as well as more old-fashioned approaches — such as private face-to-face meetings — to organize letters, talk strategy, or contact

media outlets and other groups to express their dissent.

The goal is to get their message across while not violating any rules covering workplace communications, which can be monitored by the government and could potentially get them fired.

At the EPA, a small group of career employees — numbering less than a dozen so far — are using an encrypted messaging app to discuss what to do if Trump’s political appointees undermine their agency’s mission to protect public health and the environment, flout the law, or delete valuable scientific data that the agency has been collecting for years, sources told POLITICO.

Fearing for their jobs, the employees began communicating incognito using the app Signal shortly after Trump’s inauguration. Signal, like WhatsApp and other mobile phone software, encrypts all communications, making it more difficult for hackers to gain access to them.

One EPA employee even got a new, more secure cell phone, and another joked about getting a “burner phone.”

“I have no idea where this is going to go. I think we’re all just taking it one day at a time and respond in a way that seems appropriate and right,” said one of the EPA employees involved in the clandestine effort, who like others quoted in the story was granted anonymity to talk about the sensitive discussions.

The employee added that the goal is to “create a network across the agency” of people who will raise red flags if Trump’s appointees do anything unlawful.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

While many workers across the federal government are still in wait-and-see mode, the first two weeks of the Trump administration — with its flurry of executive orders that have in some cases upended lives — have sent a sobering message to others who believe they must act now.

In recent days, career employees at the State Department gathered nearly 1,000 signatures for what’s known as a “Dissent Channel” memo in which they express their anger over a Trump executive order that bars immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries and halts refugee admissions to the country. The number of signatures was extraordinarily high, even though the letter was submitted after White House spokesman Sean Spicer essentially warned the dissenting diplomats they were risking their jobs.

The executive order on immigration and refugees caused widespread panic at airports, spurring protests and outrage around the world.

It also led to what has been the most high-profile act of defiance yet from a Trump

administration official: Acting Attorney General Sally Yates on Monday ordered the Department of Justice's lawyers not to defend the order in court. Yates was fired that same night.

Current and former employees of the Labor Department, meanwhile, are using their private email accounts to send around a link to a letter asking senators to oppose the nomination of Andrew Puzder for the secretary of their agency. The employees may sign on to the letter using Google Docs. The letter will not be submitted to the Senate HELP Committee, and the signatures will not be made public, unless 200 current employees sign on.

A federal worker familiar with the letter's circulation said that it's being signed by hundreds of current and former DOL employees.

According to a draft of the letter obtained by POLITICO, the employees write that they have "serious concerns" about the fast-food magnate's willingness to protect the rights of workers given some of his past comments and actions.

The draft of the letter criticizes Puzder's comments about women, and cites some of his restaurants' advertisements which feature scantily clad women eating burgers in bikinis. Puzder has defended the ads.

"One of us once heard a colleague ask, quite seriously, whether it would violate workplace rules of civility and prohibitions against sexual harassment to view Mr. Puzder's ads on a government computer," the letter says. "We think the question is a good one."

The federal employees interviewed for this story stressed that they see themselves as non-partisan stewards of the government. But several also said they believe they have a duty to speak out if they feel a policy is undermining their mission.

Drafts of the Dissent Channel memo signed by the State Department employees insist, for instance, that instead of protecting U.S. national security through his new executive order on refugees and immigrants, Trump is endangering the United States by bolstering the terrorists' narrative that the West hates Muslims.

"I think we all have to look within ourselves and say 'Where is that line that I will not cross?'" one Foreign Service officer said.

Since Trump was elected in November, many State Department employees have also met quietly for other reasons. Groups of Muslims who work at Foggy Bottom, for instance, have quietly held meetings to discuss fears that they could be subject to witch hunts and see their careers stall under the new administration. A few of Trump's top aides have spoken out against radical Islamism in such harsh terms that some Muslims believe the aides are opposed to the religion of Islam as a whole.

Steven Aftergood, who directs the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists, indicated that it's too soon to say if there's a broad trend of

bureaucratic resistance to Trump taking hold.

"Quite a few federal employees seem to be looking for constructive ways to express discontent," he said. "Meanwhile, tension is still growing, not subsiding."

EPA employees are uniquely concerned about their future, having faced barbs from Trump advisers who have toyed with cutting the agency's staff by two-thirds and from other Republicans who want to eliminate the agency altogether. So career staffers are discussing the best way to alert the public to what's happening behind the scenes.

"I'm suddenly spending my days comparing the importance of the oath I took when I started my career service and the code that I have as an American," an EPA employee said.

EPA employees have started reaching out to former Obama administration political appointees, who they hope will help them spread the word about any possible improper conduct at the agency.

"It's probably much safer to have those folk act as the conduit and to act as the gathering point rather than somebody in the agency," the employee said. "You're putting your career and your livelihood and your paycheck at risk every time you talk to somebody."

Organizations like the Government Accountability Project have been busy as federal employees fret about what their new bosses may ask them to do.

"We've had a significant number of federal employees who have contacted us in recent weeks," said Louis Clark, the nonprofit's CEO. "It has to be the largest influx of people trying to reach us that we've seen."

The largest group of callers? "The people who want to know what to do if they're asked to violate the law," Clark said.

Jeff Ruch, the executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, said EPA employees are in perhaps the "deepest pit of despair" among his group's membership.

He said his group has been fielding calls on everything from what triggers a reduction in the federal workforce to how long they can carry health insurance benefits if they are pushed out.

To: Benton, Donald[benton.donald@epa.gov]
Cc: Catherine17 Actadmmccabe
(actadmmccabe.catherine17@epa.gov)[actadmmccabe.catherine17@epa.gov]; Mike Flynn
(Flynn.Mike@epa.gov)[Flynn.Mike@epa.gov]
From: Fine, Steven
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 6:01:30 PM
Subject: RE: Improper apps

Don,

Thank you for flagging that and for sharing that information. If people are using their EPA devices in that way, I agree that's concerning.

Regarding your questions, we cannot detect app downloads. We do have the technical capability to scan iPhones/iPads and determine what apps are installed, but we not previously used that capability.

As I believe you're aware, I'll be sending a communication today to people who have EPA iPhones/iPads reminding them about the restrictions on what apps they can install.

Steve

From: Benton, Donald
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2017 7:24 AM
To: Fine, Steven <fine.steven@epa.gov>
Subject: Improper apps

Steve, The media reports are disturbing if true. Is there a way to detect the downloading of apps forbidden by EPA policy? Can our systems be scanned for such apps?

See clip from Bulletin below:

Conservative Group Seeks Information From EPA On Reported Use Of Messaging App. The Washington Times (2/2, Swoyer) reports that Cause of Action, “a conservative watchdog group,” has filed a FOIA request with the EPA “demanding the agency explain whether its employees are using encrypted messaging apps to communicate about President Trump’s environmental agenda outside of regular government channels.” The request follows a Politico report that some EPA employees are using an app called Signal, “which encrypts messages to make it more difficult to hack,” to discuss business.

Please let me know,

Don

Senator Don Benton

Senior White House Advisor

Office of the Administrator

202.564.4711



To: Simon, Harvey[Simon.Harvey@epa.gov]
From: Fine, Steven
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 5:46:17 PM
Subject: RE: Improper apps

Good suggestion. Thank you.

From: Simon, Harvey
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2017 12:06 PM
To: Fine, Steven <fine.steven@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Improper apps

Steve,

I tracked down the article in Politico which talks about a number of agencies including EPA. As described and if true, the implication is that most of this encrypted activity is on federal employees personal devices rather than GFE. That would go against EPA policy, but not something we could track or trace.

(b) (5) DPP
[Redacted]

From: Fine, Steven
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2017 11:42 AM
To: Simon, Harvey <Simon.Harvey@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Improper apps

From: Benton, Donald
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2017 7:24 AM
To: Fine, Steven <fine.steven@epa.gov>

EPA-151

Subject: Improper apps

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Please let me know,

Don

Senator Don Benton

Senior White House Advisor

Office of the Administrator

202.564.4711



To: St. Fort, Fabiola[St-Fort.Fabiola@epa.gov]
Cc: Jacobs, Vincent[Jacobs.Vincent@epa.gov]; Mehalek, Stephen[Mehalek.Stephen@epa.gov]; Zurla, Gregory[Zurla.Gregory@epa.gov]
From: Key, Rena
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 9:52:00 PM
Subject: IG Request for a Report on Mobile Apps

Fabiola,

We just received a request from OIG to get a list of all mobile apps that individuals have downloaded on their GFE iPhone and iPads. (b) (5) DPP

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Please keep Greg informed since he's acting next week.

Thank you

Rena Key

Mobility, Email and Collaboration Team Leader

Endpoint & Collaboration Solutions Division

EPA/OEI/OITO/ECSD

US Environmental Protection Agency

EPA-162

To: Reeder, John[Reeder.John@epa.gov]
From: Fine, Steven
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 2:06:07 AM
Subject: RE: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

John,

I have the answers. I'm teleworking tomorrow but would be happy to join a call with you and others.

Steve

From: Reeder, John
Sent: Thursday, February 2, 2017 12:29 PM
To: Fine, Steven <fine.steven@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

Steve,

Here are some delicate questions. (b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

(b) (5) DPP

I'm sorry for all the questions, and when you're ready I'd like to talk over this situation with folks on 3rd floor, to answer questions and discuss whether there are any follow ups. Like to include you in the conversation.

Thank you.

JReeder

From: Fine, Steven
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 12:12 PM
To: Reeder, John <Reeder.John@epa.gov>
Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

John,

The complete list of approved apps is at:
https://usepa.sharepoint.com/sites/oei_Work/ITOWG/MDM/Lists/EPA%20MobileAppStatus/Current%20Status.aspx

I have been informed that the prohibition on installing unapproved apps has been in place since before we switched to iPhones.

Steve

From: Fine, Steven
Sent: Thursday, February 2, 2017 11:30 AM
To: Reeder, John <Reeder.John@epa.gov>
Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

John,

I have attached our current policy, which states: "You are prohibited from downloading any Apps that are not included in the EPA App Catalog on your mobile device. Apps listed in the App Catalog have been approved for Agency authorized use."

You can look at the App Catalog on your phone. I don't see any of the apps that were mentioned.

I'm checking on how long the policy has been in place.

Steve

From: Reeder, John
Sent: Thursday, February 2, 2017 10:33 AM
To: Fine, Steven <fine.steven@epa.gov>
Cc: Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: Federal workers turn to encryption to thwart Trump

Steve, can we talk about this ASAP.

I'm at 564 6082

From: Schnare, David
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2017 8:20 AM
To: Actadmmccabe, Catherine17 <Actadmmccabe.catherine17@epa.gov>; Flynn, Mike <Flynn.Mike@epa.gov>; Benton, Donald <benton.donald@epa.gov>; Reeder, John <Reeder.John@epa.gov>
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"I have no idea where this is going to go. I think we're all just taking it one day at a time and respond in a way that seems appropriate and right," said one of the EPA employees involved in the clandestine effort, who like others quoted in the story was granted anonymity to talk about the sensitive discussions.

The employee added that the goal is to "create a network across the agency" of people who will raise red flags if Trump's appointees do anything unlawful.

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A federal worker familiar with the letter's circulation said that it's being signed by hundreds of current and former DOL employees.

According to a [draft of the letter](#) obtained by POLITICO, the employees write that they have "serious concerns" about the fast-food magnate's willingness to protect the rights of workers given some of his past comments and actions.

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speak out if they feel a policy is undermining their mission.

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"I think we all have to look within ourselves and say 'Where is that line that I will not cross?'" one Foreign Service officer said.

Since Trump was elected in November, many State Department employees have also met quietly for other reasons. Groups of Muslims who work at Foggy Bottom, for instance, have quietly held meetings to discuss fears that they could be subject to witch hunts and see their careers stall under the new administration. A few of Trump's top aides have spoken out against radical Islamism in such harsh terms that some Muslims believe the aides are opposed to the religion of Islam as a whole.

Steven Aftergood, who directs the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists, indicated that it's too soon to say if there's a broad trend of bureaucratic resistance to Trump taking hold.

"Quite a few federal employees seem to be looking for constructive ways to express discontent," he said. "Meanwhile, tension is still growing, not subsiding."

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Organizations like the Government Accountability Project have been busy as federal employees fret about what their new bosses may ask them to do.

"We've had a significant number of federal employees who have contacted us in recent weeks," said Louis Clark, the nonprofit's CEO. "It has to be the largest influx of people trying to reach us that we've seen."

The largest group of callers? “The people who want to know what to do if they’re asked to violate the law,” Clark said.

Jeff Ruch, the executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, said EPA employees are in perhaps the “deepest pit of despair” among his group’s membership.

He said his group has been fielding calls on everything from what triggers a reduction in the federal workforce to how long they can carry health insurance benefits if they are pushed out.

To: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
From: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 9:52:49 PM
Subject: Re: Lawsuit demands EPA say if employees using encrypted messages to evade open-records laws

10-4

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Special Agent
EPA - Office of Inspector General
Washington, DC
Cell: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Office (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

On Feb 3, 2017, at 4:50 PM, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) wrote:

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) as we discussed, please spin up a complaint initiation document for the below allegation. Pcr (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) send it to me and we will get it up the chain for Pat's review prior to opening the complaint in IGEMS.

BREAK

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C) just a heads up but no action yet, we will be initiating a hotline complaint in the near future, but hold off until you hear from me please. Management wants to see what the IT folks net before we move forward with the actual hotline initiation.

Thanks guys. More to follow...

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

From: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2017 2:09 PM
To: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) <(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)>; (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) <(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)>

OIG-003

Subject: Fwd: Lawsuit demands EPA say if employees using encrypted messages to evade open-records laws

Hi. 2:30 meeting. Please attend

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Elkins, Arthur" <Elkins.Arthur@epa.gov>

Date: February 3, 2017 at 1:39:49 PM EST

To: "Sullivan, Patrick F." <Sullivan.Patrick@epa.gov>

Cc: "Sheehan, Charles" <Sheehan.Charles@epa.gov>, "Larsen, Alan" <Larsen.Alan@epa.gov>, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Subject: RE: Lawsuit demands EPA say if employees using encrypted messages to evade open-records laws

Okay, thank you.

Art

From: Sullivan, Patrick F.

Sent: Friday, February 03, 2017 1:28 PM

To: Elkins, Arthur <Elkins.Arthur@epa.gov>

Cc: Sheehan, Charles <Sheehan.Charles@epa.gov>; Larsen, Alan <Larsen.Alan@epa.gov>; (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Subject: Lawsuit demands EPA say if employees using encrypted messages to evade open-records laws

Art,

OIG-004

Per our conversation, see link to this news story.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/feb/2/cause-action-demands-epa-say-if-employees-using-cn/>

If the allegations reported in the story are correct, it appears that some EPA employees are engaged in potential serious misconduct in two areas:

1) Using unauthorized encryption apps on their EPA devices in violation of law and EPA policy; and

2) (b)(5) - deliberative process
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has informed me that Chuck will be in later this afternoon and he has scheduled a meeting at 4:30pm. I will bring with me appropriate OI personnel to discuss this issue.

Patrick F. Sullivan

Assistant Inspector General for Investigations

EPA Office of Inspector General

Desk: (202) 566-0308

Cell: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

FAX: (202) 566-0814

To: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Cc: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
From: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 8:36:14 PM
Subject: Re: Lawsuit demands EPA say if employees using encrypted messages to evade open-records laws

We should ask OEI to scan the network for any devices that have the "Signal" app on them and if found image them and analyze.

Probably won't be able to see actual messages if encrypted but we could subpoena records and interview subjects if found.

On Feb 3, 2017, at 2:31 PM, (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) wrote:

Reference our conversation.

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

From: Elkins, Arthur
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2017 1:44 PM
To: Sullivan, Patrick F. <Sullivan.Patrick@epa.gov>
Cc: Sheehan, Charles <Sheehan.Charles@epa.gov>, Larsen, Alan <Larsen.Alan@epa.gov>; (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Subject: RE: Lawsuit demands EPA say if employees using encrypted messages to evade open-records laws

Kevin and (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Additional background re subject for today's meeting.

Art

To: Sullivan, Patrick F.[Sullivan.Patrick@epa.gov]
Cc: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
From: (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)
Sent: Fri 2/3/2017 10:06:39 PM
Subject: Status - OEI action on Signal

Gentlemen,

I just heard back from SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) regarding his tasker for setting in motion the data retrieval for the "Signal App" installation and use. He has advised me that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) is that Acting Director for the program that runs the MDM software management system, and has contacted the appropriate Tech people to begin the process of identifying which EPA phones have the Signal App installed.

SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) informed me that the Tech folks told him that they have never conducted a data inquiry such as this and that they will have to do some research on how to do this. Once they identify the how this data retrieval can be done, they are going to do it immediately. SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) told me that he conveyed to them that this was a time sensitive issue, as well as one that shouldn't be talked about with others outside of those with the need for direct knowledge to accomplish the task.

Finally, SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) told me that (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) told him that his staff has already gone home for the weekend, but assured SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) that they were aware of what needed to be done and that this is first thing on their list for Monday morning. SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) told me that he is to receive a status update phone call on Monday from the Tech folks to give us a more realistic time projection once they actually get in and begin the work, and then SA (b) (6), (b) (7)(C) will be emailing/calling me to convey the update. I will then immediately inform management of the status. If I learn that anything of significance regarding this matter takes place over the weekend, I will advise.

V/r,

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Special Agent

OIG-082

EPA-OIG/OPR

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Washington DC

Desk (b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

Cell -

(b) (6), (b) (7)(C)

(<http://www.twitter.com/dailycaller>)

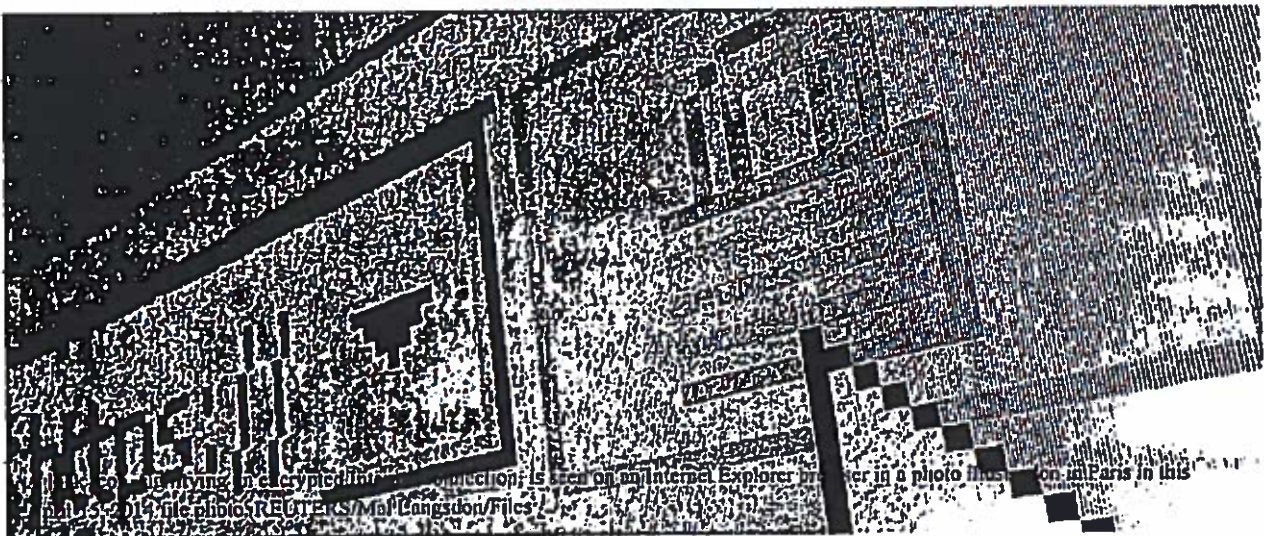
(<http://www.facebook.com/DailyCaller>)

(<https://plus.google.com/104273926598894453484/posts>)

(<https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-daily-caller>)

THE DAILY CALLER NEWS FOUNDATION

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OIG-090

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EPA Employees Are Using Encryption Technology To Hide Resistance To Trump — But Is It Legal?



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Federal employees are turning to encryption technologies to coordinate their resistance to the Trump administration, looking for ways to protect their conversations from hackers or agency overlords.

A small group of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) employees are already "communicating incognito using the app Signal shortly after Trump's inauguration," Politico reports (<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/02/federal-workers-signal-app-234510>). Such apps encrypt communications and make them difficult to monitor or hack.

But is this legal? Probably not, according to one expert.

"It appears that some employees at the EPA may be using encrypted apps on their phones to avoid transparency laws in an effort to conceal their communications from internal and external oversight," Henry Kerner, an attorney and senior vice president of the public interest law firm Cause of Action, told The Daily Caller News foundation.

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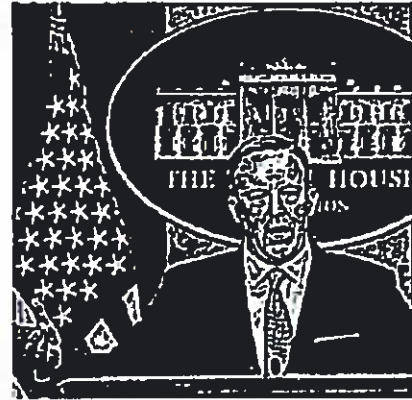
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Federal law requires agency employees to preserve work-related records on government servers, even if such communications occur over non-government emails, phones or text messages.

Encrypting messages allow employees to create potentially work-related messages as ones they can control. That creates the possibility employees could use encryption to circumvent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

"Under the Federal Records Act, the EPA has a legal obligation to preserve all records made by employees working on official government business," Kerner said. "This obligation is all the more important if EPA employees are using personal cellular devices or private accounts for such purposes."

Chaim Mandelbaum, an attorney and director of the Free Market Environmental Law Clinic, said it's less about the encryption technology itself, but instead about preserving records.

"Agency employees are obligated to preserve work-related communications sent or received regardless of the device used and to forward them to the agency for possible archiving," Mandelbaum told TheDCNF.

"If agency employees are failing to do so then they are in clear breach of agency policy," he said. "Their use of encrypted devices itself is irrelevant. It is the end product, the communication itself, not the means of delivery that matters. They must send a copy of the communications to the agency's system."

Politico reported "a small group of career [EPA] employees — numbering less than a dozen so far — are using an encrypted messaging app to discuss what to do if Trump's political appointees undermine their agency's mission to protect public health and the environment, flout the law, or delete valuable scientific data that the agency has been collecting for years."

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One EPA employee told Politico they bought a "more secure cell phone." The overall goal of their effort is to "create a network across the agency" of those willing to call out Trump appointees they see as acting unlawfully.

"I have no idea where this is going to go. I think we're all just taking it one day at a time and respond in a way that seems appropriate and right," one of the EPA employees using encryption told Politico on the condition of anonymity.

EPA has long had problems with employees not preserving records and using private emails to conduct agency business. The agency's inspector general, for example, found EPA employees only archived 86 text messages (<http://dailycaller.com/2016/12/21/epa-employees-are-not-intentionally-breaking-the-law-by-deleting-official-texts/>) out of 3.1 million sent and received in 2015.

Former EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson used an alias email address under the name "Richard Windsor" to conduct agency business, and top agency officials have been caught using private emails (<http://dailycaller.com/2016/09/20/top-epa-official-admitted-his-yahoo-email-was-a-channel-for-offline-chats-with-environmentalists/>) to coordinate with environmental activists.

EPA employees aren't alone in their efforts to resist Trump. Department of Labor employees are using private email accounts to circulate a letter asking lawmakers to oppose Carl's Jr. CEO Andrew Puzder, Trump's pick for labor secretary.

Trump fired acting Attorney General Sally Yates Monday after she ordered Department of Justice lawyers to not defend an executive order on immigration in court.

That same order, temporarily halting the U.S. refugee program, has been opposed by career Department of State employees who "gathered nearly 1,000 signatures for what's known as a "Dissent Channel" memo in which they express," Politico reports.

News outlets frantically reported (<http://dailycaller.com/2017/01/25/veteran-federal-workers-fire-back-at-overblown-media-reports-of-a-trump-gag-order/>) Trump's team ordered the EPA employees to temporarily freeze grant spending and stop sending out social media posts or talking with reporters.

But veteran agency employees who spoke to the New York Times said the Trump administration acted no differently than the Obama administration did when taking over the reins of government in 2009.

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