

Our Ref: FoI/Req/2017/244

10 January 2018

Hugh O'Connell
Sunday Business Post,
Hambleden House,
19/26 Pembroke Street Lower,
Dublin 2.
D02 WV96

Dear Mr. O'Connell,

I refer to your request of 22 November which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

- **All correspondence related to the role of Irish government envoy to the US Congress including emails, memos and briefings from the period. This request covers the period 14 June 2017 to 13 November 2017.**
- **A detailed breakdown of all costs arising from the role including travel, hotels, expenses and any other costs. This request covers the period 14 June 2017 to 13 November 2017.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 4 December.

I have identified eighteen records which fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to grant access to sixteen records in full and refuse access to the two remaining records under section 33(1)(d) Security, Defence and International Relations.

This Department manages relations between Ireland and 178 countries, operating in a complex and diverse international environment, in a variety of locations and under varying local laws and customs. In order to effectively carry out its role, the Department must maintain trust and confidence between governments and other interlocutors. If the Department does not maintain the mutuality of trust, its ability to protect and promote Ireland's interests could reasonably be expected to be adversely affected. I feel release of the information would have a significant adverse impact on the effective conduct of the functions of this Department. I have considered the right of the public to have access to information and the need for an open and accountable civil and foreign service. I am satisfied that the balance favours refusal rather than release.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfat.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely

Jack McCormack,
Assistant Director, U.S & Canada
Americas Unit
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade