

September 25, 2000

Cobb County Police Department
ATTENTION: Lieutenant T.R. Alexander
Records Custodian
140 N. Marietta Parkway, N.E.
Marietta, Georgia 30060-1454

I am writing on behalf of the Georgia First Amendment Foundation. We are an organization that seeks to advance the cause of open government and monitors freedom of information issues throughout this state.

It was brought to our attention that you have denied access to “motor vehicle accident reports” to a requestor on the grounds that it was not a “news media organization.” The Open Records Act does not define the size or scope of a “news media organization” for which information gathering is accepted as “good cause” for requesting bulk production of Uniform Motor Vehicle Accident Reports under Ga Code § 50-18-72 (a)(4.1)(I). Certainly, there is no “size” test or requirement that only “mass media” qualify under the language of the Act. It seems clear that even an individual stringer acting as a representative might qualify as someone engaged in “gathering information as a representative of a news media organization.”

If an organization provides information gathering functions for multiple media clients or has provided information to a media organization in the past and this information is sought in good faith for use or distribution to news media - it ought not matter how large the organization is.

We would appreciate an explanation of what will be done to remedy these violations that go against the interests of the public. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Hollie Manheimer

Cc: GFAF Board of Directors