President Donald Trump's decision to declassify competing congressional memos about the validity of the so-called Steele dossier means the FBI has lost its authority to rebuff Freedom of Information Act requests about the bureau's efforts to verify the report's intelligence linking Trump to Russia during the 2016 campaign, a federal judge ruled on Thursday.

U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta previously blessed the FBI's decision to refuse such FOIA requests by declining to confirm whether any records exist about aspects of its handling of the hotly contested dossier, prepared by the former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele. The judge ruled in January that Trump's tweets about the dossier did not require the FBI and other intelligence agencies to be more responsive to public records requests on the issue.

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