

 CREW - citizens for responsibility and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

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CREW Exposes Millions of Lost White House Emails with the Release of *WITHOUT A TRACE*

CREW's report, *WITHOUT A TRACE*, released last month, exposed the incredible fact that five million White House e-mails were "lost" over a two year period. Confidential sources told CREW that the Executive Office of the President lost hundreds of days of emails generated between March 2003 and October 2005. The White House counsel's office was advised of the problem in 2005, but rejected a plan of action to recover these emails. To date, nothing has been done to rectify this massive loss of records. During a televised news briefing the day after CREW released its report, the White House was forced to confirm that over five million emails have been lost.

The Presidential Records Act requires the White House to maintain all records of official business, including email. The White House has offered ever changing excuses for its violations of the law: that officials did not want to violate the Hatch Act and that staff members were not clear on the law. These explanations are patently ridiculous. It is very convenient that embarrassing - and potentially incriminating - emails are missing. It's the Nixon White House all over again.

[Read the full *WITHOUT A TRACE* report](#)

Members of Congress Set the Bar Low on Stepping Down During Federal Investigations

In a span of two days in April, the FBI raided both Rep. John Doolittle's (R-CA) home and Rep. Rick Renzi's (R-AZ) family business. Although these members were already under federal investigation, they did not resign from their committee assignments until these raids occurred. Their resignations leave open the question as to why congressional leaders have allowed Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA), also currently under FBI investigation, to maintain his plum assignment as the ranking member on the House Appropriations Committee.

CREW first addressed the committee memberships of Reps. Doolittle and Lewis in November, with a public statement asking them to [recuse themselves from Department of Justice \(DOJ\) appropriations matters](#). Following the decision of Rep. Doolittle to step down from the Appropriations Committee and Rep. Renzi to give up his spots on the Select Committee on Intelligence, the Natural Resources Committee and Financial Services Committee pending the results of the FBI's investigations, [CREW renewed its call for Rep. Lewis to give up his perch](#).

Raids of a member's home or business cannot be the new standard for what compels a member to step down from a committee post. As the top Republican appropriator, Rep. Lewis is responsible for funding all federal agencies, including the DOJ, which is conducting a grand jury probe into his activities. No member should have oversight over an agency investigating him.

Reps. Doolittle, Renzi and Lewis were all named in CREW's 2006 report on the most corrupt members of Congress, *Beyond DeLay*.

More details can be found at <http://www.beyonddelay.org>

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Attorney General Gonzales Stays Silent on CREW's Request for Special Prosecutor in U.S. Attorney Scandal

Over a month ago, on March 13, 2007, CREW asked Attorney General Alberto Gonzales to appoint a Special Prosecutor to investigate potential criminal violations related to the dismissals of eight U.S. Attorneys. CREW also asked the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Inspector General and Office of Professional Responsibility to investigate the matter. While these two offices are now conducting a probe into the matter, Gonzales has so far refused to appoint a special prosecutor.

DOJ officials have testified before Congress -- under oath -- that the U.S. Attorneys were asked to resign for performance-related reasons, that the White House was minimally involved in the firings and that the Department did not attempt to evade the Senate confirmation process for new U.S. Attorneys. Documents provided by DOJ to Congress contradict this testimony and suggest that at least one high-ranking official, D. Kyle Sampson, knew that the statements made to Congress were untrue. If, as it appears, any DOJ officials knowingly provided or allowed other officials to provide inaccurate information to Congress, federal crimes may have been committed.

Gonzales continues to defend, deny, and forget his department's actions in regard to the firings, infamously uttering the phrase "I don't recall" or its variants dozens of times during his April 19th testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee. CREW won't stop digging until the truth is exposed.

[Read more](#)

CREW Documents Tell Story of Rejected Katrina Aid

On September 7, 2005, CREW sent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Department of State (DOS), asking for records and communications regarding the federal government's preparedness and response to Hurricane Katrina. When none of them responded in a timely manner, CREW sued, forcing the agencies to open their files on responses to Katrina.

This week, the FOIA responses received by CREW were the basis for a *Washington Post* expose revealing that the federal government had turned down millions of dollars in aid from foreign countries in the aftermath of Katrina. Incredibly, \$854 million in aid was offered from countries across the world, yet only \$40 million has been used so far for victims or reconstruction. In fact, offers to provide rescue equipment, cruise ships, medical teams and water were rejected, as victims went without basic necessities. Even assistance that was accepted, such as medical supplies from Italy, were unused, exposed to the elements and eventually discarded. CREW has posted over 25,000 State Department documents at www.citizensforethics.org.

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