

 CREW - citizens for responsibility and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

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CREW and VoteVets.org Expose Internal Veterans Affairs Email Directing Staff Not to Diagnose PTSD and Urge Inspector General Investigation

On May 15th, CREW and VoteVets.org exposed an internal Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) e-mail advising VA mental health staff in Texas to consider a diagnosis of adjustment disorder in place of a post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis as a cost-cutting measure.

Since that disclosure, the House and Senate VA Committee heads, as well as Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), have called for investigations. Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), chair of the Senate VA committee, will hold a hearing on June 4th.

VA Secretary James Peake has repudiated the email as not reflecting VA policy.

In addition, both CREW and VoteVets.org have received new information from VA employees and veterans attesting to the fact that this practice is widespread and systemic, contrary to Sec. Peake's claim.

On May 28th, CREW and VoteVets.org sent a letter to the VA Inspector General requesting an investigation into the process and manner by which the VA makes a diagnosis of PTSD in veterans. We look forward to their response.

[Read the VA e-mail on CREW's website](#)

[Read CREW's letter to the VA Inspector General](#)

[Read The Washington Post post story](#)

CREW Calls for Vito Fossella to Resign, Files Ethics Complaint; Ethics Committee Defers Investigation

On May 1st, Rep. Vito Fossella (R-NY) was stopped and arrested for drunk driving and soon thereafter, admitted that he had been having an affair with retired Lieutenant Colonel Laura Fay, and that the two have a three-year-old daughter together.



Soon thereafter, CREW called for Rep. Fossella's resignation and sent a complaint to the House Ethics Committee for possible violations of House Rules.

Since the Ethics Committee was already required to investigate Rep. Fossella's DWI charges, CREW argued that it should also take the opportunity to consider whether Fossella violated House Rules by using taxpayer funded travel to pursue his romantic relationship with Lt. Col. Fay.

Hours after CREW sent the complaint to the House Ethics Committee, Rep. Fossella announced he would not seek reelection. Two days later, the Ethics Committee announced it would establish an investigative subcommittee to investigate the DWI charge, but immediately recommended that the subcommittee defer action on its investigation until Fossella's criminal proceedings are concluded. CREW was "shocked, shocked, shocked."

On May 22nd, the House Ethics Committee also deferred its investigation into Rep. Rick Renzi (R-AZ). CREW was "shocked" once again.

[Read CREW's ethics complaint](#)

[Read the Roll Call story](#)

CREW Files Amicus Brief in Case to Compel Testimony from Josh Bolten and Harriet Miers about Firings of U.S. Attorneys

On May 29th CREW, along with the Rutherford Institute, Judicial Watch and the Brennan Center, filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the House Judiciary Committee's efforts to compel former White House Counsel Harriet Miers and former White House Chief of Staff Joshua Bolten to comply with congressional subpoenas.

The Judiciary Committee is investigating whether the White House and top Justice Department officials fired U.S. Attorneys because of their refusal to give in to partisan political considerations in their decisions on who to prosecute. The White House has taken the extreme and unprecedented position that Miers and Bolten are absolutely immune from congressional subpoenas, meaning that according to the White House they are free to ignore the subpoenas at the unilateral and unreviewable decision of the president. In the lawsuit, the White House has argued that the Court cannot and should not even hear the matter.

CREW joined with the other groups, representing a broad spectrum of interests, in arguing that the checks and balances that are so fundamental to our democracy require that the court hear and resolve the case. The President's actions have prevented Congress from carrying out its constitutional responsibility to investigate very serious allegations of executive wrong-doing and to consider a possible legislative fix. Dismissing the case will only reward the White House for its intransigence and create a perverse incentive to never comply with a congressional request for information, secure in the knowledge that the courts will not intervene to protect Congress' legitimate constitutional interests.

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