

 CREW - citizens for responsibility and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

May 2008/ Issue #13

CREW Launches FixtheFEC.org

In the midst of the presidential campaign season, the nation's campaign watchdog, the Federal Election



Commission (FEC), has been rendered ineffectual. On April 28th, CREW launched FixtheFEC.org, a new website designed to educate readers about the problem and encourage them to write to Sen. Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to ask him to allow a vote on nominees to Commission so that the FEC can get back to work policing federal elections.

The FEC is made up of six commissioners appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate and needs at least four commissioners to act. Right now, the FEC has only two commissioners; four seats are vacant. This means the FEC cannot offer guidance, issue advisory opinions, create regulations, or formally initiate investigations.

In addition to the letter to Sen. McConnell, FixtheFEC.org posts the 19 FEC complaints that have not been addressed this year. The complaint CREW recently filed against U.S. Term Limits (USTL) is one such example. That complaint was based on an advertisement paid for by USTL, an issue advocacy organization, that violated federal election law by advocating the election of Bob Schaffer for U.S. Senate in Colorado.

[Visit FixtheFEC.org](http://FixtheFEC.org)

[Read CREW's complaint against USTL](#)

[Read *The Washington Post* Blog post](#)

CREW Releases New Report Finding Government Electronic Record Keeping Practices Abysmal

On April 16th, CREW released a new report entitled *Record Chaos: The Deplorable State of Electronic Record Keeping in the Federal Government*, which explores how the federal government is severely mismanaging its electronic records.



Despite readily available off-the-shelf products that would allow federal agencies to manage their records electronically, agencies continue to cling to outdated, inefficient and ineffective paper record keeping systems. The federal government has fallen woefully behind its private sector counterparts and the National Archives and Records Administration has failed to affirmatively assist agencies in developing and implementing records management policies as the Federal Records Act requires.

The day the report was released, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform [proposed legislation](#) amending federal record keeping laws to require agencies and the president to address this government-wide problem.

Unfortunately, the bill is anemic and fails to make the substantial changes necessary to bring the federal government into the 21st century. See CREW's analysis of the legislation [here](#).

[Read the full report](#)

[Read *The Washington Post* story](#)

CREW Argues in Appeals Court for Release of White House Visitor Log

On April 21st, CREW argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit that White House visitor logs of conservative religious leaders are agency records and must be released to CREW under the Freedom of Information Act. The government was appealing a district court decision that White House visitor records are agency records and that the Secret Service must release all non-exempt records to CREW.

The three-judge appellate court was critical of the Bush administration's argument that the visitor logs are presidential records that must be kept secret. As one member of the court, Judge Tatel, noted, the White House is a public building where anyone can stand outside and see who enters and leaves. Judge Tatel characterized the administration as trying to "draw a curtain around the White House."

Over 20 news organizations have filed amicus briefs in support of CREW's argument that the visitor logs should be made public.

CREW expects a decision from the appeals court within the next few months.

[Read more](#)

[Read the *San Antonio Express-News* editorial](#)

Organizations Across the Political Spectrum Join CREW in Asking Congressional Leaders to Post Committee Votes Online

On April 15th, nineteen organizations from across the political spectrum joined CREW in asking leaders of both the Houses of Representatives and the Senate to post all committee roll call votes on their websites within 24 hours in tandem with an easily accessible online database of those votes.

Currently, retrieving committee votes from Congress is extremely difficult or even impossible. The only reliable way to review committee votes is to pay thousands of dollars each year to private organizations, making the votes inaccessible to those who either cannot afford to pay those costs or are unable to visit the relevant committee offices.

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