

CREWcitizens for responsibility
and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

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CREW Files FEC Complaint Against Palin and RNC over \$150,000 Wardrobe Purchase

On October 23rd, CREW filed a Federal Election Commission (FEC) complaint against vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin and the Republican National Committee (RNC) for improperly spending \$150,000 of campaign funds on clothing for Palin and her family in violation of federal campaign finance laws.



Once the clothing purchases became public, the RNC quickly said it planned to donate the clothing to charity after the campaign, because of an exception in the law providing that charitable donations by a candidate are not personal use. That exception, however, applies only to candidates, not their families so the purchase of clothing for Governor Palin's husband and children still violated the law.

The \$150,000 spent on clothing for the Palin clan is the equivalent of three Alaskan school teachers' salaries, health care premiums for 31 working Americans, flu vaccinations for over 6,000 people, or the winter heating bill for 131 low-income households.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's FEC complaint](#)

[Read the Associated Press article](#)

CREW Files Ethics Complaint Against Sen. John McCain



On October 9th, CREW filed a complaint with the Senate Ethics Committee against Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), requesting an investigation into his failure to disclose gambling winnings on his Senate financial disclosure reports in violation of Senate rules and federal law.

According to a recent article in *The New York Times*, Sen. McCain is an avid gambler who frequents casinos as often as once a month. The article states that during a winter 2000 visit to Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut, "[Sen. McCain] and his entourage emerged with thousands of dollars in winnings." *Time* and *The New Yorker* have also reported on his gambling habits, detailing casino visits in New Orleans and on Mississippi riverboats.

The McCain campaign responded to the complaint, as reported on October 9 in *Politico's* blog, *The Crypt*, arguing that Senate rules do not require reporting of gambling winnings on personal financial disclosure reports. In fact, federal law and Senate rules require all income to be reported and the Senate Ethics Manual specifically lists winnings of any kind as reportable income. Knowingly filing a false report is a crime punishable by up to five years in jail.

In addition, while Sen. McCain did not report any income derived from gambling on his personal financial disclosure reports between 2000 and 2007, several other members, including Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH), House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) and Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-PA) did.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's complaint](#)

[Read The Washington Post article](#)

Judge Clears Way for Depositions in Cheney Suit

CREW, along with two eminent historians and three organizations of historians and archivists, filed suit earlier this fall, seeking to ensure that Vice President Dick Cheney's records will be preserved and publicly available under the Presidential Records Act (PRA). President Bush declared in a 2001 executive order that the PRA applied only to the "executive records" of the vice president, and the vice president subsequently declared he was no longer part of the executive branch. CREW's suit challenges Cheney's effort to exclude many of his vice presidential record from the reach of the PRA and its preservation obligations.

On October 31st CREW won the right to depose Vice President Cheney's Deputy Chief of Staff Claire O'Donnell and National Archives and Records Administration official Nancy Smith, to uncover exactly what the administration has been doing with documents that belong not to the vice president, but to the American people.

[Learn more](#)

[Read the 10/31/08 Circuit Court ruling](#)

[Read the Associated Press article](#)

CREW Renews Request for Investigation into Rep. Heather Wilson

On October 7th, CREW asked the House Ethics Committee - for the second time -- to investigate whether Rep. Heather Wilson (R-NM) violated House rules by improperly contacting a sitting U.S. Attorney in 2006. The ethics complaint was sent in the wake of the long-awaited report of Justice Department's internal investigation into the removal of nine U.S. attorneys.

The report found that Senator Pete Domenici and Rep. Wilson improperly contacted David C. Iglesias, the former U.S. Attorney in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to pressure him about an ongoing corruption probe of state Democrats before the 2006 elections. Such contacts violate congressional ethics rules. The Senate Ethics Committee previously considered a complaint CREW had filed against Sen. Domenici when news of the scandal first broke.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's complaint](#)

[Read The Hill article](#)

CREW Asks Ethics Committee to Investigate Rep. Tim Mahoney

On October 16th, CREW sent a letter to the House Ethics Committee requesting an investigation into an affair involving Rep. Tim Mahoney (D-FL) during and after his 2006 campaign for Congress. The House Ethics Committee announced the next day, on October 17th, that it would investigate Rep. Mahoney's conduct.

According to press reports, Rep. Mahoney, who was elected to Congress in 2006 to fill disgraced Rep. Mark Foley's seat, maintained a personal relationship with Patricia Allen, a woman he met during his congressional campaign and later hired in his personal office before finally moving her to his campaign staff. Ms. Allen's employment was terminated when the affair ended, and she subsequently threatened to sue Rep. Mahoney for sexual harassment, intimidation and humiliation.

Following mediation, Mahoney promised Ms. Allen



a total of \$121,000 and a two-year position with a public relations firm to settle the matter. Additionally, she was required to sign a back-dated resignation letter to the campaign chairman exonerating the congressman and his campaign.

Rep. Mahoney's conduct breaks numerous House rules, including those governing hiring practices, compensation, and sexual harassment.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's ethics complaint](#)

[Read the Scripps News Service article](#)

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