

 CREW - citizens for responsibility and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

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CREW Files FEC Complaint Against Rep. Vern Buchanan

On August 19, 2008, CREW and Florida citizens Carlo Bell and David J. Padilla filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) against Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-FL). The complaint alleges three violations of campaign finance law: 1) threatening employees with reprisals to coerce them to make campaign donations; 2) making contributions in the name of another; and 3) making corporate contributions.

In September 2005, employees of Rep. Buchanan's car dealerships were pressured into contributing to his congressional campaign and some were reimbursed for their contributions. Fearing for his job, former dealership finance director Carlo Bell made a \$1,000 contribution for which he was reimbursed. Mr. Bell also saw two other employees take cash in return for promising to write \$1,000 checks to Rep. Buchanan's campaign and later learned that other employees had participated as well.

Despite fear of retaliation, former finance manager David Padilla refused to participate in the scheme, knowing that accepting repayment for a campaign contribution is illegal, but learned that other employees had succumbed to the pressure.

Making a conduit contribution - reimbursing someone for making a contribution - is a serious campaign finance violation that can be prosecuted by the Department of Justice as well as investigated by the FEC.

The full complaint is available on [CREW's website](#).

[Read more.](#)

[Read The Tallahassee Democrat story.](#)

CREW Files Complaint Against VA for FOIA Documents

On August 28, 2008, CREW filed a complaint against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) based on the VA's failure to respond to CREW's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for documents related to the VA's misdiagnoses of veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). CREW filed the FOIA on May 15, 2008 to discover the extent to which the VA has been refusing to diagnose veterans with PTSD, instead making alternative, less costly diagnoses.

This past spring, on May 15, 2008, CREW released an e-mail with VoteVets.org that was obtained from a VA employee directing staff to refrain from diagnosing soldiers and veterans with PTSD. The email, sent March 20, 2008, noted that due to an increased number of "compensation seeking veterans," the staff should "refrain from giving a diagnosis of PTSD straight out," The email further noted that employees should, "R/O [rule out] PTSD" and consider a diagnosis of "Adjustment Disorder" instead.

A 2008 RAND Corporation report has found that approximately 300,000 U.S. troops are suffering from major depression or post traumatic stress disorder as a result of serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The full complaint is available on [CREW's website](#).

[Read more.](#)



CREW Sues DOJ for Failing to Provide Records of V.P. Cheney's Interview in Valerie Plame Wilson Leak Investigation

CREW sued the Department of Justice (DOJ) on August 25, 2008 for its failure to provide records of Special Council Patrick Fitzgerald's interview with Vice President Dick Cheney stemming from the investigation into the leak of Valerie Plame Wilson's covert identity as a CIA officer.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform has been seeking DOJ documents related to the leak of Ms. Wilson's identity for over a year. After DOJ refused to provide the committee with access to records related to the vice president's interviews, the committee subpoenaed them.

On July 15, 2008, Attorney General Michael Mukasey asked President Bush to assert executive privilege over the records. On July 17th, the committee announced that the president had done so, blocking DOJ from responding to the subpoena. The same day, CREW sent a Freedom of Information Act request to DOJ for the interview records. After DOJ failed to provide the records, CREW sued the Department and asked for a preliminary injunction to force their release. CREW and DOJ are negotiating and District Court Judge Emmet Sullivan has scheduled a status conference for September 8th.

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