

CREWcitizens for responsibility
and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

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CREW Joins Diverse Coalition of Organizations in Call for WH to Rescind Rule Restricting Lobbyist Communications

On March 31st, CREW, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the American League of Lobbyists (ALL) sent a letter to White House General Counsel Gregory Craig, urging the administration to rescind a controversial ban on oral communications between registered lobbyists and executive branch officials regarding the expenditure of Recovery Act Funds.

On March 20, the administration issued a memo prohibiting lobbyists from engaging in telephone or face-to-face contacts with officials concerning projects, applications, or applicants for funding under the Recovery Act. Further, any written communications received from lobbyists must be disclosed. The alleged purpose of this ban is to promote transparency and accountability.

CREW, the ACLU and the ALL argued that the ban will be ineffective because bank officers, corporate directors and business executives will all become defacto lobbyists petitioning for funds, but unlike registered lobbyists, they will not have to disclose their contacts with the government. In addition, the ban may well be unconstitutional because the First Amendment includes the right to petition the government.

The three groups suggested a better alternative would be to require disclosure of any and all communications with executive branch officials regarding a project, application or applicant for funding, including the name and business affiliation of the person who engages in the contact, the name of the official contacted, the date of the contact, and the subject matter discussed. All such information should be posted on the Treasury Department's web site.

[Learn more](#)

[Read The Washington Post article](#)

[Read our letter to WH General Counsel Gregory Craig](#)

CREW Asks AG Holder to Investigate

CREW Launches TARPTales.org - Keeping Tabs on All-Things TARP



On March 24th, CREW launched TARPTales.org, a new website designed to be an all-in-one source for the latest articles, congressional hearings, and oversight reports related to the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP).

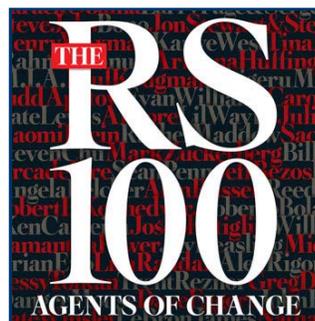
Formed in October 2008 by the passage of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, TARP has been armed with a taxpayer-funded budget of \$700 billion to keep financial institutions and other big businesses afloat during the economic downturn. From the start, the program has come under criticism for a lack of transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

In addition to TARPTales.org, CREW has filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to learn more about the federal government's financial bailout practices. For example, on March 3rd, after learning that Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke refused to tell Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders which banks had received over \$2 trillion in financial assistance from the Federal Reserve over the last two years, CREW sent out a FOIA requesting that information.

Visit TARPTales.org and [CREW's FOIA page](#) for the latest updates on CREW's efforts to hold government officials accountable to the American public as they attempt to stabilize the U.S. economy.

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

[Read CREW's FOIA request to the Federal Reserve Board](#)



White House Appointee Adolfo Carrión for Bribery and Honest Services Fraud

On March 12th, CREW sent a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder, asking the Department of Justice (DOJ) to initiate an immediate investigation into pay-to-play allegations involving Director of the White House Office on Urban Policy, Adolfo Carrión, Jr. CREW's complaint highlights several instances where Carrión, while serving as Bronx Borough President in New York, approved zoning changes and committed taxpayer money for projects whose developers made significant financial contributions to Carrión's campaign fund.

In one example, individuals associated with the Atlantic Development Group and Boricua College made campaign contributions around the same time Carrión approved zoning changes and sponsored taxpayer funds for the construction of a 14-story residential tower at Boricua Village in the Bronx in 2007. Donations from Atlantic Development Group totaled over \$50,000 - the largest source of Carrión's campaign funds. At the same time, Carrión hired the Boricua Village's architect to design an addition to his home. Despite the fact that the work was completed two years ago, Carrión has yet to pay the architect. The Bronx district attorney is investigating allegations related to Carrión's home renovation.

If the era of pay-to-play politics is over, Carrión has certainly not received the memo. CREW asked DOJ to investigate whether Carrión engaged in bribery and honest services fraud by accepting campaign contributions and free design work on his house in return for official actions.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's complaint](#)

[Read *The Hill* article](#)

[Read the *New York Daily News* article about Carrión's home renovation](#)



CREW's Melanie Sloan Named One of *Rolling Stone's* Top 100 "Agents of Change"

On March 18th, *Rolling Stone* named CREW's executive director Melanie Sloan to their list of the top 100 "Agents of Change." She joins artists, policymakers, writers, scientists and provocateurs such as Al Gore, Cornel West, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Paul Krugman, Rachel Maddow and Jon Stewart as one of the "100 People Who Are Changing America."

Melanie Sloan was recognized on the list for "tearing down the walls of secrecy in Washington." *Rolling Stone* honored CREW's role in exposing the millions of missing Bush White House emails, forcing the Secret Service to disclose White House visitor logs and CREW's current battle against the Federal Reserve to disclose who received \$2 trillion in taxpayer-backed loans.

CREW continues to work tirelessly to ensure government officials who put special interests above the common good are held accountable for their actions. Only with your help can we keep shining a light on Washington.

[Click here to donate to CREW today](#)

[Read Melanie Sloan's listing](#)

[Read the entire list: "RS 100: Agents of Change"](#)

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