

CREW Cuts

The Monthly Newsletter of CREW

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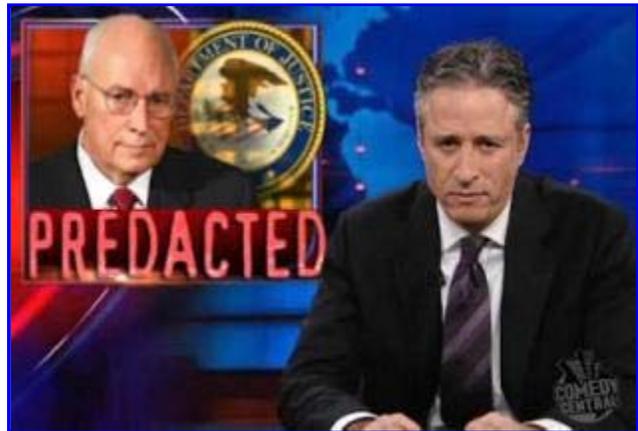
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Spotlight



The Daily Show: Cheney Predicted

On the June 25th episode of *The Daily Show*, host Jon Stewart took a hilarious and penetrating look at transparency in the Obama administration. The segment tackled the very issues that CREW works on every day, including [the administration's refusal to release White House visitor logs](#), [former Vice President Dick Cheney's role in the Valerie Plame Wilson CIA leak case](#), [the White House's refusal to release prisoner abuse photos](#), and [the lack of transparency surrounding the spending of stimulus funds](#).

The best part? Stewart noted that during arguments in CREW's case against the Justice Department for release of the transcript of Cheney's FBI interview in the Plame Wilson leak investigation, the Obama administration argued the transcript should remain secret because future White House officials will refuse to cooperate with criminal investigations for fear of being ridiculed on *The Daily Show*.

[Click here to watch the segment](#) ↗



CREW Files Ethics Complaint Against Sen. John Ensign

On June 24th, CREW filed a complaint with the Senate Ethics Committee against Sen. John Ensign (R-NV), as well as a companion complaint with the Federal



Election Committee against his campaign committee and leadership PAC after news broke that the senator had an affair with former campaign staffer Cynthia Hampton and had terminated both Ms. Hampton and her husband Doug, who worked on the senator's official staff, because of the affair. These terminations might violate Senate ethics rules, which prohibit discrimination based on sex.



Press reports indicate Sen. Ensign paid Mrs. Hampton a severance out of his own pocket, but neither the campaign committee nor the PAC reported receiving an in-kind contribution from the senator as required by campaign finance law. Although the amount of the payment is unknown, the failure to report contributions of over \$25,000 is a criminal offense and contributions to PACS are limited to \$5,000. Mr. Hampton received \$6,000 from the senator's office, allegedly for unused vacation time. If the money was really severance, it may constitute a misuse of official funds.

CREW's complaint also highlights two instances where Sen. Ensign's behavior violated senate rules prohibiting improper conduct - using his position as head of the National Republican Senatorial Committee to hire the Hamptons' son as an intern, and claiming to have been blackmailed by Mr. Hampton without alerting proper authorities.

Sen. Ensign has replaced Sens. David Vitter (R-LA) and Larry Craig (R-ID) as the latest poster senator for bad judgment and hypocrisy. CREW called on the Senate Ethics Committee to launch an investigation immediately.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's complaint to the Senate Ethics Committee](#) and [the exhibits](#)

[Read CREW's complaint to the Federal Election Commission](#)

[Read the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article](#)

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CREW Requests Ethics Investigation of Gov. Mark Sanford

On June 26th, CREW filed a complaint with South Carolina's State Ethics Commission and the state's Attorney General, requesting an investigation into whether Gov. Mark Sanford violated South Carolina state law while conducting an affair with a woman in Argentina.



Gov. Sanford misled state government officials, the lieutenant governor, and his security detail regarding his whereabouts between June 18th and 24th, leaving the state leaderless and potentially violating South Carolina's constitution. Gov. Sanford lied to his staff, claiming he planned to go hiking on the Appalachian Trail, when in fact he left the country to visit his mistress. Additionally, Gov. Sanford may have illegally used state funds and equipment by taking a state vehicle to the Columbia airport to depart for Argentina, and by having an aide meet him at the Atlanta airport upon his return. Gov. Sanford also admitted using a state sponsored trip to Brazil and Argentina in 2008 to visit the woman.

It is impossible to understand why Gov. Sanford's misconduct was serious enough to force him to step down as chair of the Republican Governors Association, but not bad enough for him to resign as governor. Because it appears that the governor likely violated South Carolina law, CREW asked the State Ethics Commission and the Attorney General to hold him accountable.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's complaint](#)

[Read the *CBS News* article](#)

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CREW Sues Secret Service for Refusing to Disclose White House Visitor Logs

On June 16th, CREW sued the Obama administration after the Secret Service refused to respond to a May 15th Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for records documenting White House visits made by coal company executives. CREW asked for these records, as well as records of White House visits made by health care industry executives, to learn how influential heads of industry may be shaping administration policy.

The Obama administration has taken the exact same position as the Bush administration on this issue, claiming the records are not subject to FOIA requests because they are presidential - not agency - records. The White House's position conflicts with a January 9th court decision - reached in response to an earlier CREW lawsuit -- in which the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia held that Bush administration visitor records are agency records subject to the FOIA.

The Obama administration's legal position cannot be reconciled with the president's commitment to transparency. These records belong to the people, and CREW continues to fight to make sure they are disclosed.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's complaint to the Secret Service](#)

[Read CREW's FOIA request for coal executive visits](#)

[Read CREW's FOIA request for health care executive visits](#)

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

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CREW Releases Analysis of Missing Bush White House Emails Released by Obama Administration

On June 17th, CREW released an analysis of over 100 documents (posted [here](#)) received as part of our lawsuit over the millions of missing Bush White House emails. The documents, which represent only a small percentage of the material CREW has requested, confirm the Bush administration knew it was failing to properly archive records and that some administration officials were aware of the problem as early as February 2004.

The documents CREW received are part of the same set the Bush administration gave to Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA) in 2007 and 2008 as part of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee's investigation into the missing emails. While CREW is still awaiting the release of additional documents, including 38 more boxes the Obama administration has promised to review for release, the documents that have been provided offer startling insights. For example, emails subpoenaed by former Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald during the Valerie Plame Wilson leak investigation were among those missing from the Office of the Vice President.

Several gray areas remain in the missing email case, such as the circumstance surrounding the White House's discovery of the loss of the emails, details of its attempts to fix the archiving system, and the status of efforts to restore some missing emails. As the White House releases more records, CREW will post them. With more information, perhaps vital gaps in the Bush administration's history will be filled.

[Learn more](#)

[Browse the documents](#)

[Read the *Mother Jones* article](#)

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CREW Argues for Release of Cheney Interview in Plame Wilson CIA Leak and Supreme Court Refuses to Hear Wilson Lawsuit



On June 22nd, the Supreme Court refused to hear Valerie and Joseph Wilson's civil lawsuit against former Bush administration officials for revealing Valerie Plame Wilson's covert CIA identity. CREW serves as legal counsel to the Wilsons in their suit, which had been dismissed by lower courts.

While the Supreme Court's refusal essentially ends the Wilsons' civil case, CREW continues to fight for information surrounding the leak of Valerie Plame Wilson's covert identity. On June 19th, a federal court heard argument in CREW's FOIA suit to obtain the transcript of former Vice President Cheney's interview with the Special Counsel regarding the leak.

The Obama administration has parroted the legal argument of the Bush White House, claiming the interview should remain secret so presidents and vice presidents are not reluctant to voluntarily participate in future criminal investigations. The DOJ actually argued the interview should not be disclosed so it does not become fodder for "[The Daily Show](#)."

CREW pointed out that the vice president never asked and the Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald never agreed to keep the interview confidential. The judge presiding over the case asked to see the transcript himself so he can personally assess its sensitivity, rather than rely on the word of the Justice Department. He is also requiring the Obama administration to provide a declaration from a high level official explaining why the transcript should be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA.

The Wilsons and the American public deserve to know the degree to which former White House officials abused their power to destroy the careers of others and endangered national security for their own political gain.

[Read CREW's statement on the Supreme Court's refusal](#)

[Read *The Hill* article](#)

[Learn more about the argument for the Cheney interview](#)

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

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