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and ethics in washington

CREW Cuts

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CREW Releases [You Don't Know Jack](#) - A Map to Rep. Murtha's Web of Corruption

On May 28th, CREW released [You Don't Know Jack](#), an interactive graphical guide to Rep. John Murtha's (D-PA) infamous web of earmark corruption. For years Rep. Murtha, who has appeared on [CREW's Most Corrupt Members of Congress](#) list three times and counting, has used his position on the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to reward lobbyists, defense contractors, and family members with money and power in exchange for campaign contributions and personal favors. CREW's new graphic allows visitors to explore each of these crooked connections, visualizing Rep. Murtha's network of deals and providing background.

Rep. Murtha has been receiving national attention recently as a result of federal investigations into entities linked to him, the PMA Group and the Kuchera Corporation, reports of nepotism involving Rep. Murtha's nephew, and the recent revelation that the congressman has earmarked millions for an under-used, airport named after him in his western Pennsylvania district. Also this month, CREW filed a FOIA request with the Department of Justice to learn if the Justice Department suddenly began supporting the National Drug Intelligence Center's request for funding - after years of trying to shut it down - because it is one of Rep. Murtha's pet projects.

In light of the criminal probe and the ever-increasing number of reports of Rep. Murtha's unethical conduct, CREW has called for Rep. Murtha to step down from his chairmanship of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

[Click here to visit You Don't Know Jack](#)

[Read the USA Today article](#)

[Read CREW's FOIA request to the DOJ](#)

[Read The Hill article on the National Drug Intelligence Center](#)

CREW Releases Analysis of Credit Card Execs' 2008 Political Donations

On May 4th, CREW released an analysis of credit card industry executives' 2008 election cycle donations - showcasing the extent to which their contributions may influence Washington policy. CREW's analysis comes after a late April meeting between these industry executives and President Obama.



CREW's study found that during the 2008 election cycle, the credit card company executives in attendance at the White House meeting personally donated about \$50,000 to federal candidates, their employees contributed \$14.5 million, and their companies' political action committees contributed \$8.6 million. Additionally, these companies spent \$15.5 million on lobbying expenses in the first quarter for 2009 in their efforts to influence government officials.

This analysis reinforced CREW's opposition to a White House ban on lobbyists -- but not other influential individuals -- seeking Recovery Act funds from engaging in oral communications with agency officials. While the meeting with credit card industry executives was not held to discuss Recovery Act funds, it showed how industry executives have significant influence over administration decisions.

On May 29th, as the result of efforts by CREW, the American Civil Liberties Union and the American League of Lobbyists, the White House announced revisions to its policy. Now, after competitive grant applications have been filed, communications by anyone, lobbyists and non-lobbyists alike, may only be in writing.

[Learn more about CREW's credit card industry analysis](#)

[Read the analysis](#)

[Read The Politico article](#)

[Learn more about the White House's revised lobbying restrictions](#)

CREW Launches [CorporateCrackdown.org](#) - Outside Oversight, Where Business and Government Intersect



Since 2003, CREW has exposed unethical activities of public officials. Now, we have corporate America in our sights. On May 20th, CREW launched [CorporateCrackdown.org](#) - a new website dedicated to providing much-needed oversight on the intersection between business and government.

[CorporateCrackdown.org](#) is designed to hold accountable those who improperly influence government officials, overcharge taxpayers or in any way sacrifice the public good for private earnings. The site compiles up-to-date [news](#), [reports](#) and [blog posts](#) on the latest cases of corporate malfeasance, which range from credit card company rip-offs to defense contractors' crooked dealings.

CREW's goal is to educate the public on those companies that use their power and influence to prioritize profit at the expense of Americans' interests.

[Click here to visit CorporateCrackdown.org](#)

CREW Files Opposition to Norm Coleman's Request to Use Recount Funds for Legal Expenses

On May 19th, CREW sent a letter to the Federal Election Commission (FEC), opposing former Sen. Norm Coleman's (R-MN) request to use campaign funds to pay for expenses he might incur as a potential witness in two ongoing lawsuits against one of his campaign donors.

The FEC prohibits the expenditure of campaign funds for personal use though the Commission infamously and frequently makes exceptions to this rule. CREW argued the FEC should deny Sen. Coleman's request because the senator is not a party to the litigation and he might not be called as a witness. Previously, the FEC has refused to provide opinions when faced with hypothetical questions. Additionally, some if not most of Sen. Coleman's remaining campaign funds were transferred from the Coleman Minnesota Recount Committee and the FEC has held recount funds may be used only for expenses and related to a recount. As a result, the FEC should prohibit Sen. Coleman from using recount funds to defray these other legal expenses.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to the FEC](#)

[Read the St. Paul Pioneer Press article](#)

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[Read The Washington Post article](#)

Court Finds White House Administration is Not Sul of Information Act

On May 19th, in a blow to transparency : Court of Appeals upheld a lower court de House Office of Administration (OA) is n not subject to Freedom of Information Ac stems from a May 2007 lawsuit CREW b failing to respond to CREW's April 2007 related to millions of emails dating betwe 2005 that had disappeared from White H

Since its creation under the Carter admi functioned as an agency subject to the F FOIA regulations on its website. Only aft sought documents related to the disappe coincided with the early days of the Iraq Plame Wilson's cover identity, did the Bt unprecedented claim that the office was agreed and this ruling will prevent the pu emails vanished and why the Bush White plan to recover them.

Along with 36 other transparency-advoc on the Obama administration to treat the again make its records available under th Act. Opening the OA to FOIA requests is transparent and accountable governmen

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[Read the Circuit Court's decision](#)

[Read the letter CREW and 36 other grou](#)

[Read The Washington Post article](#)