

CREW Cuts

The Monthly Newsletter of CREW

September 2009 // Issue No. 29

Headlines

[CREW Files Complaint Against Rep. Deal](#)

[CREW Files Complaint Against Former NJ US Attorney Chris Christie](#)

[CREW Urges MSNBC to Pull Misleading and Delusional Health Care Ad](#)

[Rep. William Jefferson's Conviction Confirms CREW's Allegations](#)

Spotlight



CREW's Melanie Sloan Profiled in O Magazine's "Power List"

CREW's Executive Director Melanie Sloan is featured in O Magazine's first ever [O Power List](#). O Magazine, founded by Oprah Winfrey, published the [O Power List](#) in the September issue of the magazine, recognizing 20 remarkable visionaries who are flexing their muscles in business and finance, politics and justice, science and the arts. Here's an excerpt from the profile of Melanie:

"CREW-now with a staff of 17-has revealed dirty tricks by lobbyist Jack Abramoff, Rep. John Murtha (D-PA), and many others. Politicos, beware: No matter where you fall on the partisan divide, Sloan is looking over your shoulder."

Please join Melanie and the rest of CREW in holding elected officials' feet to the fire by making a contribution to CREW. Together, we can ensure that government officials focus on the public's interest.

[Click here to donate to CREW](#)

[Click here to read the full profile of Melanie on the O Power List](#)

[Click here to read about others on the O Power List](#)



CREW Files Complaint Against Rep. Deal



On August 26th, CREW filed a complaint with the Office of Congressional Ethics against Rep. Nathan Deal (R-GA), [for illegally and unethically intervening in Georgia state politics](#) to preserve a program that funds his personal car inspection business from which he pockets \$150,000 per year.

In 2008, Georgia Revenue Commissioner Bart Graham took over responsibility for the state's inspection system and found the operational costs and locations of the inspection stations to be too costly and restrictive for the state. Rep. Deal and his staff, with help from Georgia Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle, arranged meetings with Comm. Graham in an effort to persuade him not to reform the system and to leave the \$1.7 million that had been allocated for the program in the state's budget. Despite Rep. Deal's efforts, Comm. Graham's plan was passed by the Georgia House, prompting Rep. Deal's chief of staff to use his official House email to contact Georgia officials to ensure the state Senate did not pass the cut in the program. The Senate complied, though lawmakers profess ignorance as to why.

Rep. Deal's use of his congressional influence and resources to enrich his personal business directly violates House rules and may constitute honest services fraud - a federal crime. Members of Congress are to serve the public interest, not their own personal financial interests. The Office of Congressional Ethics should hold Rep. Deal accountable for his shameless conduct.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to the Office of Congressional Ethics](#)

[Read *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* article that broke this story](#)

[Read *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* article about CREW's complaint](#)

[Back to Top](#) 

CREW Files Complaint Against Former NJ US Attorney Chris Christie



On August 17th, CREW asked the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) to investigate whether Chris Christie, Republican candidate for Governor of New Jersey, violated the law by both talking with former White House official Karl Rove about a possible gubernatorial run and attending meetings to plan logistics for the race while still a US Attorney.

In transcripts released by the House Judiciary Committee as part of its investigation into the US Attorney firings scandal, Rove stated that while he was at the White House, he spoke with Christie "not regarding his duties as US Attorney, but regarding his interest in running for Governor." These conversations directly violate the Hatch Act, which prohibits federal employees from engaging in the world of partisan politics.

Ironically, Christie is running his campaign on an ethics platform. Did Christie violate ethics rules to use his position as US Attorney to gain political standing to secure his party's nomination for Governor? An OSC investigation would reveal the extent to which Christie advanced his political ambitions while a sitting US Attorney.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to OSC](#)

[Read the *Associated Press* article](#)

[Back to Top](#) 

CREW Urges MSNBC to Pull Misleading and Delusional Health Care Ad

On August 28th, CREW sent a letter to MSNBC President Phil Griffin, urging him to pull a misleading and delusional [anti-healthcare reform ad](#) from the air. The US Citizens Association-sponsored ad, which aired at least once on August 27th during MSNBC's Morning Joe, violates both Federal Communications Commission and NBC regulations addressing false and misleading ads.

The ad ludicrously asserts that if the healthcare system is reformed, "20 million illegal aliens" will receive free care and private care will disappear due to the government's ability to tax and print money.

MSNBC informed CREW on August 31st that the ad was not running nationally through its network, but rather through the local cable provider, Comcast. CREW sent a letter today to Comcast asking that the ad be pulled from its airwaves.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to MSNBC](#)

[Watch the ad on the US Citizens Association website](#)

[Read *The Gainesville Sun* article](#)

[Back to Top](#) 

Rep. William Jefferson's Conviction Confirms CREW's Allegations



On August 5th, a federal jury found former Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA) guilty on 11 of 16 corruption charges related to soliciting bribes and brokering deals to funnel money to businesses owned by his family. CREW filed an ethics complaint against Rep. Jefferson in April 2006, and he was featured in [CREW's Most Corrupt Members of Congress](#) in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

After Rep. Jefferson's Capitol Hill office was searched by federal investigators in May 2006, Rep. Jefferson asked for the search to be held unconstitutional on the basis that an FBI raid on his congressional office had violated the Speech or Debate Clause, a clause of the Constitution that protects lawmakers from being prosecuted for legislative acts. CREW filed a friend-of-the-court brief in April 2007 arguing the Speech or Debate Clause did not prohibit congressional offices from being searched pursuant to valid search warrants, and warned that such an expansive interpretation

of the Clause would hamper the government's ability to investigate the criminal conduct of corrupt members of Congress. Although earlier decisions had prevented law enforcement from using legislative materials against a member of Congress to obtain an indictment or conviction, the D.C. Court of Appeals held the Clause also prevents federal investigators from even accidentally viewing such materials. This decision has impeded prosecutions of corrupt members of Congress including former-Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK) and former-Rep. Rick Renzi (R-AZ).

Rep. Jefferson's conviction confirms what CREW has known all along - Rep. Jefferson's conduct abused his office for personal financial gain.

[Read CREW's statement on Rep. Jefferson's conviction](#)

[Learn more about CREW's friend-of-the-court brief](#)

[Read Rep. Jefferson's *Most Corrupt* profile](#)

[Read the *Christian Science Monitor* article](#)

[Back to Top](#) 

◆ 2009 Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. All rights reserved.

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)