

CREW Cuts

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Spotlight



Melanie Sloan Discusses CREW's *Smoke Screen* Report on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*

As world leaders gathered at the U.N.'s Copenhagen summit on climate change, CREW's executive director Melanie Sloan went on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show* to discuss *Smoke Screen* - CREW's new report documenting former Bush administration officials who seamlessly moved from the Bush White House's climate team to jobs in the energy industry.

[Smoke Screen: How Bush Insiders Distorted - And Still Influence - America's Debate Over Climate Change](#) lists at least 22 former officials from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) who later accepted positions representing powerful oil, gas and mining interests. Some of these former officials, such as former CEQ chief of staff Philip Cooney, were infamous for distorting the facts on climate change during the Bush years.

[Click here to watch the segment](#) and [click here to donate to CREW today](#).



CREW Unveils Top Ten Ethics Scandals of 2009



On December 22, CREW released its third-annual roundup of the year's most outrageous ethical lapses in government - [The Top Ten Ethics Scandals of 2009](#). The unranked list covers scandals in a variety of government agencies and legislative bodies, including:

- ◆ the federal pay-czar who didn't stop the use of TARP funds for executive bonuses,
- ◆ the likely gutting of the honest services fraud statute,
- ◆ the ethical violations surrounding Sen. John Ensign (R-NV) and Gov. Mark Sanford's (R-SC) extramarital affairs, and
- ◆ the total inaction of the House ethics committee.

2009 proved to be a busy year for ethics watchdogs - will 2010 be any better? CREW hardly expects the culture of corruption to vanish overnight, but we can always hope that spotlighting these misdeeds will remind public officials that someone is watching.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's Top Ten Ethics Scandals of 2009 report](#)

[Read the Mother Jones story](#)

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CREW and Obama Admin. Reach Settlement in Lawsuit over Missing Bush White House Emails



On December 14, CREW and the Obama administration announced a settlement agreement in CREW's long-running lawsuit challenging the failure of the Bush White House and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to recover and properly archive millions of emails that had gone missing from White House servers over a two and a half year period.

The settlement stipulates the Executive Office of the President (EOP) will restore a total of 94 days of missing emails, which will then be sent to NARA for preservation and, eventually, public access. CREW and the National Security Archive, which also filed a lawsuit, worked with the Obama administration to choose which dates' emails will be restored based on lowered volume and historic dates. In addition, the EOP will continue to provide CREW with documents relating to the discovery by the Bush White House in late 2005 of the missing emails and what, if any, steps the Bush administration took in response. Finally, the Obama administration now has

in place an effective system for managing and preserving its emails.

So far, documents released in the suit have shown the Bush White House unquestionably lied when it claimed there was no email archiving problem and, instead, ignored the crisis and knowingly allowed it to worsen. All documents CREW has received so far have been posted on www.governmentdocs.org for public review, and future documents will be added as CREW receives them.

The Obama administration has lived up to its promise of openness and transparency by working with CREW to sort out this mess. Thanks to all involved parties, critical records of recent infamous chapters of our nation's history will be saved. Several questions remain, but this legal victory represents a great win for those who advocate for government accountability and transparency.

[Learn more](#)

[Read the settlement agreement](#)

[Review documents on www.governmentdocs.org](http://www.governmentdocs.org)

[Read the Associated Press story](#)

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CREW Files Ethics Complaint Against Sen. John McCain Over NRSC-Funded Robocalls



On December 9, CREW sent a complaint to the Senate ethics committee requesting a full investigation of Sen. John McCain (R-AZ). In direct violation of Senate Rule 38, Sen. McCain used funds provided by the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) to pay for robocalls in four states in early December. The calls asked listeners to contact Senators Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Ben Nelson (D-NE), Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) to urge their support for Sen. McCain's motion to send the then-pending health care reform bill back to the Senate finance committee.

This activity is unambiguously related to Sen. McCain's official duties: he engaged in grassroots lobbying to support his own motion. By using NRSC money to pay for these calls, Sen. McCain used an outside entity's funds to pay for expenses related to his official duties in violation of Rule 38. Senators cannot pick and choose when it is convenient for them to break or follow the rules. The Senate ethics committee must investigate this matter and hold Sen. McCain accountable for his actions.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to the Senate ethics committee](#)

[Read The Huffington Post story](#)

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CREW Urges Senate Ethics Committee to Enforce Ban on Secret Holds



On December 2, CREW sent a letter to the Senate ethics committee requesting an investigation into senators' continued use of "secret holds" despite a ban on the practice in a 2007 ethics reform bill.

Senators often use holds to stall or block legislation and presidential nominations. Secret holds, which allow a senator to issue a hold anonymously, were banned by a provision of the 2007 Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA). Nevertheless, the practice has continued.

CREW examined the Senate Calendar of Business in the two years following HLOGA's passage and found only two bills that had been flagged with notices of "intent to place a hold" as HLOGA requires. The hold that delayed Hilda Solis's nomination to be Secretary of Labor and the hold placed on a veterans health care bill, for example, were made anonymously - and therefore, improperly.

Senators should follow the rules, but it is particularly ironic that they are ignoring a rule included in an ethics reform package enacted with great fanfare.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to the Senate ethics committee](#)

[Read the *Roll Call* story](#)

[Read *The New York Times* editorial](#)

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