

CREW Cuts

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Spotlight



Melanie Sloan Talks to Fox 5 about the C Street House's Tax-Exempt Status

On February 24th, CREW Executive Director Melanie Sloan talked to Washington, D.C. Fox affiliate WTTG about the wrongful tax-exempt status of the infamous C Street House - a residence and refuge for some of Congress's most unethical members. The house - which claims to be a church - found itself in the spotlight yet again in February when a group of clergy members in Ohio filed a formal IRS complaint against the house's owner, The Fellowship Foundation.

[Click here to watch the interview](#)

[Click here to read the group's IRS complaint](#)

[Click here to learn more about CREW's actions against the Fellowship Foundation](#)

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CREW Calls on President and Members of Congress Not To Attend Shadowy

Fellowship Foundation's National Prayer Breakfast



On February 1st, CREW sent a letter to the president and congressional leadership urging a boycott of the February 4th National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. While the annual breakfast appears to be an official government event, in fact, it is a meeting and recruiting event for the shadowy Fellowship Foundation.

The Fellowship, also known as "The Family," is a secretive religious organization with strong ties to unethical members of Congress who have resided and sought refuge in its infamous C Street House and acts as an evangelizing shadow State Department. Fellowship members in Uganda have even been involved in drafting legislation calling for the death penalty for gays.

By attending the prayer breakfast, President Obama and members of Congress gave legitimacy to this secretive cult - the leader of which once praised the organizing abilities of Osama bin Laden and Adolf Hitler.

On the day before the breakfast, CREW sent a letter to the chairman and CEO of C-SPAN, urging the network not to broadcast the event or at least provide viewers with context and background information about its sponsor. While no government officials heeded CREW's call for a boycott, President Obama used the occasion to repudiate the Ugandan legislation in his remarks. Further, while C-SPAN broadcasted the breakfast, the network did identify The Fellowship as the organizer and explained it was not an official government event.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to the president and congressional leadership](#)

[Read CREW's letter to C-SPAN](#)

[Read the *New York Times* article](#)

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CREW Calls for DOJ Investigation into Destruction of Emails Related to Torture Memos



On February 25th, CREW asked Attorney General Eric Holder to investigate the destruction of emails of John Yoo and Patrick Philbin, two former Department of Justice (DOJ) employees who were involved in crafting the Office of Legal Counsel's memos authorizing torture of detainees. A recently-declassified July 2009 report from DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) cleared the memos' authors of any wrongdoing, but for the first time brought to light the fact that key emails from the time the torture memos were being written had been destroyed, impeding the investigation.

The destruction of these monumentally important emails directly violates the Federal Records Act, which requires agencies to preserve all records unless the National Archives authorizes their destruction. Also, if these emails were destroyed in order to hamper OPR's investigation, it may constitute a violation of criminal law.

Mr. Yoo and Mr. Patrick may have been cleared of misconduct for their roles authorizing torture, but now serious questions have been raised about whether they or others might have covered their tracks by destroying emails. The Attorney General must investigate this matter immediately.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's letter to Attorney General Holder](#)

[Read the July 2009 OPR report](#)

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

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CREW Study Finds Health Care Lobby Invested Heavily in Those Who Attended WH Reform Summit



On February 24th - the eve of the White House's health care reform summit - CREW released data analyzing health care special interests' donations over the past five years to the 21 members of Congress invited to the summit and the president. CREW's study found House and Senate leaders, and chairs and ranking members of committees with primary jurisdiction over health care legislation, have received a combined \$28 million in campaign contributions from the health lobby since 2005.

CREW's report breaks down the contributions by sector, listing the top five congressional recipients of money from health professionals and their trade associations, hospitals and nursing homes, pharmaceutical and health product companies, and HMOs and insurers. Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) topped the list with over \$2.5 million in healthcare contributions since 2005. Additionally, President Obama's campaign received at least \$18.6 million in the 2008 presidential election cycle.

With so much health care industry money in the room during the summit, anti-health reform groups essentially paid millions to insure their views were represented at the table. CREW asked, "Who represented the American people's views?"

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's report](#)

[Read the *Huffington Post* article](#)

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CREW Seeks to Depose Veterans Affairs Employees in Light of Destruction of Emails about PTSD Diagnosis

In CREW's long-running Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for records regarding the under-diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in returning veterans as a cost-cutting measure, the VA recently admitted to destroying documents directly related to CREW's FOIA. The VA's reprehensible PTSD policy first came to light in emails from Department employee Norma Perez. Since CREW first initiated action in May 2008, the VA has consistently been reluctant to provide CREW with documents. Now the VA claims it cannot produce any emails predating December 9, 2008, not even the Perez email.

On February 1st, in light of this admission, CREW requested permission to depose VA employees who may have knowledge of the Department's policies regarding PTSD diagnosis in order to locate other copies of the destroyed documents and to learn the circumstances behind their destruction. CREW has also requested the National Archives and Records Administration investigate the VA for violating the Federal Records Act by destroying records relevant to CREW's FOIA.

It is unconscionable that the government body charged with looking after our nation's veterans could institute a cost-cutting measure that would deny returning soldiers from getting the essential care they need. It is equally unacceptable that the VA took no steps to preserve records explaining this policy. Government agencies cannot simply destroy records that may prove embarrassing - it is unethical and decidedly illegal.

[Learn more](#)

[Read CREW's February 1st brief](#) and [letter to the National Archives](#)

[Read the *Daily Kos* article](#)

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