

CREW Cuts

The Monthly Newsletter of CREW

September 2010 // Issue No. 41

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Spotlight

Sen. Ensign Demanding Pity in the Form of Cold, Hard Cash

At CREW, we're used to politicians refusing to take responsibility for their actions, but Sen. John Ensign (R-NV) has raised the game to entirely new level.

The disgraced and embattled Nevada Republican recently sent around a fundraising letter asking for donations to his legal defense fund. [In the letter](#) (.pdf), obtained by the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Sen. Ensign blames his mounting legal bills not on his own reprehensible actions, but instead **on CREW**.

It is hard to imagine how CREW could have forced Sen. Ensign to have an affair with a campaign staffer (who was married to his chief of staff), and engage in a series of illegal activities to cover up the affair, but according to Sen. Ensign, his problems are all our fault. We'll continue to call for Sen. Ensign to resign, and we certainly won't let baseless blame deter us from holding public officials accountable for their actions.

[Click here to learn more about CREW's actions against Sen. Ensign.](#)

[Click here to donate to CREW today.](#)



Rep. Duncan Hunter Joins the Pork Parade



After examining the illegal and lucrative earmarks-for-campaign-contributions schemes employed by the late Rep. John Murtha (D-PA) and Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), CREW has added another member of Congress to our "Pork Parade."

On August 18th, CREW released *Congressman Duncan Hunter's Pork Parade*, a look at Rep. Duncan D. Hunter's (R-CA) remarkable ability to bring home the bacon for his biggest campaign donors. In Fiscal Year 2010 alone, Rep. Hunter requested \$26 million to General Atomics, a San Diego-based defense contractor. Returning the favor, General Atomics employees are among Rep. Hunter's biggest campaign donors - contributing more than \$26,000 since 2007. Similarly, employees of TREX Enterprises have contributed more than \$10,000 to the congressman since 2007; Rep. Hunter requested a generous \$3 million earmark for their troubles. Even more interesting: TREX was founded by Rep. Hunter's uncle, although today, he no longer works for the firm.

Rep. Hunter is following in the footsteps of his father, Rep. Duncan L. Hunter (R-CA), who also secured earmarks for General Atomics. While on his website the current Rep. Hunter publicly proclaims his commitment to cutting government spending, behind closed doors he's quietly scratching the backs of his supporters.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read Congressman Duncan Hunter's Pork Parade .](#)

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CREW Files Suit against the Federal Election Commission



On August 11th, CREW filed a lawsuit against the Federal Election Commission (FEC) for dismissing complaints without any explanation, despite a legal requirement that the agency provide its reasoning. The agency's actions deprive complainants of the information they need to sue the FEC over a decision within the 60-day period the law provides. CREW's suit lists nine examples over the past two years of cases where the FEC either delayed releasing its reasoning or simply released nothing at all.

The FEC is made up of six commissioners, three Democrats and three Republicans and much of the time the panel deadlocks, unable to reach a decision. By robbing the American people of the ability to challenge their decisions - or their deadlocks - the FEC is undermining the integrity of our country's electoral process. CREW's lawsuit seeks to stop this dangerous practice.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read CREW's complaint in *CREW v. Fed. Election Comm'n \(D.D.C.\)*.](#)

[Read the *Washington Post* story.](#)

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Justice Department Drops Investigation into Former Rep. Tom DeLay



On August 16th, CREW learned the Justice Department's six-year investigation into disgraced former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay's (R-TX) dealings with notorious lobbyist Jack Abramoff was closed with no charges filed. CREW has long had former Rep. DeLay in our sights: in 2004, we wrote the ethics complaint against "the Hammer" that resulted in his unanimous admonishment by the House Ethics Committee. His indictment on felony conspiracy charges prompted his resignation from Congress in 2005.

While Rep. DeLay still has to answer for charges of money laundering and conspiracy in Texas, the Justice Department's decision not to file charges in this matter sends the wrong message to current and future members of Congress.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read Melanie Sloan's post on *Politico's Arena*.](#)

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CREW Reacts to House Ethics Committee's Actions against Reps. Waters and

Rangel



Timing is everything. After years of sitting completely dormant, it is reassuring to see the House Ethics Committee coming to life by holding Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) and Congresswoman Maxine Waters (D-CA) accountable for their actions. CREW questions, however, the timing of the committee's actions.

Policing Congress and making sure members of both parties behave in an ethical manner should be an apolitical affair. By holding ethics hearings this fall, right before the midterm elections, the ethics process looks political. That serves no one's interest.

Rep. Rangel and Rep Waters are in a mess of their own making, and the Ethics Committee is right to charge them. We continue to believe that Rep. Rangel should resign, and that Rep. Waters should step down as Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity.



[Read Melanie Sloan's Op-Ed in the *Politico*.](#)

[Read the House Ethics Committee's Statement on Rep. Waters.](#)

[Read the House Ethics Committee's Statement on Rep. Rangel.](#)

[Read the *Politico* story on both Rep. Waters and Rep. Rangel.](#)

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Americans deserve elected officials who focus on our interests rather than their own. Building a better Washington won't be easy, but the most worthwhile accomplishments never are.

Thank you for your continued support.

Melanie

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