

CREW Cuts

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Spotlight

CREW to Rep. Issa: Since You Won't Post Responses, We Will.



What is Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) hiding? The new chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee claims to be a champion of government transparency, but so far his words don't match his rhetoric.

Late last year, Rep. Issa reached out to corporations, trade groups and research organizations, asking them which government regulations they'd like to see changed or outright eliminated. The American people deserve to know who is asking for what regulatory roll backs, so CREW called on Chairman Issa to release both the letters sent and the responses received. Nevertheless, in a letter to committee Ranking Member Elijah Cummings, Chairman Issa said he would release the responses, along with his analysis of them on February 11th.

That begged the question: why not immediately? The CREW team picked up the phone, and asked those who received the letters to release their replies. We have obtained (and posted) more than 30 of them, some of which were submitted on behalf of multiple organizations. Disappointingly, 10 recipients refused to release their responses and dozens simply ignored our request. What are they hiding? We'll keep looking for all the responses and posting them as we find them.

[Learn more.](#)

[Click here to view the collection of letters that CREW gathered and posted.](#)

[Click here to read CREW's original call for Rep. Issa to post the letters.](#)

[Click here to read CREW's second call for Rep. Issa to post the letters.](#)



DeLay Messed with Texas



The law has caught up with former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX). This month, he was sentenced to three years in prison after being convicted of state money laundering charges in Texas. It might be a while until he sees the inside of a jail cell though; Rep. DeLay is still free on bail pending his appeal.

Unfortunately, Rep. DeLay was able to escape federal charges. CREW is [looking for answers](#) as to why one of the most corrupt members to walk the halls of Congress got away from the Department of Justice. We've submitted a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for records of the DeLay investigation, and we're asking for similar records regarding the closed investigations into Reps. Don Young (R-AK) and Jerry Lewis (R-CA), as well as Sen. John

Ensign (R-NV).

Crooked politicians belong in prison, not in positions of power. We can take comfort, however, in knowing that Rep. DeLay couldn't outrun the law.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read about Mr. DeLay's conviction in *Politico*.](#)

[Read about CREW's FOIAs to the Department of Justice and FBI.](#)

[Read CREW's FOIAs regarding Rep. Lewis and Rep. Young.](#)

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CREW Calls on Education Secretary Duncan to Investigate Wall Street Investors

Why did high-level Department of Education officials regularly discuss regulation of the for-profit education industry with Wall Street investors? That's a question CREW has been asking since this past summer when we filed a FOIA request with Education for records of its contacts with famed short-seller Steve Eisman. Eventually, we had to sue Education to discover just how much influence hedge fund managers with a personal financial interest in the regulations have had over the department's decision-making process.

Now, CREW is [demanding](#) that Education Secretary Arne Duncan investigate the matter. As CREW's Executive Director Melanie Sloan told reporters, "...the bigger question is where else is this happening?" Americans deserve to know whether Wall Street investors are attempting to manipulate stock prices by insinuating themselves into the federal regulatory process.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read more in *The Wall Street Journal*.](#)

[Read CREW's letter to Secretary Duncan \[PDF\].](#)

[Read CREW's blog, *Uncovering the Truth about Who's Profiting from For-profit Education Regulation*.](#)

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House Votes to End Public Financing of Presidential Elections



January marked the one-year anniversary of the disastrous *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision that opened the corporate floodgates for massive donations to candidates. Just last week, the House of Representatives marked the dubious day by passing legislation that would eliminate the public financing of presidential campaigns.

As Melanie Sloan told the press after the vote, "I am disappointed - but not surprised - that they would choose to put even more special interest money into our elections. We need real campaign finance reform that

allows elections to be won by the candidate with the best ideas, not the biggest donors. ♦

[Learn more.](#)

[Click here to read about the vote in *The Hill*.](#)

[Read more about the anniversary of the disastrous *Citizens United* decision.](#)

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Secret Holds are History



The Senate is one step closer to fully functioning. Thanks to the work of CREW and other good government groups, major reforms were adopted for the 112th Congress, one of which ends the odious practice of allowing secret holds to block legislation and nominations. (Notably, one of the four senators to vote against the package was Sen. John Ensign. Wonder what he wants to keep secret?)

It ♦s not all good news though: Democrats blinked at the prospect of reforming the filibuster, instead resorting to a ♦handshake agreement. ♦ That means, in all likelihood, the filibuster will continue to be abused, and we ♦ll have to keep fighting for common sense reforms in the ♦world ♦s most deliberative body. ♦ There were 136 filibusters last session of Congress. How many will there be this time around? We ♦ll see.

[Learn more.](#)

[Read more in CREW ♦s Blog.](#)

[Read CREW ♦s report on secret holds](#) [PDF].

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Americans deserve elected officials who focus on our interests rather than their own. Keeping politicians honest and building a better Washington won't be easy, which is why CREW needs your help. Please forward this to your friends and family to help spread the word about the hard work CREW is doing in Washington. Also, be sure to stay up to date by visiting our website, www.citizensforethics.org.

Thank you for your continued support.

Melanie Sloan
Executive Director
CREW



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