

Dec 5 2005 - CULTURE OF CORRUPTION FACT CHECK

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Clear Pattern of Continued Republican

Abuse of Power Emerges in Federal Agencies

Political Hacks Making Major Agency Decisions, Not Experts:

Redistricting, Voting Rights and OTC Emergency Contraception All Victims

Partisan senior officials driven by extreme right-wing political ideology are now driving the decision making process in various federal government agencies.

Reports of senior Bush political appointees over-ruling agency experts and professional staff recommendations on crucial agency decisions are numerous and well documented.

The regularity and similar manner in which senior Bush political appointees at federal agencies have abandoned agency protocol and overruled officials' recommendations of their own professional staff on matters which are traditionally beyond the reproach of partisan politics indicates a serious pattern of abuse of power and corruption of the process at these agencies.

The facts clearly show these are not isolated incidents, but a pattern of abuse and corruption which has already directly impacted the lives of millions of Americans.

Texas Redistricting

DOJ APPOINTEES DISGARDED STAFF CONCLUSIONS THAT THE TEXAS REDISTRICTING PLAN WAS ILLEGAL: Reports indicate the senior administration officials overruled Department of Justice staff's finding of Tom DeLay's Texas redistricting plan was illegal. Senior administration officials completely disregarded a memo endorsed by six lawyers and two analysts in the department's voting section, which concluded that the landmark Texas congressional redistricting plan spearheaded by indicted Rep. Tom DeLay (R) violated the Voting Rights Act. The memo found that Republican lawmakers and state officials who helped craft the redistricting proposal were aware it posed a high risk of being ruled discriminatory compared with other options. [Dan Eggen, "Justice Staff Saw Texas Districting As Illegal," The Washington Post, 12/2/05]

DOJ EXECUTIVES DISREGARDED STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO REJECT GEORGIA VOTER-ID LAW FOR BEING DISCRIMINATORY: The decision to overrule of the DOJ staff's finding is the second example of senior officials at DOJ making questionable decisions concerning voting laws. Less than a month ago another report surfaced detailing how higher-ranking officials at Justice over-ruled department lawyers and analysts' recommendation to reject a voter-identifications law which was likely to discriminate against black voters. [Dan Eggen, "Criticism of Voting Law was Over-Ruled," The Washington Post, 11/17/05]

TOP FDA OFFICIALS REFUSED TO APPROVE OVER THE COUNTER EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, THOUGH RECOMMENDED BY STAFF: Just recently the Government Accountability Office released a "smoking gun" report documenting the reasons behind the Food and Drugs Administration's (FDA) recent refusal to approve the over-the-counter sale of Plan B emergency contraception. GAO released its report entitled: "Decision Process to Deny Initial Application for Over-the-Counter Marketing of the Emergency Contraceptive Drug Plan B Was Unusual," which found that there were 4 unusual aspects to FDA's decision in May 2004 to not approve Barr Laboratories' application for over-the-counter sales of Plan B. [11/14/05]

EXXON MOBIL LOBBYING THE WHITE HOUSE TO APPOINT HARLAN WATSON, AN OIL INDUSTRY FAVORITE IN CLIMATE CONTROL NEGOTIATIONS: Oil-industry favorite Harlan Watson is being used to peddle the administration's position on air-pollution policies. "A Feb. 6, 2001, fax sent to the White House by oil giant Exxon Mobil proposed involving Watson more closely in international climate negotiations. The document -- which Exxon Mobil spokesman Russ Roberts said was sent by the company but not written by any of its employees -- suggested asking House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) to make Watson, who at the time worked for the House Science Committee -- "available to work with the team" of Americans attending international climate change meetings." [Juliet Eilperin, "Climate Official's Work is Questioned," The Washington Post, 12/5/05]