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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
FACSIMILE (202) 225-4784
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TTY (202) 225-6852

<http://oversight.house.gov>

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July 17, 2007

The Honorable John P. Walters
Director
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000

Dear Director Walters:

I am writing to request information relating to efforts by White House officials to direct you or other officials in the Office of National Drug Control Policy to travel at taxpayer expense to events with Republican candidates for political office.

The Committee has obtained an e-mail written by Douglas Simon, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) liaison to the White House, that describes a political briefing given by Karl Rove after the 2006 elections. According to this e-mail, Mr. Rove commended the efforts of ONDCP and the Departments of Commerce, Transportation, and Agriculture for "the work that went into surrogate appearances by Cabinet members and...the 72 Hour deployment." Mr. Simon wrote:

Karl Rove opened the meeting with a thank you for all of the work that went into the surrogate appearances by Cabinet members and for the 72 Hour deployment. He specifically thanked, for going above and beyond the call of duty, the Dept. of Commerce, Transportation, Agriculture, AND the WH Drug Policy Office. This recognition is not something we hear everyday and we should feel confident that our hard work is noticed. All of this is due to our efforts in preparing the Director and Deputies for their trips and events. Director Walters and the Deputies covered thousands of miles to attend numerous official events all across the country. The Director and the Deputies deserve the most recognition because they actually had to give up time with their families for the god awful places we sent them.¹

¹ E-mail from Douglas A. Simon to Michael F. Bishop, *et al.* (Nov. 21, 2006) (Simon-22).

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Attached to Mr. Simon's e-mail was a memorandum written by Sara Taylor, the White House Director of Political Affairs, that enumerated 31 events she suggested you or your deputies attend in 2006.²

On June 27, 2007, Committee staff requested that your office provide the Committee with all other versions of Ms. Taylor's memo and all related communications between ONDCP and White House officials discussing the travel of ONDCP officials. Committee staff also requested an interview with Mr. Simon, who still serves as your White House liaison. Committee staff requested these documents and interview by July 13, 2007.

ONDCP officials initially told Committee staff that they had collected the documents responsive to this request and that Mr. Simon was willing to participate in a voluntary interview. Late last week, however, ONDCP officials informed Committee staff that White House officials were reviewing this request and had not agreed to release the documents or allow Mr. Simon to be interviewed.

The purpose of this letter is to formalize the Committee's requests and to make additional requests for information relating to the Committee's investigation. I ask that you provide all documents relating to the involvement of Karl Rove or officials in the White House Office of Political Affairs in scheduling, suggesting, coordinating, or directing events with Republican elected officials or Republican candidates for office for any ONDCP officials during calendar year 2006. In addition, I request that you provide all documents related to any of the 31 events listed in Ms. Taylor's memo, including communications with the offices of the Republican officials involved, agendas, itineraries, press releases, and texts of speeches.

I also request that you provide the Committee with a list of all events with Republican elected officials or Republican candidates for office that you and/or your Deputy Directors attended outside of Washington, DC, in an official capacity during 2006. For each event, please provide the date and location of the event, a brief description of the purpose of the event, the identity of the Republican elected officials or Republican candidates for office attending the event, and a statement whether taxpayer funds were used to travel to the event.

The Committee may hold a hearing with Sara Taylor, the former Director of the White House Office of Political Affairs, on July 30, 2007. Because the documents I am requesting and the interview with Mr. Simon are likely to be relevant to this hearing, I ask that you provide the documents and make Mr. Simon available for an interview with Committee staff on or before July 24, 2007.

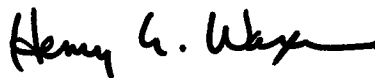
² Memorandum from Sara Taylor, Director, White House Office of Political Affairs, and Mindy McLaughlin, Surrogate Scheduler, White House, to Doug Simon, White House Liaison, ONDCP (Nov. 20, 2006) (Simon-22).

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The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction as set forth in House Rule X. An attachment to this letter provides additional information about how to respond to the Committee's request.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me or ask your staff to contact David Leviss or Susanne Sachsman of the Committee staff at (202) 225-5420.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

Enclosure

cc: Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member