



January 30, 2006

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Gonzales,

In light of the underlying facts and the corresponding Justice Department investigations into criminal acts by numerous fundraisers for presidential candidates John Edwards and George W. Bush, we request that the Justice Department conduct the following:

- 1) an investigation into the funds raised by any bundling fundraiser for either Edwards or Bush who has pleaded guilty or been indicted or convicted of fraud, corruption, or any election-related law since 1990, including but not limited to Ken Lay, Jack Abramoff, Brent Wilkes, James Tobin and Pierce O'Donnell; and
- 2) a random audit of the "bundling" fundraising programs of 2004 presidential candidates John Edwards and George W. Bush, to ensure the absence of any additional illegal conduit contributions from bundling fundraisers.

Campaigns Create Strong Incentive for Illegal Conduit Contributions

The presidential campaigns of John Edwards, George Bush, and other candidates had programs for fundraising supporters that encouraged people to reach specific benchmarks in money raised. Under these programs, such as the Pioneers, fundraisers who raised and bundled a certain dollar amount of campaign contributions were generally rewarded with increased access to the candidate during and after the campaign, in addition to the kind of prestige and cachet that can open doors in the highest circles of the political and business communities.

The incentives provided by both campaigns to bundlers were powerful enough to cause bundlers to break the law in their pursuit. The Justice Department has already indicted

Tom Noe for making illegal campaign contributions to the 2004 presidential campaign of George W. Bush through conduit contributors. Last week, the Justice Department convened a grand jury in Michigan to indict Geoffrey Fieger for making similar illegal campaign contributions to the 2004 presidential campaign of John Edwards through conduit contributors. The Associated Press has reported that the Justice Department also investigated Arkansas lawyer and Edwards fundraiser C. Tab Turner for illegal conduit contributions to John Edwards 2004 campaign.

Bundlers Have Broken Numerous Election and Fraud Laws

Other bundling fundraisers have shown a willingness to break federal election laws in order to achieve the same ends as the incentives provided by the bundling programs. Ken Lay goes on trial this week for wire, securities and bank fraud, and making false and misleading statements. Jack Abramoff has pleaded guilty to using campaign contributions to purchase access and influence with federal officials and elected representatives. Brent Wilkes has been identified by his attorney as one of the co-conspirators fingered by former Congressman Duke Cunningham in his guilty plea for bribing Cunningham in return for help getting federal defense contracts. James Tobin has been convicted of tampering with phone lines to obstruct get-out-the-vote efforts in New Hampshire. It bears investigating whether men who appear to have shown such cavalier regard for the law in these other areas also skirted the law by funneling federal campaign contributions through conduits.

Campaign contributions funneled through some of these fundraisers, particularly Brent Wilkes, also demonstrate a similar pattern to those already under investigation by the Justice Department for illegal conduit contributions. A pattern of contributions for identical amounts on identical dates from the employees, business associates, and/or relatives of these men who have demonstrated their willingness to violate federal election laws should raise immediate red flags as to possible illegal conduit contributions.

Public Has No Other Recourse

Because both campaigns refuse to disclose any of the individuals whose contributions were bundled together to meet the fundraising quotas of the campaigns, the public has no way of investigating whether some donors may have been reimbursed for their contributions by those who bundled them. Even the patterns mentioned above are the result of reasonable inferences, rather than the rigorous investigation that only an institution with the subpoena power of the Justice Department can provide.

Several recent scandals have undermined public confidence in the institutions and elected representatives of the United States government. According to polls, some 80% of Americans believe we have a serious problem with corruption. The Justice Department stands alone in being able to investigate the possible illegal actions behind the bundled fundraising programs of presidential candidates Edwards and Bush.

Conclusion

In sum, we ask that the Justice Department conduct the requested audits and investigations promptly, or, if the Department of Justice is not the appropriate jurisdiction, we ask you to forward this letter along to the appropriate authorities.

Due to your status as former attorney for Enron and the White House, we must also ask that you recuse yourself from both the initial determination into whether to conduct the requested audit and investigation and into the audits and investigations themselves.

Respectfully,

Derek Cressman
Director of TheRestofUs.org

Ned Wigglesworth
Analyst for TheRestofUs.org