

Press Release

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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News Release

Issa to Emanuel: Back Off!

August 4, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Following reports that White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel has been orchestrating an effort to intimidate members of Congress and Governors who raise legitimate concerns regarding the effectiveness of the stimulus, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) sent a letter to Emanuel saying “While this type of scare tactic may work in Chicago, it will not work to intimidate me or other Members of the United States Congress.”

“I and others have dared to bring these facts to the attention of President Obama, the Congress and the American people,” Issa wrote. “You’ve unfortunately reacted by once again resorting to the playbook of the Chicago political machine.”

Last month, *Politico* reported that Emanuel had “launched a coordinated effort to jam” Senator Kyl and other Administration critics... “[A]fter seeing Kyl and House Minority Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA) again paint the legislation as a failure on Sunday talk shows, White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel directed that the letters from the Cabinet secretaries be sent to [Governor] Brewer, according to two administration officials.”

Issa noted, “The fact that the letters were coordinated by you to maximize the level of intimidation is supported by the timing, structure, and content of each letter. Not only were the four letters all sent the day following Senator Kyl’s remarks, but they were also remarkably similar in tone and sentence structure.”

Letter from Ray LaHood, Secretary of Transportation:

On Sunday, Arizona Senator Jon Kyl publicly questioned whether the stimulus is working and stated that he wants to cancel projects that aren’t presently underway. I believe the stimulus has been very effective in creating job opportunities throughout the country. *However, if you prefer to forfeit the money we are making available to your state, as Senator Kyl suggests, please let me know* [emphasis added].

Letter from Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior:

Some key Republican leaders in Congress have publicly questioned whether the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is working and suggested cancelling all projects that are not currently in progress. I believe they are wrong. The stimulus funds provided through the Recovery Act are a very effective way to create job opportunities throughout the Country. *However, if you prefer to forfeit the money we are making available to Arizona, please let me know* [emphasis added].

“At what point do you believe your practice of Chicago-style politics violates a public official’s right to speak out in favor of alternative policies,” Issa asks. “The American people have a right to know what role you played in developing the threatening letters to Governor Brewer and whether you intend to continue to engage in these tactics in the future.”

In order to assist the Committee with its investigation of this issue, please provide the following information by close of business on Tuesday, August 11, 2009:

1. Your response to *Politico*’s report that “White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel directed that the letters from the Cabinet secretaries be sent to [Governor] Brewer, according to two administration officials.”

2. A full and complete explanation of the development of the four July 13 letters from the cabinet secretaries to Governor Brewer, including but not limited to the role you or any other White House official played in writing the letters or encouraging the writing of the letters.
3. All records and communications between you and Secretary LaHood, Secretary Salazar, Secretary Donovan, and Secretary Vilsack referring or relating to the decision to send the July 13 letters to Governor Brewer.
4. A full and complete explanation of the role of the Democratic National Committee and the White House Office of Political Affairs in authoring, encouraging, facilitating, or directing the four July 13 letters from the cabinet secretaries to Governor Brewer.

You can view a copy of the full letter to Emanuel by clicking [here](#).