

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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March 22, 2010

The Honorable Robert Bauer
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Bauer:

On March 10, 2010 I wrote to you requesting additional information about Rep. Joe Sestak's public statements that the White House tried to secure his withdrawal from Pennsylvania's Democratic Primary for the United States Senate in exchange for a high ranking federal job – believed to be Secretary of the Navy. I requested answers to seven straightforward questions by no later than March 18, 2010. To date, the White House has not responded to my letter.

On Tuesday of this week, March 16, 2010, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs stated publicly, that he – the press secretary – personally met with several White House staffers about the possibly criminal Sestak allegations. Gibbs stated:

I've talked to several people in the White House. I've talked to people who have talked to others in the White House I'm told that whatever conversations have been had, are not problematic. I think Congressman Sestak has discussed that this is – whatever happened is in the past and he is focused on this primary.¹

To say the least, this is a highly irregular methodology for conducting a serious internal investigation of what, according to Rep. Sestak, may amount to criminal activity. Gibbs's statements – namely that he is collecting direct evidence from witnesses – imply that the White House is allowing its communications staff to carry out investigative tasks

¹ Fred Lucas, *White House Says Whatever Conversation It Had With Rep. Sestak Was 'Not Problematic'*, CNSNews.com, Mar. 17, 2010; Thomas Fitzgerald, *Gibbs: White House Conversations With Sestak Clean*, Commonwealth Confidential Blog, Philly.com, Mar. 16, 2010.

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ordinarily conducted by legal professionals in the Counsel's office. Such slipshodness has all the makings of a cover-up.

In my March 10, 2010 letter I asked some simple questions about Sestak's allegations: who at the White House offered Sestak the position; what position was he offered; when was the offer made; under what conditions was the job offered; and what type of investigation is your office conducting to determine the extent of the criminal activity reported by the Congressman.

I have some additional questions about this matter:

1. What is the role of Press Secretary Robert Gibbs in the White House's internal investigation into this serious criminal matter?
2. Explain the basis for Robert Gibbs to take testimony from witnesses about this serious criminal matter?
3. Gibbs stated that he has "talked to several people in the White House" about the Sestak matter. Identify these individuals.
4. On what basis has Robert Gibbs concluded that "whatever conversations have been had, are not problematic?"
5. What is the status of your internal investigation?

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.

We look forward to your response by April 5, 2010. You may contact the Committee staff at (202) 225-5074 if you have any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Darrell Issa
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Edolphus Towns, Chairman