

WHY ROVE RESIGNED? TO GRANT THE ADMINISTRATION IMMUNITY

There have been a flurry of stories depicting the degree to which the Bush Administration has politicized ... everything. McClatchy described how Treasury and Commerce were making decisions based on the political value for the Republican party. And today, the WaPo describes how Interior and Labor were doing the same. And based on interviews and documents, the WaPo describes the whole process as more systematic than anything before.

But Rove, who announced last week that he is resigning from the WhiteHouse at the end of August, pursued the goal far more systematically than his predecessors, according to interviews and documents reviewed by The Washington Post, enlisting political appointees at every level of government in a permanent campaign that was an integral part of his strategy to establish Republican electoral dominance.

[snip]

Investigators, however, said the scale of Rove's effort is far broader than previously revealed; they say that Rove's team gave more than 100 such briefings during the seven years of the Bush administration. The political sessions touched nearly all of the Cabinet departments and a handful of smaller agencies that often had major roles in providing grants, such as the White House office of drug policy and the State Department's Agency for International Development.

Well, so what? What are you going to do about it?

See, for the most part, we're talking about civil Hatch Act violations. And the punishment for civil Hatch Act violations? To be fired from your job. Shall we review the names of those most involved in leading this process?

- Karl Rove
- Sara Taylor
- Scott Jennings
- Barry Jackson
- Ken Mehlman
- Susan Ralston

Rove, Taylor, Mehlman, and Ralston are gone, and Jackson is rumored to be leaving. Add in Monica Goodling, who only admitted to her massive Hatch Act violations after she resigned. So how are you going to hold the White House responsible for its massive Hatch Act violations, if the people involved have already mooted the only punishment available?

FWIW, with the David Iglesias firing and cover-up, the Administration has strayed into criminal Hatch Act violations, which carry a criminal penalty (if we can find anyone who would actually charge them for it). And there may be more examples where you could make the case. But most of what the recent flurry of reporting talks about? By resigning, Rove basically made the Administration immune from any punishment for it.