

ABOUT THAT NEED FOR A WHISTLEBLOWER LAW...

I believe it was just the other day when I was saying it was more urgent to implement whistleblower protection than to write a new journalist shield law. This doesn't change my opinion in that regard.

This summer the House Judiciary Committee launched an effort to collect tips from would-be whistleblowers in the Justice Department. The U.S. attorney firings scandal had shown that much was amiss in the Department, and with the danger of retaliation very real, the committee had set up a form on the committee's website for people to blow the whistle privately about abuses there. Although the panel said it would not accept anonymous tips, it assured those who came forward that their identity would be held in the "strictest confidence."

But in an email sent out today, the committee inadvertently sent the email addresses of all the would-be whistleblowers to everyone who had written in to the tipline. The committee email was sent to tipsters who had used the website form, including presumably whistleblowersthemselfs, and all of the recipients of the email were accidentally included in the "to:" field – instead of concealing those addresses with a so-called blind carbon copy or "bcc:".

See, if we didn't force our whistleblowers to sneak around so much, this wouldn't be the monumental fuck up it is. As it is though, this is likely to discourage a more whistleblowers

from coming forward.

That say, I will at least entertain (for the moment) that this was deliberate. The Republicans have always hated this tip line—they've been trying to shut it down since Conyers started this. And the email explained that the tip line has now been shut down.

This message is to inform you that the Committee is now ending the tipline and has voted to approve procedures governing the confidentiality of the e-mails received.

So this email included the emails of everyone who has—or will—submit a tip to the tip line. And that entire list was carbon copied to Cheney's office.

Some of the email addresses appear to be transparently fake, but there's also, much more troubling, a `vice_president@whitehouse.gov` carbon copied on the email, which is the public email address for Vice President Dick Cheney.

In other words, it would be very smart poker if some disloyal Democratic staffer or a Republican staffer to "accidentally" send Cheney the list of all those who were revealing secrets about DOJ. There have been some Republican leaks of damaging testimony in the past. What would it take for someone to "accidentally" make this tip line backfire—to make it serve the intelligence purposes of those trying to avoid responsibility for politicizing DOJ, rather than the opposite?