

OH, NOW THEY'RE TRYING TO INSIST ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO ARCHIVE

It seems like BushCo—particularly Cheney—have been fighting for about 2 years to limit their responsibility under the Presidential Records Act to actually supply their papers to the National Archive in usable and timely fashion.

Well, all of a sudden, they're arguing the contrary—that the papers have to go immediately.

The new Congress on Thursday asked a federal judge to force the Bush White House to keep documents on the controversial firings of nine federal prosecutors instead of turning them over to the National Archives.

[snip]

They asked U.S. District Judge John Bates to order the administration to leave the documents at the White House in the custody of President-elect Barack Obama's aides in case the information is needed.

Justice Department lawyers argued that the White House is required to turn the material over to the National Archives.

[snip]

The National Archives has already agreed to segregate the subpoenaed material from the rest of Bush's documents in case it is needed by the courts or the Obama administration, lawyers said.

"If they want the documents, they can request them from NARA," lawyer Carl Nichols said.

But Bates said he had no doubt "there

will be some delay if the materials are sent" to the Archives. The judge suggested that he may order the administration to make copies of the documents so they can send the originals to the Archives and make the copies available to the incoming administration.

He said he would make a final ruling on Friday.

This is all follow-up to the rule passed on Tuesday that allows the House Judiciary Committee to pick up its pursuit of testimony in the US Attorney firing investigation right where they left off.

I guess Conyers didn't want to have any down time during the early days of this Congress.

Update: And in somewhat related move, a different District Court Judge ruled that BushCo doesn't get to hide what kind of wingnuts were visiting Cheney's house.

A federal judge on Friday rejected the Bush administration's latest attempt to keep secret the identities of White House visitors and declared that it engaged in illegal record-keeping practices.

[snip]

A watchdog group, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, asked for the records to determine whether nine conservative religious leaders visited the White House and Vice President Dick Cheney's residence in October 2006.

Lamberth's decision means the government will have to find other legal grounds if it wants to block release of the Secret Service logs.

All this transparency is getting sort of exciting.

A pity we didn't get it about 2 years ago.