

ANYONE WONDERING WHETHER GREGG JUST DIDN'T WANT SCRUTINY OF HIS OFFICE'S FAVORS FOR ABRAMOFF?

Darn. We'll have one less Republican in Obama's cabinet, at least until Obama nominates Mitt Romney or Newt Gingrich to the post. I'm heartbroken.

But, really, does anyone actually believe this claptrap?

However, it has become apparent during this process that this will not work for me as I have found that on issues such as the stimulus package and the Census there are irresolvable conflicts for me. Prior to accepting this post, we had discussed these and other potential differences, but unfortunately we did not adequately focus on these concerns. We are functioning from a different set of views on many critical items of policy.

Shorter Gregg: "I just completely stopped listening after the moment Obama said, 'interested in a cabinet spot?' and missed all his discussion of retaining the census in Democratic hands."

Yeah, I don't find that too plausible either.

I wonder whether Gregg simply got to the point in the vetting process where he realized that he didn't want his life to be investigated in detail by his colleagues and the press? I mean, it was just hours after Gregg was nominated that it became clear that Gregg's Legislative

Director from 2002 to 2004, Kevin Koonce, had been trading sports and music tickets and booze for legislative favors. As the latest details on the Abramoff make clear, Abramoff and his cronies were asking for \$3.5 million earmarks and the defeat of a defense appropriations bill that would have hurt Abramoff's Native American gaming clients. Koonce's language, "[Gregg's office] had the proposed amendment 'flagged,'" "I got something for you too," "Let me know if I can return the favor," and Abramoff's language (describing a request from a potential Abramoff client), "Koonce practically lives in our various suites. We are shady," suggest Abramoff's \$10,000 investment in sports tickets did not go to waste. Koonce was delivering on Abramoff's requests.

Which sort of means—whether or not Gregg is a subject or a target of the investigation at the moment—his office was trading legislative favors for gifts. And those trades, whether they were made with or without Gregg's knowledge, certainly don't say much for Gregg's ability to shepherd the nation's commercial interests.

Sure, Gregg tells a nice story about how his lifetime dream was to run a census. But I suspect he's just hoping to get out of the Senate in 2010 with his honor and his clear criminal record intact.