

Judicial Watch Announces List of Washington's "Ten Most Wanted Corrupt Politicians" for 2009

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Judicial Watch, the public interest group that investigates and prosecutes government corruption, today released its 2009 list of Washington's "Ten Most Wanted Corrupt Politicians." The list, in alphabetical order, includes:

1. **Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT):** This marks two years in a row for Senator Dodd, who made the 2008 "Ten Most Corrupt" list for his corrupt relationship with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and for accepting preferential treatment and loan terms from [Countrywide Financial](#), a scandal which still dogs him. In 2009, the scandals kept coming for the Connecticut Democrat. In 2009, Judicial Watch filed a [Senate ethics complaint](#) against Dodd for undervaluing a property he owns in Ireland on his Senate Financial Disclosure forms. Judicial Watch's complaint forced Dodd to amend the forms. However, press reports suggest the property to this day remains undervalued. Judicial Watch also alleges in the complaint that Dodd obtained a sweetheart deal for the property in exchange for his assistance in obtaining a presidential pardon (during the Clinton administration) and other favors for a long-time friend and business associate. The false financial disclosure forms were part of the cover-up. Dodd remains the head the Senate Banking Committee.
2. **Senator John Ensign (R-NV):** A number of scandals popped up in 2009 involving public officials who conducted illicit affairs, and then attempted to cover them up with hush payments and favors, an obvious abuse of power. The year's worst offender might just be Nevada Republican Senator John Ensign. Ensign admitted in June to an extramarital affair with the wife of one of his staff members, who then allegedly obtained special favors from the Nevada Republican in exchange for his silence. According to [The New York Times](#): "The Justice Department and the Senate Ethics Committee are expected to conduct preliminary inquiries into whether Senator John Ensign violated federal law or ethics rules as part of an effort to conceal an affair with the wife of an aide..." The former staffer, Douglas Hampton, began to lobby Mr. Ensign's office immediately upon leaving his congressional job, despite the fact that he was subject to a one-year lobbying ban. Ensign seems to have ignored the law and allowed Hampton lobbying access to his office as a payment for his silence about the affair. (These are potentially criminal offenses.) It looks as if Ensign misused his public office (and taxpayer resources) to cover up his sexual shenanigans.
3. **Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA):** Judicial Watch is investigating a [\\$12 million TARP cash injection](#) provided to the Boston-based OneUnited Bank at the urging of Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank. As reported in the January 22, 2009, edition of the Wall Street Journal, the Treasury Department indicated it would only provide funds to healthy banks to jump-start lending. Not only was OneUnited Bank in massive financial turmoil, but it was also "under attack from its regulators for allegations of poor lending practices and executive-pay abuses, including owning a Porsche for its executives' use." Rep. Frank admitted he spoke to a "federal regulator," and Treasury granted the funds. (The bank continues to flounder despite Frank's intervention for federal dollars.) Moreover, Judicial Watch [uncovered documents in 2009](#) that showed that members of Congress for years were aware that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac were playing fast and loose with accounting issues, risk assessment issues and executive compensation issues, even as liberals led by Rep. Frank continued to block attempts to rein in the two Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs). For example, [during a hearing](#) on September 10, 2003, before the House Committee on Financial Services considering a Bush administration proposal to further regulate Fannie and Freddie, Rep. Frank stated: "I want to begin by saying that I am glad to consider the legislation, but I do not think we are facing any kind of a crisis. That is, in my view, the two Government Sponsored Enterprises we are talking about here, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, are not in a crisis. We have recently had an accounting problem with Freddie Mac that has led to people being dismissed, as appears to be appropriate. I do not think at this point there is a problem with a threat to the Treasury." Frank received \$42,350 in campaign contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac between 1989 and 2008. Frank also [engaged in a relationship](#) with a Fannie Mae Executive while serving on the House Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.
4. **Secretary of Treasury Timothy Geithner:** In 2009, Obama Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner admitted that he [failed to pay \\$34,000](#) in Social Security and Medicare taxes from 2001-2004 on his lucrative salary at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an organization with 185 member countries that oversees the global financial system. (Did we mention Geithner now runs the IRS?) It wasn't until President Obama tapped Geithner to head the Treasury Department that he paid back most of the money, although the IRS kindly waived the hefty penalties. In March 2009, Geithner also came under fire for his handling of the AIG bonus scandal, where the company used \$165 million of its bailout funds to pay out executive bonuses, resulting in a massive public backlash. Of course as head of the New York Federal Reserve, Geithner helped craft the AIG deal in September 2008. However, when the AIG scandal broke, Geithner claimed he knew nothing of the bonuses until March 10, 2009. The timing is important. [According to CNN](#): "Although Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner told congressional leaders on Tuesday that he learned of AIG's impending \$160 million bonus payments to members of its troubled financial-products unit on March 10, sources tell TIME that the New York Federal Reserve informed Treasury staff that the payments were imminent on Feb. 28. That is ten days before Treasury staffers say they first learned 'full details' of the bonus plan, and three days before the [Obama] Administration launched a new \$30 billion infusion of cash for AIG." Throw in another embarrassing disclosure in 2009 that Geithner employed "household help" ineligible to work in the United States, and it becomes clear why the Treasury Secretary has earned a spot on the "Ten Most Corrupt Politicians in Washington" list.

5. **Attorney General Eric Holder:** Tim Geithner can be sure he won't be hounded about his tax-dodging by his colleague Eric Holder, US Attorney General. Judicial Watch [strongly opposed](#) Holder because of his terrible ethics record, which includes: obstructing an FBI investigation of the theft of nuclear secrets from Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory; rejecting multiple requests for an independent counsel to investigate alleged fundraising abuses by then-Vice President Al Gore in the Clinton White House; undermining the criminal investigation of President Clinton by Kenneth Starr in the midst of the Lewinsky investigation; and planning the violent raid to seize then-six-year-old Elian Gonzalez at gunpoint in order to return him to Castro's Cuba. Moreover, there is his soft record on terrorism. Holder bypassed Justice Department procedures to push through Bill Clinton's scandalous presidential pardons and commutations, including for 16 members of FALN, a violent Puerto Rican terrorist group that orchestrated approximately 120 bombings in the United States, killing at least six people and permanently maiming dozens of others, including law enforcement officers. His record in the current administration is no better. As he did during the Clinton administration, Holder continues to ignore serious incidents of corruption that could impact his political bosses at the White House. For example, Holder has refused to investigate charges that the Obama political machine traded VIP [access to the White House](#) in exchange for campaign contributions – a scheme eerily similar to one hatched by Holder's former boss, Bill Clinton in the 1990s. The Holder Justice Department also came under fire for dropping a voter intimidation case against the [New Black Panther Party](#). On Election Day 2008, Black Panthers dressed in paramilitary garb threatened voters as they approached polling stations. Holder has also failed to initiate a comprehensive Justice investigation of the notorious organization ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), which is closely tied to President Obama. There were allegedly more than 400,000 fraudulent ACORN voter registrations in the 2008 campaign. And then there were the [journalist videos](#) catching ACORN Housing workers advising undercover reporters on how to evade tax, immigration, and child prostitution laws. Holder's controversial decisions on new rights for terrorists and his attacks on previous efforts to combat terrorism remind many of the fact that his former law firm has provided and continues to provide pro bono representation to terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. Holder's politicization of the Justice Department makes one long for the days of Alberto Gonzales.
6. **Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL)/ Senator Roland Burris (D-IL):** One of the most serious scandals of 2009 involved a scheme by former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich to sell President Obama's then-vacant Senate seat to the highest bidder. Two men caught smack dab in the middle of the scandal: Senator Roland Burris, who ultimately got the job, and Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. According to the [Chicago Sun-Times](#), emissaries for Jesse Jackson Jr., named "Senate Candidate A" in the Blagojevich indictment, reportedly offered \$1.5 million to Blagojevich during a fundraiser if he named Jackson Jr. to Obama's seat. Three days later federal authorities arrested Blagojevich. Burris, for his part, apparently lied about his contacts with Blagojevich, who was arrested in December 2008 for trying to sell Obama's Senate seat. According to [Reuters](#): "Roland Burris came under fresh scrutiny...after disclosing he tried to raise money for the disgraced former Illinois governor who named him to the U.S. Senate seat once held by President Barack Obama...In the latest of those admissions, Burris said he looked into mounting a fundraiser for Rod Blagojevich -- later charged with trying to sell Obama's Senate seat -- at the same time he was expressing interest to the then-governor's aides about his desire to be appointed." Burris changed his story five times regarding his contacts with Blagojevich prior to the Illinois governor appointing him to the U.S. Senate. Three of those changing explanations came under oath.
7. **President Barack Obama:** During his presidential campaign, President Obama promised to run an ethical and transparent administration. However, in his first year in office, the President has delivered corruption and secrecy, bringing Chicago-style political corruption to the White House. Consider just a few Obama administration "lowlights" from year one: Even before President Obama was sworn into office, he was interviewed by the FBI for a criminal investigation of former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich's scheme to sell the President's former Senate seat to the highest bidder. (Obama's Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel and slumlord Valerie Jarrett, both from Chicago, are also tangled up in the Blagojevich scandal.) Moreover, the Obama administration made the startling claim that the [Privacy Act does not apply to the White House](#). *The Obama White House believes it can violate the privacy rights of American citizens without any legal consequences or accountability.* President Obama boldly proclaimed that "transparency and the rule of law will be the touchstones of this presidency," but his administration is addicted to secrecy, stonewalling far too many of Judicial Watch's [Freedom of Information Act requests](#) and is refusing to make public White House visitor logs as federal law requires. The Obama administration turned the National Endowment of the Arts (as well as the agency that runs the AmeriCorps program) into [propaganda machines](#), using tax dollars to persuade "artists" to promote the Obama agenda. According to documents uncovered by Judicial Watch, the idea [emerged as a direct result of the Obama campaign](#) and enjoyed White House approval and participation. President Obama has installed a record number of "czars" in positions of power. Too many of these individuals are [leftist radicals](#) who answer to no one but the president. And too many of the czars are not subject to Senate confirmation (which raises serious constitutional questions). Under the President's bailout schemes, the federal government continues to appropriate or control — through fiat and threats — large sectors of the private economy, prompting conservative columnist George Will to write: "The administration's central activity — the political allocation of wealth and opportunity — is not merely susceptible to corruption, it is corruption." Government-run healthcare and car companies, White House coercion, uninvestigated ACORN corruption, debasing his office to help Chicago cronies, attacks on conservative media and the private sector, unprecedented and dangerous new rights for terrorists, perks for campaign donors — this is Obama's "ethics" record — and we haven't even gotten through the first year of his presidency.
8. **Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA):** At the heart of the corruption problem in Washington is a sense of entitlement. Politicians believe laws and rules (even the U.S. Constitution) apply to the rest of us but not to them. Case in point: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her excessive and [boorish demands](#) for military travel. Judicial Watch obtained documents from the Pentagon in 2009 that suggest Pelosi has been treating the Air Force like her own personal airline. These documents, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, include internal Pentagon email correspondence detailing attempts by Pentagon staff to accommodate Pelosi's numerous requests for military escorts and military aircraft as well as the speaker's 11th hour cancellations and changes. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also came under fire in April 2009, when she claimed she was never briefed about the CIA's use of the waterboarding technique during terrorism investigations. The CIA produced a report documenting a briefing with Pelosi on September 4, 2002, that suggests otherwise. Judicial Watch also obtained documents, including a [CIA Inspector General report](#), which further confirmed that Congress was fully briefed on the enhanced interrogation techniques. Aside from her own personal transgressions, Nancy Pelosi has ignored serious incidents of corruption within her own party, including many of the individuals on this list. (See Rangel, Murtha, Jesse Jackson, Jr., etc.)
9. **Rep. John Murtha (D-PA) and the rest of the PMA Seven:** Rep. John Murtha made headlines in 2009 for all the wrong reasons. The Pennsylvania congressman is under federal investigation for his corrupt relationship with the now-defunct

defense lobbyist PMA Group. PMA, founded by a former Murtha associate, has been the congressman's largest campaign contributor. Since 2002, Murtha has raised \$1.7 million from PMA and its clients. And what did PMA and its clients receive from Murtha in return for their generosity? Earmarks -- tens of millions of dollars in earmarks. In fact, even with all of the attention surrounding his alleged influence peddling, Murtha kept at it. Following an FBI raid of PMA's offices earlier in 2009, Murtha continued to seek congressional earmarks for PMA clients, while also hitting them up for campaign contributions. According to [The Hill](#), in April, "Murtha reported receiving contributions from three former PMA clients for whom he requested earmarks in the pending appropriations bills." When it comes to the PMA scandal, Murtha is not alone. As many as six other Members of Congress are currently under scrutiny according to [The Washington Post](#). They include: Peter J. Visclosky (D-IN.), James P. Moran Jr. (D-VA), Norm Dicks (D-WA.), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), C.W. Bill Young (R-FL.) and Todd Tiahrt (R-KS.). Of course rather than investigate this serious scandal, according to [Roll Call](#) House Democrats circled the wagons, "cobbling together a defense to offer political cover to their rank and file." The Washington Post also reported in 2009 that Murtha's nephew received \$4 million in Defense Department [no-bid contracts](#): "Newly obtained documents...show Robert Murtha mentioning his influential family connection as leverage in his business dealings and holding unusual power with the military."

10. **Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY):** Rangel, the man in charge of writing tax policy for the entire country, has yet to adequately explain how he could possibly ["forget" to pay taxes](#) on \$75,000 in rental income he earned from his off-shore rental property. He also faces allegations that he improperly used his influence to maintain ownership of highly coveted rent-controlled apartments in Harlem, and misused his congressional office to fundraise for his private Rangel Center by preserving a tax loophole for an oil drilling company in exchange for funding. On top of all that, Rangel recently amended his financial disclosure reports, which doubled his reported wealth. (He somehow "forgot" about \$1 million in assets.) And what did he do when the House Ethics Committee started looking into all of this? He apparently resorted to making "campaign contributions" to dig his way out of trouble. According to [WCBS TV](#), a New York CBS affiliate: "The reigning member of Congress' top tax committee is apparently 'wrangling' other politicians to get him out of his own financial and tax troubles...Since ethics probes began last year the 79-year-old congressman has given campaign donations to 119 members of Congress, including three of the five Democrats on the House Ethics Committee who are charged with investigating him." Charlie Rangel should not be allowed to remain in Congress, let alone serve as Chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, and he knows it. That's why he felt the need to disburse campaign contributions to Ethics Committee members and other congressional colleagues.