[7/13/78-Not Submitted] [CF, O/A 548]

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ID 783391 THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DATE: 28 JUN 78

FOR ACTION: STU EIZENSTAT — attached (hold)

JACK WATSON

JIM MCINTYRE

BOB LIPSHUTZ

ANNE WEXLER

ESTHER PETERSON attached

INFO ONLY: THE VICE PRESIDENT

RICHARD HARDEN

SUBJECT: HARRIS MEMO RE REQUEST FROM COMMON CAUSE FOR MAINTENANCE OF LOGGING SYSTEM

+ RESPONSE DUE TO RICK HUTCHESON STAFF SECRETARY (456-7052) +

+ BY: 1200 PM FRIDAY 30 JUN 78 +

ACTION REQUESTED: YOUR COMMENTS

STAFF RESPONSE: ( ) I CONCUR. ( ) NO COMMENT. ( ) HOLD.

PLEASE NOTE OTHER COMMENTS BELOW:

THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20410

JUN 2 7 1978

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Request from Common Cause for Maintenance of Logging System

I am attaching a copy of a letter that has been received by several Presidential appointees in the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I would presume that this letter was sent also to high level staff in other Departments.

In this letter Common Cause suggests that high level government officials should keep logs of all official visits and telephone calls and make these available for public inspection.

I believe that this request from Common Cause should be studied on a government-wide basis and a policy adopted that would apply to all Departments and agencies. While the suggestion does coincide with the current Administration's policy of open government, I feel that it would present a number of problems in implementation. Some thoughts that come to mind immediately are:

1. The system would likely be very difficult to handle administratively and would necessitate, among other things, additional staff, increased space and establishment of a uniform system of records.

2. It is our experience that the logs will not be used with enough frequency to make it worthwhile to maintain them.

3. A great deal of judgment would have to be used in determining which contacts are to be logged. For example, social engagements are excluded, yet everyone knows that much business is conducted at such events in Washington.

My initial reaction is to oppose this suggestion, first of all because it would be so difficult to administer and secondly because it probably would not be very successful. I think a better idea is to make it clear that this is an open Administration that welcomes the advice and assistance of consumers and the groups that represent them. Perhaps if this suggestion from Common Cause receives some attention from White House staff and Cabinet members, we can devise a better method of being responsive to the organization's concern without imposing undue burdens on government officials and agencies.

Patricia Roberts Harris

Attachment

common cause
2030 M STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036 · (202) 833-1200

NAN F. WATERMAN
Chairwoman

DAVID COHEN
President

JOHN W. GARDNER
Founding Chairman

April 26, 1978

Ruth T. Prokup
General Counsel
Department of HUD
451 7th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Ms. Prokup:

In the interest of open government, Common Cause has long advocated that government officials maintain uniform, publicly available records of their contacts with persons outside their agencies. In August of 1977, we issued a study of the 1976 appointment calendars of 39 federal regulatory commissioners. Of the 50 commissioners we asked for a record of their contacts, eleven were unwilling or unable to supply any form of appointment record. Even among the records we did obtain, the scope and quality varied significantly.

One of the findings of that study was that for every meeting with a representative of a consumer or public interest organization, or a concerned individual, commissioners recorded ten meetings with industry representatives.

Common Cause believes that logging would create an incentive for government officials to meet more regularly with the non-industry groups that now represent such a small fraction of all government contacts. By increasing accountability, a logging system would help balance the weight of interest group pressures on government officials. We believe logging would also give the public better access to information about those trying to influence government decision-making.

Common Cause supports a logging system that would create a record of the date, subject matter, and name and association of people involved in government contacts, whether they are by telephone, mail, or in person. The system should cover contacts with industry, consultants, Congress, consumers, public interest groups, foreign visitors, and other business callers. Meetings covered by the Sunshine Act, along with staff meetings, Cabinet meetings, social engagements, or meetings with the press, job applicants, confidential informants, educators, or students need

not be made public.

We feel that publicly available logs are a vital part of restoring public confidence in government openness. Most high level officials already keep logs or other records of their official visits and telephone calls.

We would appreciate your telling us: first, whether you currently keep such logs, and second, whether you would be willing in the future to maintain logs that are available for public inspection.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have, and look forward to hearing your reaction to our proposal.

Sincerely,

David Cohen
President

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FOR: Rick Hutcheson

FROM: RICK NEUSTADT

We suggested the attached need not go in, and Secty. Harris has agreed to withdraw it, per Henry Hupshman, her Executive Asst.

cc. Nancy Dorman

Attachment

783391 : THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DATE: 28 JUN 78

ACTION: STU EIZENSTAT — BOB LIPSHUTZ

JACK WATSON — ANNE WEXLER

JIM MCINTYRE — ESTHER PETERSON

INFO ONLY: THE VICE PRESIDENT — RICHARD HARDEN

SUBJECT: HARRIS MEMO RE REQUEST FROM COMMON CAUSE FOR MAINTENANCE OF LOGGING SYSTEM

RESPONSE DUE TO RICK HUTCHESON STAFF SECRETARY (456-7052)

BY: ~~1200 PM FRIDAY~~ 30 JUN 78 (AS RUSH)

ACTION REQUESTED: YOUR COMMENTS

STAFF RESPONSE: ( ) I CONCUR. ( ) NO COMMENT. ( ) HOLD.

PLEASE NOTE OTHER COMMENTS BELOW:

Held until Pres. returns from CD.
Per Rich H.
June 30. /RN

THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20410

JUN 27 1978

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

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common cause
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April 26, 1978

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Sincerely,

David Cohen
President

ID 783391 THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DATE: 28 JUN 78

FOR ACTION: STU EIZENSTAT — BOB LIPSHUTZ

JACK WATSON — ANNE WEXLER

JIM MCINTYRE — ESTHER PETERSON

INFO ONLY: THE VICE PRESIDENT — RICHARD HARDEN

SUBJECT: HARRIS MEMO RE REQUEST FROM COMMON CAUSE FOR MAINTENANCE OF LOGGING SYSTEM

++++++++++++++++++ ++++++++++++++++++ ++++++++++++++++++

+ RESPONSE DUE TO RICK HUTCHESON STAFF SECRETARY (456-7052) +

+ BY: 1200 PM FRIDAY 30 JUN 78 +

++++++++++++++++++ ++++++++++++++++++ ++++++++++++++++++

ACTION REQUESTED: YOUR COMMENTS

STAFF RESPONSE: ( ) I CONCUR. ( ) NO COMMENT. ( ) HOLD.

PLEASE NOTE OTHER COMMENTS BELOW:

The merits of the issue aside, we agree with Secretary Harris that there should be an Administration-wide policy rather than an ad hoc policy in each agency. We, therefore, believe that OMB should develop a proposal and circulate it for comment. For more than five years, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has required logging of meetings.

Edward B. Cohen*
General Counsel
Office of Consumer Adviser

*Esther is out of town.

ID 783411

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

DATE: 29 JUN 78

FOR ACTION: STU EIZENSTAT — FRANK MOORE (LES FRANCIS) n/c

JACK WATSON (+ concur w/ Urban, n/c on others) — ANNE WEXLER — #2 should be held for later for urban ceremony n.c. on 1 or 3

ZBIG BRZEZINSKI — LANDON BUTLER (n/c)

INFO ONLY: THE VICE PRESIDENT — CHARLIE SCHULTZE

RICHARD PETTIGREW

SUBJECT: LIPSHUTZ EXECUTIVE ORDER RE ~~CABINET-LEVEL COMMISSION ON~~ ~~H.O.~~ URBAN AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ANALYSES; ~~RELATING TO CERTAIN POSITION IN LEVEL IV OF EXECUTIVE SCHEDULE~~

RESPONSE DUE TO RICK HUTCHESON STAFF SECRETARY (456-7052)
BY:

ACTION REQUESTED: COMMENTS, IF ANY, BY END OF TODAY

STAFF RESPONSE: ( ) I CONCUR. ( ) NO COMMENT. ( ) HOLD.

PLEASE NOTE OTHER COMMENTS BELOW:

6.29
Held for July signing ceremony

Glen to Peter
Agrado