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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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August 30, 2007

Mr. Fred F. Fielding
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Fielding:

Last week, in an apparent effort to keep the public from learning the extent of missing White House e-mails, the White House took the unusual position that the Office of Administration is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Because Congress also has an interest in this issue, I am writing to request information about the reports that millions of e-mails may have been lost from the White House e-mail system.

On May 29, 2007, Keith Roberts, the Deputy General Counsel of the White House Office of Administration, and Emmet Flood, Special Counsel to the President, briefed Committee staff on the White House e-mail system and the missing e-mails. At the briefing, Mr. Roberts informed Committee staff that the White House had discovered in 2005 that an unknown number of e-mails may not have been preserved in the White House archive, as required by the Presidential Records Act. According to Mr. Roberts, the Office of the Chief Information Officer then conducted a review of the e-mail system to determine the scope of the potential loss. He said that this review apparently found some days with a very small number of preserved e-mails and some days with no e-mails preserved at all. He also stated that a report summarizing these findings had been presented to the White House Counsel's office.

In addition, Mr. Roberts informed the Committee that an unidentified company working for the Information Assurance Directorate of the Office of the Chief Information Officer was responsible for daily audits of the e-mail system and the e-mail archiving process. Mr. Roberts was not able to explain why the daily audits conducted by this contractor failed to detect the problems in the archive system when they first began.

At the conclusion of the briefing, Committee staff requested a copy of the analysis presented to White House Counsel and the identity of the contractor responsible for daily audits and archiving. Mr. Flood told Committee staff that he would take the two requests under consideration. Since then, Committee staff have repeatedly requested that the White House

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provide this information without success. Given that three months have passed since your office first received this request, I am writing to ask that you provide the information to the Committee by September 10, 2007.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction as set forth in House Rule X. An attachment to this letter provides additional information on how to respond to the Committee's request.

If your staff has any questions about this request, they should contact David Rapallo with the Committee staff at (202) 225-5420.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Henry A. Waxman". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

Enclosure

cc: Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member