

Common Cause

Free Press

Center for Digital Democracy

Nov. 17, 2005

Chairwoman Cheryl Halpern
Vice Chairwoman Gay Hart Gaines
President Patricia Harrison
Inspector General Kenneth Konz
Corporation for Public Broadcasting
401 Ninth Street NW
Washington, DC 20004

Ms. Halpern, Ms. Gaines, Ms. Harrison and Mr. Konz:

The report issued by the Inspector General earlier this week on political interference at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting excludes key evidence uncovered during the investigation. We ask you to immediately release to the public all reports, documents and evidence given by the Inspector General to CPB Board of Directors or members of Congress.

The report released by Mr. Konz on Nov. 15 cites delivery of a "separate investigative report, along with specific evidence indicating possible wrongdoing, to the Board for their disposition." It is highly inappropriate for members of the board, CPB senior staff and the Office of Inspector General to keep these materials secret.

Recent press accounts indicate that the Board possesses extensive evidence of potentially inappropriate communications between the CPB and White House officials. According to statements made by Inspector General Konz to Bloomberg News, former CPB Chairman Kenneth Y. Tomlinson discussed programming and hiring matters at the agency with presidential adviser Karl Rove and other White House officials between November 2003 and May 2005.

The Inspector General's report describes "e-mails between the former Chairman and staff in the Executive Office of the President that, while cryptic in nature ... [give] the appearance that the former Chairman was strongly motivated by political considerations in filling the President/CEO position."

We remain deeply concerned about possible interference by the White House in programming and hiring decisions at the CPB -- and whether any further laws may have been violated.

The public's right to know transcends the politically convenient "confidentiality agreements" Ms. Harrison claims prevent release of the documents. The public must be

allowed to judge for itself the importance the correspondence between the CPB and top Bush administration officials or any other evidence shared privately with the board.

By withholding information, you are not serving the mission of public broadcasting. The American people must be told the full story of what transpired at the CPB.

Sincerely,

Chellie Pingree
President
Common Cause

Josh Silver
Executive Director
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Jeff Chester
Executive Director
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