

Office of Management and Budget

National News at the time the White House e-mail went missing

(**** = Dates specified by Waxman in January 17, 2008 letter to Fielding)

November 1, 2003 - December 9, 2003.

For these dates, CREW searched *The Washington Post* archives and Google News for articles relating to the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, CREW searched the Library of Congress' legislative database, THOMAS.

6 of the 11 [FY2004 Appropriations Bills](#) Were Passed--OMB Has No Email Records.

Office of Management and Budget does not have any email archived between November 1, 2003 through December 9, 2003. Six of the 11 FY2004 appropriations bills passed during this time.

****November 3, 2003:

It looks as though the White House has failed to get the job done this year in promoting its proposed Human Capital Performance Fund. The fund, announced early this year as part of President Bush's 2004 budget plan, was supposed to provide \$500 million that agencies could tap to award higher raises to their best workers. Officials explained that the fund would help fix a "broken" compensation system in which most federal pay raises are determined by longevity rather than performance. (Christopher Lee, [Bush's Merit Pay Plan Is Stalled in Congress](#), *Washington Post*, November 3, 2003)

****November 6, 2003:

Despite initial assurances about keeping costs down, President Bush signed a law Thursday that will provide [\\$87.5 billion](#) to try to turn around the Iraq occupation after months of bloodshed. The emergency spending package, the biggest in history, is more than double the amount the government spends on homeland security, more than 10 times the budget of the Environmental Protection Agency, and enough to provide all U.S. unemployment benefits for nearly two years.

US Army Corps of Engineers announced a [suspension of Halliburton's no-bid contract](#) for oil services in Iraq. This announcement comes after several weeks of pressure by House Democrats who have led the charge to increase transparency regarding Halliburton's prices and contracting procedures. For months, Congressmen Waxman and Dingell made inquiries to Bush's Office of Management and Budget as well as other administration officials asking for information on Halliburton's prices. Their requests were met with silence.

******November 8, 2003:**

Proposals on taxes and Medicare would help keep the federal budget deep in red ink throughout the next 10 years, even if Congress hews to the White House's tough line on federal spending, a new Congressional Budget Office report suggests [...] The new CBO numbers anticipate the current \$4 trillion publicly held federal debt would more than double over the next decade to \$8.4 trillion under the president's economic prescriptions. This fiscal year would see a record deficit of \$494 billion. That figure would fall to \$415 billion in 2005. In 2008, the deficit would stand at \$417 billion. Never would the deficit dip below the \$374 billion mark set in the fiscal year that ended five weeks ago. That fiscal 2003 deficit was the largest ever in dollar terms, easily exceeding the record set in 1992, when the deficit reached \$290 billion. In contrast, the White House Office of Management and Budget projected in July a deficit of \$475 billion for 2004, falling to \$226 billion in 2008. The largest discrepancy between the new CBO analysis and the OMB figures is projected war costs in Iraq and Afghanistan, which the White House left out of its five-year projections. Even with the rising costs of the Iraq war, White House Budget Director Joshua B. Bolten has maintained that the deficit will be halved by 2008. (Jonathan Weisman, Bush Proposals Will Keep Budget in Red, CBO Projects, *Washington Post*, November 8, 2003)

******November 11, 2003:**

Government Accountability Office had just released a study that showed the “outsized influence over the shape, scope and direction of new federal regulations” that a tiny department with the Office of Management and Budget exercised. The GAO study looked at 85 rules that were changed, returned to the agencies, or withdrawn between July 2001 and June 2002. It found Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs significantly affected 25 of those rules, with changes occurring in cost and benefit estimates--especially for rules issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. (Cindy Skrzycki, Tiny OIRA Still Exercises Its Real Influence Invisibly, *Washington Post*, November 11, 2003).

******November 18, 2003:**

Congress approved an overhaul of executive pay this month as part of the fiscal 2004 defense authorization bill. Under the bill, the six pay grades of the Senior Executive Service would be abolished and replaced with one pay range. The bill also would raise the statutory pay cap that keeps executive salaries linked to the pay provided to presidential appointees and members of Congress. (Stephen Barr, Congress Authorizes a New Pay System for Senior Executives, *Washington Post*, November 18, 2003)

******November 24, 2003:**

As Congress rushes to conclude its 2003 session, Republican leaders are trying to garner votes for controversial legislation by loading the bills with billions of dollars in added

costs that analysts said would expand the budget deficit for years to come. The year-end binge has alarmed analysts in Washington and on Wall Street, coming as it does after three years of presidential and congressional initiatives that have both substantially boosted government spending and shrunk its tax base. (Jonathan Weisman, [Alarms Sounded On Cost of GOP Bills; Lawmakers Increase Spending to Win Votes](#), *Washington Post*, November 24, 2003)

******November 26, 2003:**

[Federal employees who lose their jobs through privatization](#) lost a right to appeal outsourcing decisions because of last minute changes to a massive spending bill. The Office of Management and Budget successfully lobbied to remove several worker-friendly provisions from the \$328 billion bill.

******November 27, 2003:**

Numerous budget and program analysts in the government are crunching numbers at home, before and after their turkey, because the Office of Management and Budget started the annual 'pass back' process Monday [November 24th]. OMB sends spending blueprints to agencies detailing what kind of funding to expect in the president's fiscal 2005 budget, and agencies must respond with their comments and try to sway the White House if the spending plans give them indigestion. For the process to work, analysts have to meet deadlines, even during the holiday season. (Stephen Barr, [Giving Thanks for Devotion to Duty That Take No Holiday](#), *Washington Post*, November 27, 2003)

******December 3, 2003:**

EPA was working to undo mercury emissions regulations under the Clean Air Act. A draft of the proposal was being reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget. (Eric Pianin, [White House, EPA Move to Ease Mercury Rules; More Flexible Enforcement System Sought](#), *Washington Post*, December 3, 2003)

The GOP Medicare Prescription Part D legislation passed in late November 2003. (Amy Goldstein, [Medicare Chief Scully Says He's 'Checking Out of Dodge.'](#) *Washington Post*, December 3, 2003)