

QUINN GILLESPIE'S NEW CLIENT

Ever since Ed Gillespie became Bush's replacement for Dan Bartlett (and after that, for Rove), I've been trying to track the clients of Quinn Gillespie—the firm that Gillespie co-founded. After all, Gillespie is a guy who, up until days before he took on one of the most powerful advisory roles at the White House, was a big-time lobbyist, with a broad clientele. And Gillespie has declined to recuse himself automatically from matters concerning his former clients.

Despite the potential for conflicts of interest, Gillespie won't be forced in his new role to recuse himself from all matters related to the companies he has lobbied for, said Ken Gross, a Washington-based attorney and former associate general counsel with the Federal Election Commission.

Instead, Gillespie will have to decide on a case-by-case basis if his activities could violate federal ethics standards.

So, when Bush pushes back S-CHIP eligibility to prevent S-CHIP from becoming a cornerstone to a universal, government-provided health care program, I think it relevant to consider that, until recently, Bush's counselor was representing the interests of the Coalition to Advance Healthcare Reform—a corporate group pushing privately-funded healthcare. And as Bush prepares to veto a bill reforming the corrupt student loan process, I think it relevant to consider that Gillespie was also, until very recently, representing Nelnet, one of the student loan companies most deeply mired in the scandal. And as Bush commands Congress to enact a bill giving telecommunications companies immunity for their past illegal actions associated with the warrantless wiretapping

program, you might want to remember that until recently, Gillespie was representing the interests of AT&T, Verizon, and the US Telecom Association.

But I have to admit, even I was surprised by the remarkable timing of Quinn Gillespie's most recent (at least thus far recorded in the database) client acquisition.

You see, the rumor that Gillespie would replace Bartlett was reported at least as early as June 3. Bush made it official on June 13. And on June 15, Quinn Gillespie started working for a new client. A pretty significant one, as it turns out.

Just in time to work with Gillespie's now incredibly wired former colleagues—but late enough to avoid any requirement that he recuse himself, the US Chamber of Commerce jumped in bed with Gillespie's close associates. In the first two weeks Gillespie was working at the White House, the US Chamber of Commerce paid his former colleagues \$40,000 to lobby Congress on banking issues, immigration, trade policy, and energy policy.

But I'm sure—now that Gillespie is taking over Bartlett's role **and** Rove's role—Gillespie won't have anything to do with those policy issues.