



Wednesday, October 1, 2008

## **Hot Docs: Investigating the Firing of U.S. Attorneys, Poll on Bailout, Campaign Whoppers**

### **Today's selection of timely reports**

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**Investigating the Firing of Nine U.S. Attorneys:** A federal investigation into the firings of nine U.S. attorneys in 2006 by the [Bush administration](#) has determined that the firings were "unsystematic and arbitrary, with little oversight by the attorney general, the deputy attorney general, or any other senior department official." Despite the fact that the Justice Department's inspector general and the Office of Professional Responsibility produced a 358-page report, they conclude that more investigation is needed because key witnesses such as Karl Rove and Harriet Miers refused to be interviewed. The report recommended that Attorney General Michael Mukasey appoint a special counsel to determine any criminality. Mukasey followed through on Monday by naming Nora Dannehy, the acting U.S. attorney in Connecticut, to continue the inquiry.

**Public Uneasy About the Bailout:** A poll suggests that the public was turning on the [economic bailout](#) plan even before it failed in the House on Monday. In a survey conducted in the days prior to the plan's rejection, a Pew Research Center poll found that support was dropping. Forty-five percent told pollsters that government intervention is the "right thing to do," a 12 percentage-point decline from the previous week. The Pew report notes that "anger about the rescue plan crosses party lines," with two thirds describing themselves as "angry." Even people who supported the bailout plan said that they're concerned that those responsible for the economic crisis won't be punished.

**Campaign Whoppers of 2008:** FactCheck.org has released a list of presidential campaign "whoppers" told by [Barack Obama](#) and [John McCain](#). The list includes McCain's exaggerations of how many times Obama voted to raise taxes and Obama's twisting of facts on McCain's Social Security plan. [Sarah Palin](#) also receives a few mentions—particularly one about the "Bridge to Nowhere" project.

**Ideas for Fixing the Financial Crisis:** To begin damage control for the flailing

economy, a broader policy is needed, a finance professor at Duke University proposes. Campbell Harvey believes the government has "bounced from one problem to the next" for the past 12 months. He describes the considerable faults with the Troubled Asset Relief Program and suggests a proposal that includes creating a "Bank Capitalization Fund" to "jump-start the credit process in our economy."

**America's Energy Future:** The U.S. Chamber of Commerce weighs in on energy with 75 policy recommendations for the next president and Congress. "The Blueprint for Securing America's Energy Future" from the Chamber's Institute for 21st Century Energy includes calling for a permanent end to the "moratorium on explorations and production of America's oil and natural gas resources," an expansion of federal loan guarantees to increase the construction of **nuclear power plants**, and the creation of a Clean Energy Bank of the United States to speed the commercialization of innovative technologies.

**Clean Coal and Climate Change:** As the world considers ways to address climate change, some have proposed "clean coal" energy as part of the solution. The Government Accountability Office releases a report outlining how this carbon capture and storage technology might work in the United States. As yet, few operators have jumped on board—right now, the technology is expensive and relatively untested on a commercial scale. Also, "regulatory and legal uncertainties" include key questions like what happens to the carbon once it's captured. The GAO recommends that the Environmental Protection Agency and the Energy Department work to remove barriers to the adoption of the technology and points out that "the absence of a national strategy to control CO2 emissions" gives industry "little incentive" to participate and slows government "agencies from resolving other important practical issues."

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