

Inauguration Slush Funds Use Unknown, Need Congress Investigation and Law, Weiner & Schwartz Say in Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, October 24, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "We Still Don't Know Where Inauguration Funds Went" is the title of a new piece by Bob Weiner, former Clinton White House and Jared Schwartz, policy analyst, that was published in the Las Vegas Sun on Oct. 21. The piece was ranked H2 by OpEdNews as the No. 2 op-ed in the nation.

Weiner and Schwartz begin, "There is no day that defines the institution of the Presidency more than the inauguration. From Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address to JFK's first, inauguration day is a celebration of peaceful transfer of power. Yet according to FEC filings and reporting by OpenSecrets, of the \$106 million raised, more than double the amount by either of Obama's inaugurations, it is still almost entirely unclear how most was spent."

They argue, "presidency begun under dubious financial circumstances is an administration created in suspicion, and clearing that suspicion up is crucial to protecting the presidency. U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nevada) has introduced the Inaugural Committee Transparency Act in Congress, which would require a public record of where inaugural committee funds go. The Inaugural Committee Transparency Act is a logical, narrowly drawn bill to counteract any misuse of campaign funds."

They write, "This legislation would be a key step to make sure that presidential administrations are free from corruption at their outset. Greg Jenkins, who organized George W. Bush's inauguration, told Rolling Stone that 'they had a third of the staff and a quarter of the events and they raise at least twice as much as we did. So there's the obvious question: Where did it go? I don't know.'"

They explain, "The New York Times indicates that \$25 million went to Hargrove Inc., a company that traditionally manages inaugurations. \$26 million was paid to WIS Media, a firm owned by a friend of the First Lady, which was created six weeks before the inauguration. A little over \$10 million went to three other event-planning companies, and \$5 million went to charity, leaving a total of \$40 million entirely unaccounted for."

They continue, "Both the obvious ethical problems posed by giving \$26 million to a family friend and the unaccounted millions demand congressional investigation and action. How can tens of millions of dollars go missing, right at the start of a presidency, and not trigger any congressional investigation?"

They explain, "These issues are being swept under the rug because congressional Republicans, who now run investigations, have neither the will nor, by choice, the independence from the administration, to do what a co-equal branch should do: investigate and legislate."

They go on, "Should Democrats win back the House, they should immediately open an investigation with the relevant committee and either request or subpoena the financial records of WIS Media and the Trump Inauguration Committee. Congress must ask whether WIS Media did any relevant work or was simply a payout to a friend of the First Lady. The Government Reform and Oversight Committee, which may be chaired by Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland,

could ask those who received payment what they did and what they know about payments to others.”

They write, “If Congress changes hands, it, and specifically the Government Reform and Oversight Committee, could and should do their constitutional duty to legislate and investigate the Inaugural Funds scandal. They should protect the integrity of the presidency by safeguarding the transfer of power and the swearing in of a new commander-in-chief who does not start with a cloud over his or her financial allegiances because of a huge loophole in the law.”

Weiner and Schwartz conclude, “In fact, this is something that both parties should be interested in. With situations like this, it's in the national interest that a bipartisan effort should be made.”

Link to published article: <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2018/oct/21/we-still-dont-know-where-inauguration-funds-went/>

Link to OpEdNews version (updated from original):
<https://www.opednews.com/articles/Inauguration-Slush-Fund-W-by-Robert-Weiner-Democrats-Inauguration-Inauguration-2017-Investigations-181023-533.html>

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