

Crew files Bar complaint against Sen. Vitter

Written by

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Washington D.C. – Today, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington filed a bar complaint with the Louisiana Office of Disciplinary Counsel against Senator David Vitter (R-LA) for violating Louisiana’s rules of professional conduct for lawyers.

In 2007, it was revealed that Sen. Vitter’s telephone number was included in the so-called “D.C. Madam,” Deborah Jeane Palfrey’s, list of client telephone numbers. The senator confirmed he had sought Ms. Palfrey’s services, saying in a statement, “this was a very serious sin in my past for which I am, of course, completely responsible.” Two other women also alleged Sen. Vitter had engaged the services of prostitutes. Jeanette Maier, the “Canal Street Madam,” claimed Sen. Vitter visited the New Orleans brothel several times in the mid-1990s. In addition, a woman who worked as a prostitute under the name of Wendy Cortez said Sen. Vitter was a regular client of hers between July and November 1999.

Under D.C. and Louisiana law, it is a crime to solicit for prostitution. CREW filed a complaint against Sen. Vitter with the Senate Ethics Committee, which dismissed the matter without action in September 2008.

Louisiana Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(b) provides it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to “commit a criminal act especially one that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects.” By repeatedly committing the crime of soliciting for prostitution, Sen. Vitter violated the rules of professional conduct for lawyers and should be investigated and disciplined for his misconduct.

CREW executive director Melanie Sloan stated, “Sen. Vitter’s zeal to see ACORN criminally investigated for offering advice in setting up a prostitution ring reminded me he has yet to be held accountable for his own role in a prostitution ring. While ACORN’s conduct is indefensible, so is Sen. Vitter’s and what is good for the goose is good for the gander.”

13 former prostitutes were forced to testify at the trial of the DC Madam, who committed suicide shortly after her conviction. Sloan noted that one, a former Navy supply officer and Naval Academy instructor, lost her job because the Navy requires those who serve “to adhere to a standard of conduct that reflects the Navy’s values of honor, courage and commitment.” Sloan said, “It is a shame the Senate has no such standard of conduct. It will be interesting to see

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what sort of standard the Louisiana Disciplinary Board chooses to apply.”

Click [here](#) to read CREW's bar complaint and click [here](#) to read the accompanying exhibits.

A citizen for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) is a non-profit legal watchdog group dedicated to holding public officials accountable for their actions. For more information, please visit www.citizensforethics.org or contact Naomi Seligman at (202) 408-5565 /nseligman@citizensforethics.org.