

Michael Toner Comments on Advocacy Group with Close Ties to the White House

NPR's Morning Edition

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Michael E. Toner, co-chair of Wiley Rein's Election Law & Government Ethics Practice, was quoted in an *NPR* story that aired last week on *Morning Edition* about the social welfare group Organizing for Action (OFA) and how the group has very close ties to President Obama.

According to the report, OFA, the tax-exempt advocacy group that grew out of President Obama's campaign organization, violated its own internal fundraising rules when it tried to connect a potential donor with White House officials. Jon Carson, OFA's executive director, set up what turned out to be an unsuccessful meeting between the donor and an unnamed White House official. After the OFA declined to accept the donation, an OFA consultant suggested that the money instead go to another liberal advocacy group. In response the OFA consultant was dismissed and Mr. Carson apologized and promised not to steer money to other social welfare groups.

"For all practical purposes, this entity is an extension of the White House," Mr. Toner told *NPR*. "Each succeeding White House tends to emulate these kinds of practices from its predecessors." Assuming that the OFA stays out of legal trouble, "and if there is a judgment that it effectively helps to advocate the president's policies, I think we'll see similar kinds of organizations in future White Houses."

[Click here to listen to the entire story.](#)

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