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Subject: Politico: WH Releases More Visitor Records

W.H. releases more visitor records

By: Nia-Malika Henderson and Kendra Marr
December 30, 2009 08:12 PM EST

The White House's most recent list of visitors, released Wednesday, serves as a partial mirror of the Obama administration's domestic priorities, particularly health care reform and economic policy affecting Wall Street and the auto industry.

The list includes 25,000 visits from Sept. 16 to Sept. 30, as well as about 2,000 visits dating back to January. Visits to Vice President Joe Biden and his staff are also included. The White House records count the total number of visits rather than individual visitors.

Records show that top administration officials met with Lloyd Blankfein, Chairman of Goldman Sachs, Microsoft's Bill Gates and Karen Ignagni, a lobbyist for AHIP, which represents health care companies as well as Kim Gandy, president of the National Organization for Women, and former Vice President Al Gore.

Steve Rattner, who was tasked with restructuring General Motors and Chrysler before returning to New York, visited the White House 56 times dating back to the beginning of the year. Most of his visits were to see Larry Summers, director of the National Economic Council. Andrew Stern, head of Service Employees International Union and a key labor ally,visited 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue 28 times.

In July, the watchdog group, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington challenged the Obama administration to release the records. The White House responded by releasing about 2,100 records in October and November, and plans to release additional records once a month — the October log is expected in 30 days.

In a blog post, Norm Eisen, Special Counsel to the President for Ethics and Government Reform, said that the "release represents a milestone in the President's commitment to change Washington. The President believes that this and our many other transparency initiatives promote accountability and keep American democracy vital."

"We are excited about the visitor records policy not only because we are breaking new ground for this Administration but also because we are establishing a new standard for all future administrations. We know of no comparable initiative in the history of the White House. Indeed, previous Administrations fought for years to protect just a handful of records — far less than we are putting out for any single day of the month."

All of the records can be found here.