

CREW requests DOJ records on judicial misconduct

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After an investigation by the *Wall Street Journal* last fall uncovered 131 judges who had violated U.S. law and judicial ethics rules by owning the stock of a litigant in cases they heard, it is clear that the U.S. judicial system is suffering from a widespread ethical crisis. Since 2010, there have been 685 court cases in which judges failed to properly recuse themselves when overseeing cases involving companies whose stock they or their family held, the *WSJ* reported. The legitimacy of our judicial system depends on the integrity of judges, and we need answers about the extent of the problem. CREW has requested DOJ records of all complaints or submissions of possible professional misconduct by any U.S. Supreme Court Justice, federal court of appeals judge, district court judge, magistrate judge, or bankruptcy judge since 2010. CREW also requested any referrals made by the DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) to any disciplinary authority or state bar regarding possible professional misconduct by judges.

These conflicts of interest undermine the rule of law and the integrity of our judicial system. However, despite the severity of such ethical violations by a large number of judges across the country, Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts recently downplayed the findings, calling them “isolated violations,” and “unintentional oversights.” But they are not isolated, and it is essential that these records are released—the public deserves to know the extent of this ethical crisis and the lack of accountability in the judicial system that has allowed it to continue.