

Memorandum

To: U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich
From: Robert J. Fittrakis, Ph.D., J.D.
Subject: Possible Congressional hearings
Date: July 25, 2008

Introduction to the issue

In 2001, Michael L. Connell's company GovTech Solutions, L.L.C., a notoriously partisan GOP operative and Bush family confidant, was selected to re-organize the Capitol Hill IT network. Under the guise of selecting a female-owned IT company (Connell's wife Heather is listed as the owner), former Congressman and convicted felon Bob Ney reportedly arranged for Connell to be the man behind the firewall "protecting" the electronic communications for the U.S. House of Representatives. At the same time, Connell built the IT system for Ohio Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell's real-time tabulation of the Ohio election vote counts. That system was outsourced in the 2004 election at the end of Election night to Connell's servers stationed in Chattanooga, TN where hundreds of partisan Republican website also reside, including email accounts used by Karl Rove that are now missing and under investigation. Connell's role and activities need to be investigated by putting Connell under oath and examining how arguably one of the country's most zealously partisan IT specialists managed to land the contract and be allowed access to this electronic communication system.

Steve Spoonamore, a Republican computer security expert, is willing to testify that the apparatus created in Ohio by Connell – in conjunction with the county tabulators served by the well-known right-wing Rapp family who own the Triad Governmental Systems, Inc. – could be used to alter election results. (*See attached Spoonamore bio*). Spoonamore is the former founder and CEO of Cybrinth L.L.C., an information and technology company. He has more than 20 years experience in information technology and is an expert on electronic security and computerized fraud. He is an expert in the King Lincoln Bronzeville lawsuit in Ohio. Spoonamore has briefed the Ohio press corps about the vulnerabilities of Ohio's integrated electronic voting system. What he says reinforces the findings of Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner's Everest study.

Connell Background

Education: 1986, Bachelors in Marketing, University of Iowa

Companies owned:

- New Media Communications (1996)
List of clients at: <http://www.technomania.com/public/Clients/Listss.aspx>
- DCI/New Media L.L.C. (1998 or 1999)
- GovTech Solutions, L.L.C. (April 23, 2001)
(Source: <http://www.allbusiness.com>)
- Connell Donatelli Inc. (CD Inc.) (July 2004)

Partisan Electoral Activities (chronology)

1987 – Staff member for George H.W. Bush campaign for president

1988 – Programmed and developed advanced delegate tracking system for Republican National Convention

11-11-1990 – Senator Dan Coats (R-IN) fired Connell for his role in a “push polling” scheme that Coats denounced as “clearly unethical.”

1993-1994 – Connell served as U.S. Rep. Martin R. Hoke’s (R-OH) Communication Director.

1996 –

- Connell’s newly formed New Media Communications began providing design makeovers and software for Republican candidates and organizations in Ohio and Illinois.
- Public records reflect that he specifically worked on implementing databases and web services for John Bohner’s (R-OH) Freedom Project PAC, John Kasich’s (R-OH) Pioneer PAC, and Dick Arney’s (R-TX) Majority Leaders Fund.
- During this period he did computer work for right-wing ideologue David Horowitz’s Center for the Study of Popular Culture and the website FrontPageMag.com.

1998 –

- Tom Brazatis of the Cleveland Plain Dealer described Connell as “an Internet consultant in 1998 for the winning campaigns of governors Bob Taft in Ohio and Jeb Bush in Florida.” (2-7-2000)
- The 2-7-2000 Brazatis article stated that Connell told the Plain Dealer that he had been hired to do “special internet projects” for George W. Bush. “Connell declined to be more specific,” noted the Plain Dealer.
- After Jeb Bush won the governor’s office, Connell received various Florida IT contracts from the governor’s office, Florida Dept. of Education and Community Affairs, and did computer work for the Florida Republican Party.
- A few months after Bush’s 1998 Florida victory, New Media Communications merged with GOP lobbyist and operative Thomas J. Synhorst and formed DCI/New Media L.L.C. in Richfield, Ohio. Synhorst is listed as a co-founder of GovTech.
- Connell designed Jeb.org, JebWear.com, and GOPWear.com during that election cycle.

1999 – “I’m loyal to my friends and I’m loyal to the Bush family...” Connell quote in Inside Business magazine, November 2, 1999

2000 – New Media Communications became the first to use the Short Message Service (SMS) to get out the vote in the October 2000 parliamentary elections in Slovenia, according to Campaigns and Elections magazine.

2001 –

- In April 2001, Connell spins off GovTech Solutions from New Media Communications to acquire a growing list of government clients such as the House Intelligence, Judiciary, Financial Services, Ways and Means, and Administration Committees.
- Crain's Cleveland Business reported when Connell created GovTech Solutions he told them he had "...decided to roll out a separate company for its political work because government and corporations are 'two animals different enough to have it make sense.'"
- Connell told Crain's that his "GovTech Solutions is the only private-sector company to gain permission from HIR [House Information Resources] to place its servers behind the firewall"
- Connell developed the Bush-Cheney transition website

Jan. 2003-Oct. 2004 –

- According to the Federal Election Commission, Connell's company New Media Communications received more than \$800,000 from the Bush-Cheney Re-Election Campaign between January 2003 and October 2004.
- During the same period New Media Communications brought in \$1.2 million in contracts from Republican congressional candidates, political parties, and the National Rifle Association (Akron Beacon Journal, November 24, 2004).

2004 –

- Connell's company redesigned parts of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence's website.
- Connell handled the IT system work for the Bush-Cheney Re-election Campaign.
- Connell told Campaigns and Elections magazine in June 2004 that his goal in ten years was to be in a "senior position" in the campaign to elect Rick Santorum president of the United States.
- According to SourceWatch, Connell teamed up with R. Rebecca Donatelli, Chair of the D.C.-based Campaign Solutions, to form Connell Donatelli Inc. (CD Inc.) as a specialized online advertising agency in July 2004.
- One of CD, Inc.'s first activities was to become the registrant, administrator and tech organizer for the anti-Kerry group Swiftboat Veterans for Truth's website swiftboatvetsfortruth.org.
(SourceWatch list of clients and references attached).
- Connell worked for Secretary of State J. Kenneth Blackwell in designing the system that allowed the real time outsourcing of Ohio's presidential vote count.

2006 – Connell created first-ever political video ad especially for mobile devices (such as iPods) for the Dick DeVos for governor campaign in Michigan (New Media press release, December 7, 2006)

2007 - George W. Bush's hometown newspaper, the Crawford, Texas Lone Star Iconoclast, pointed out in a December 18, 2007 article "Plumbers 2.0" that top Bush operatives including Karl Rove, emailed plans for dismissing eight U.S. attorneys using accounts set up by Connell - gwb43.com and georgebush.com.
(Source: <http://lonestaricon.com/AbsoluteNM/anmviewer.asp?a=2186>)

2-22-2008 – Akron Beacon Journal reported Connell's team helped develop the John McCain for President website, just as it helped create the website for the last two Bush presidential campaigns.

2008 – The current New Media Communications website states that "New Media Communications conceptualizes, builds, and implements internet strategies and solutions" and "Our political practice groups consults for Republican campaigns and Party organizations in the United States and center-right parties around the world continuing to pioneer new initiatives in online politics."

Conclusion

Perhaps the most partisan Republican IT man in the nation is also the man behind the firewall who controls the "secrets of the temple" for the most important committees in the House of Representatives. He's also built a vulnerable electronic reporting and recording apparatus in the state of Ohio. A hearing with Connell and Spoonamore would put this issue in play prior to the 2008 election. My sources report that Connell and Rove are squabbling over exposure of these facts. Spoonamore claims, and he needs to be put under oath on this, that Connell told him that Rove asked him to erase email connected to Chattanooga server sites.

As we initially talked, you mentioned the possibility of having a hearing sometime in August. I would be happy to assist in any way including turning over my files.

You can contact me at:

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