

Six White House Staffers Used Private Email Accounts



Summary: *At least six members of the White House have used their private emails to conduct official government business, but is doing that illegal?*

It appears the President Donald Trump has his own private email scandal to deal with. After attacking Hillary Clinton during the presidential campaign for using her private server to conduct official business, at least six members of Trump's White House team are accused of doing the same thing.

The New York Times first reported that six members were using their private email accounts to discuss government business. Those accused include Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner, Trump's daughter and adviser Ivanka Trump, former Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, advisers Gary Cohn and Stephen Miller, and former chief strategist Stephen Bannon.

The question being raised about this issue is if it is actually illegal for White House members to use private emails when dealing with official government work. Sean Illing at *Vox* decided to get the advice of legal experts to answer this question.

While most of the legal experts agreed that without further information, there is no way to draw an absolute conclusion. However, former federal prosecutor Renato Mariotti notes that the Presidential Records Act says it is illegal "unless they forwarded all of the private emails to their public accounts within 20 days."

If it is found that the private emails were forwarded to their public accounts within that 20 day period, then there is no reason for criminal charges. If they did not forward the emails within that period, then Trump critics will be out for blood after what he put Clinton through.

Other charges that the six members could be facing deal with the sharing of classified information. Duke University law professor Lisa Kern Griffin said, "If classified information was transmitted over personal accounts, that may have compromised national security."

Georgetown University law professor Victoria Nourse explains that the use of personal email for official business is barred in 2014. The specific act states: "An officer or employee of an executive agency may not create or send a record using a non-official electronic messaging account unless such officer or employee – (1) copies an official electronic messaging account of the officer or employee in the original creation or transmission of the record; or (2) forwards a complete copy of the record to an official electronic messaging account of the officer or employee not later than 20 days after the original creation or transmission of the record."

The intentional violation of this act results in internal disciplinary action. Bigger problems come if the person lied under oath about using a private email in a congressional committee or another proceeding. A false statement about this action is subject to a penalty of perjury.

The legality of what his staff members did is not really the main issue. The bigger issue is that Trump and his team face are being labeled as giant hypocrites.

Do you think the Trump administration is being investigated and attacked more than any other administration? Do you think it is possible that other administrations – Obama, Bush, Clinton – had just as many mistakes but no one was searching for those mistakes? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about investigations involving the Trump administration, read these articles:

- [Sean Spicer Resigns as White House Press Secretary](#)
- [Trump Replaces Chief of Staff](#)
- [FBI Raids Home of Former Trump Campaign Manager Paul Manafort](#)

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