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Did Kamala Harris Spike PUC Investigation To Help Her Democratic Friends?

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Why has CA Attorney General Kamala Harris issued search warrants for the offices of utilities and their regulators in a PUC corruption scandal and then not followed through? Could it be because she doesn't want to hurt powerful Democratic friends? That is what a **KPBS** (http://www.kpbs.org/news/2016/apr/05/california-critics-kamala-harris-san-onofre-probe/) investigative reporter is exploring.

When Harris sent investigators to execute a search warrant last year at the home of former PUC President Michael Peevey, consumer advocates cheered. That's where investigators found hand-written notes of a secret deal between Peevey and a Southern California Edison executive to put $3.3 billion out of $4.7 billion onto ratepayers for the closure of SCE's botched San Onofre nuclear generating stations. Nothing like a little help from your former boss. Peevey was once the President of Southern California Edison.

KPBS reports that six months later, Harris issued another search warrant for the offices of Southern California Edison and the PUC. Inexplicably, investigators never showed up, according to Mike Aguirre, a consumer attorney and former federal prosecutor. "You don't drop it off at the front door and say, 'Hey, gee send me your records.' That's the whole point of the search warrant is that you go in and you execute the search warrant and you seize the records because you are concerned that they are going to disappear," he told KPBS.

Aguirre's been fighting for access to public records about the deal that the PUC refuses to release. The PUC is claiming the documents are privileged. Harris could waive that privilege, but so far *nada*. "She has no presence, she has no involvement, she has no leadership. You have no sense of her being out there, out front, and saying, 'We're charging forward to do what's right,'"Aguirre said. Now why is that?

California Governor Jerry Brown could waive privilege, but he won't. That's because some of the communications about the San Onofre deal are between the Governor and the PUC—which may be why the PUC is fighting Aguirre so hard to keep them secret. Brown's coziness with utilities, and penchant for appointing former utility executives to positions of power, have raised troubling questions about his loyalty to utility interests rather than the public interest.

For one, Brown's executive secretary, **Nancy McFadden** (http://www.consumerwatchdog.org/newsrelease/fppc-opens-investigation-governor's-top-aide-failure-disclose-timing-stock-sales-pge), is a former Pacific Gas & Electric vice president. Now, because of our ethics complaint about McFadden to the Fair Political Practices Commission, she's under investigation for failing to disclose required information about her stock ownership in Pacific Gas & Electric after she joined Brown's staff.

Aguirre is continuing to fight for those emails after a Superior Court ruling that the emails could be reviewed for release was blocked. After an Appeals Court judge who went to law school with Brown issued a stay, Aguirre successfully fought to have him **removed** (http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2016/mar/09/kline-out/) from hearing the case. Could the release of those emails be so threatening to Brown that he will do anything to stop them from seeing the light of day?

Is this why Kamala Harris, who could access the records and communications that Aguirre seeks, is failing to act at all? Is she just running out the clock to keep from public scrutiny any evidence of corruption among her powerful democratic friends? Only time will tell.

Harris appears to be repeating the same mistake of inaction she made in the case against PG&E over San Bruno, which was taken over by the US Justice Department prosecuting the case this month. A big PG&E connection to Harris? Longtime mentor Willie Brown is also a longtime PG&E consultant.

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