

CIA Lawyer Severs Tie to Lobby Group

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Mitchell Rogovin, the Washington attorney hired by the Central Intelligence Agency to consult over pending congressional investigations, has resigned as general counsel of Common Cause, the lobby group that seeks disclosure of CIA secrets.

Common Cause president David Cohen said yesterday the resignation was submitted to avoid "the appearance of a conflict of interest that might exist because of Mr Rogovin's dual roles, regardless of what the actual circumstances are."

Cohen said "the potential exists for conflicting positions between Common Cause and the CIA" over the Senate and House investigations "as well as other matters such as the public disclosure of CIA's budget."

Common Cause is pressing a request under the Freedom of Information Act for access to the agency's secret budget and is expected to lobby for more budget disclosure. CIA Director William E. Colby has said publicly that no budget disclosure is acceptable.

Cohen said he believed Rogovin agreed to take the CIA consultant role in "the same spirit" with which he has worked with Common Cause "to increase government accountability and eliminate government abuses of power."

Rogovin's CIA work "may well be helpful in the long run in establishing procedures to prevent future illegal activities by our intelligence agencies," Cohen said.