

NYTimes APR 24 1974
**Cranston Says V.A. Employees
Were Solicited for Nixon Gifts**

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 23 — Senator Alan Cranston charged today that employees of the Veterans Administration were encouraged two years ago by their superiors to contribute money to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Senator Cranston, a California Democrat who is chairman of a subcommittee of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said that he did not know for certain that Donald E. Johnson, head of the Veterans Administration, had solicited money himself. But he said there was no question but that Mr. Johnson was aware of the solicitations.

Senator Cranston's charges were confirmed tonight by a former V.A. official who said he had been solicited for contributions.

Mr. Johnson announced last night that he was resigning his position, and Senate sources said today that one of the principal factors that led to what they called a forced resignation was the allegation of campaign fund-raising.

At the White House today, Gerald L. Warren, the President's spokesman, denied that Mr. Johnson had been forced to quit and called him a "fine public servant."

Mr. Johnson could not be reached tonight for comment on the allegation that he had

known of political fund-raising in his agency.

Senator Cranston said that he had notified the Watergate special prosecutor, the Senate Watergate committee and the Civil Service Commission of possible violations of the Hatch Act.

That law prohibits employees of the Federal Government from soliciting campaign money or actively participate in a partisan political campaign, although it does not forbid political contributions.

According to Mr. Cranston and other Senate sources who would not allow themselves to be identified, a top assistant to Mr. Johnson urged employees to buy \$100 chances to attend a \$1,000-a-plate dinner for the President in the spring of 1972.

Raffle Winner

According to the sources, \$3,000 was raised in this fashion. Mr. Johnson himself is said to have taken one of the tickets, and the other two were raffled off among the V.A. employees who had contributed.

Dr. Marc J. Musser, who was chief medical director of the agency, confirmed that account today and said that he was one of the two raffle winners, although he was unable to attend the dinner.

Neither Dr. Musser nor the Senate sources would say, however, who actually solicited the money and ran the raffle.