

Hillary Clinton Has a New Excuse

Democratic presidential candidate and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has a new excuse for her private email server, but are voters going to buy it?

In a memo sent to top-line campaign donors over the weekend following the critical State Department Office of Inspector General report on Clinton's email setup, campaign chairman John Podesta said it was a "distraction" meant to get her off the message of "issues of greatest concern to the everyday lives of working families." He said she has acknowledged the private server was a "mistake," but insisted no rules or laws were broken.

He also included a new "excuse" for the private email account:

While the rules surrounding use of a personal email account were clarified after Secretary Clinton left office – and the Inspector General recommends the State Department take measures to even further clarify them – the Secretary has once again acknowledged this was a mistake. And she has taken responsibility for that mistake – including in many interviews she's done since the report's release.

What she thought would be a convenient way to communicate with family, friends and colleagues—by using one email account for both her work related and personal emails—has turned out to be anything but convenient. If she could go back, she'd do it differently.

Podesta's newest claim offers yet another spin on the whole matter, one that has never been a part of previous campaign statements, claims to the media, or her sworn testimony before Congress. And the IG report also determined that her email practices were significantly different compared to those of

past secretaries of state, particularly the use of a private, home-based server.

And while contrite, his memo does provide more spin for the donors regarding the arrangement:

Had Secretary Clinton known of any concerns about her email setup at the time, she would have taken steps to address them. She believed she was following the practices of other Secretaries and senior officials.

Sworn depositions in the ongoing Freedom of Information Act lawsuit brought by Judicial Watch, as well as emails released as part of the court-ordered release of documents, suggest there were a number of concerns about the setup. And, the IG report says Clinton was obligated to discuss the arrangement with State Department officials, not just for security reasons, but to “receive guidance and approval to conduct official business via a personal email account on her private server.”

Podesta’s memo, however, continues to paint a sunny picture for the Clinton campaign:

While we understand the questions about Secretary Clinton’s email practices, we are confident that voters will look at the full picture of everything she has done throughout her career. We have faith in the American people.

But will they? According to a “focus group” convened on the issue for MSNBC—a network with a well-documented liberal bias—Clinton has a big trust issue with grassroots liberal voters.

“I take national security really seriously and the idea that she would have a private email server, it demonstrates someone who thinks that they’re outside of the rules and not accountable,” one participant said. “It’s reckless. The most disappointing part about all of it is I don’t feel like she’s

taken responsibility for it.”