



WHITE HOUSE USHER FIRED AFTER TALKING TO MRS. BUSH

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WASHINGTON (AP) _ A longtime member of the White House usher's staff was fired after he talked with former first lady Barbara Bush by telephone from the White House, aides said Saturday.

Chris Emery, one of four White House ushers, lost his job earlier this month after being informed that the first family felt "uncomfortable" with him. He said Saturday his conversations with Mrs. Bush had been limited to advice about her computer.

Neel Lattimore, a spokesman for Mrs. Clinton, on Saturday declined to discuss the rationale for Emery's firing other than to say that the usher's office, which manages household operations at the White House, was being "restructured." He acknowledged, however, that there had been concern about Emery's conversations with Mrs. Bush, saying "it shouldn't have taken place from the office."

"That may seem harmless for all intents and purposes but it also shows an amazing lack of discretion," Lattimore said. "We believe the position that he had ... requires the utmost respect for the First Family's privacy." "It's an extremely sensitive position," Lattimore added. "This is the president's house and Mrs. Clinton's and Chelsea's."

An aide who spoke on condition of anonymity said there was concern that Emery's discussions with Mrs. Bush included private matters concerning the Clintons.

Emery, who had served as an usher since 1987, said he spoke with Mrs. Bush four times over the past 14 months, in each case returning her calls seeking help with a computer he had set up when she was still at the White House. He said he placed two calls from the White House and two from his home.

"It was strictly for computer support and believe me it was very rare," Emery said. He said he answered "typical questions, small problems that I was able to resolve."

He said he never discussed the operations of the Clinton White House or any matters having to do with the Clinton's personal life.

"I'm at a loss to try to explain it," Emery said of his firing. "Distressing's an understatement."

Michael Dannenhauer, an aide to former President Bush, said Mrs. Bush would have no comment on the matter. The issue of Emery's phone calls to Mrs. Bush was first reported in Saturday's Washington Post.