

# LOBBY WATCH

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Born Again—Yesterday:

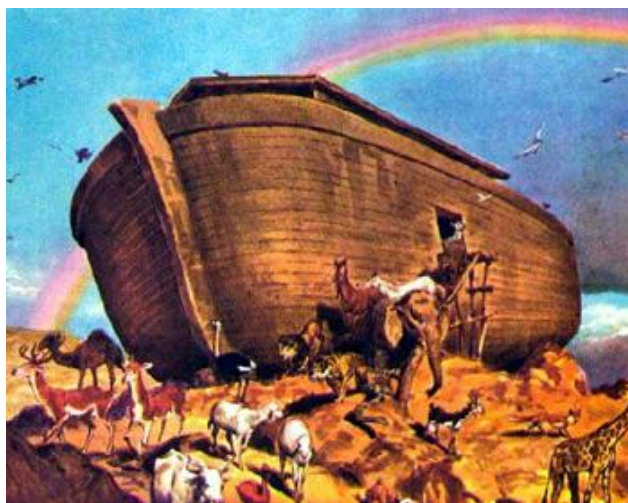
February 28, 2014

## Ark Archeologist Scammed TLR's Litigious Lawmakers

Legislators Who Sued Over 'Christian' Ponzi Scheme Took \$620,851 from Anti-Tort PAC

The [Dallas Morning News](#) only told half the story when it recently reported that a “Christian” con artist suckered four Texas lawmakers in a Ponzi scheme. By filing a lawsuit against their swindler, the duped legislators also played Texans for Lawsuit PAC for a chump.<sup>1</sup> The anti-tort PAC gave the litigious lawmakers \$620,851 since 2008. The funds were supposed to help politicians exterminate lawsuits—not procreate them.

Two years after participating in a controversial 2006 Iranian [expedition](#) that claimed to discover



A post-Armedgeddon ship miraculously comes in.

Noah's Ark, McKinney businessman Archer Bonnema bought energy-trading software. He then solicited investors in his money machine.

“He really played up his Christian credentials,” Rep. Bill Zedler told the *News*. “On the ceiling [of his palatial home] there was a dome and around the dome there was a Bible verse. To me, he used that as a way to put our guard down.”

Bonnema then lured other Christians into the scheme using the names of the credulous lawmakers. They include [Rep. Phil King](#), an architect of Texas' deregulated electric market. More than 20 people of faith invested \$2.5 million before the Ponzi scheme collapsed.

### TLR PAC Contributions To Litigious Lawmakers Since the 2008 Scam Began

| TLR Amount       | Litigious Lawmaker | Pol's Scam Stake |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| \$528,535        | Bill W. Zedler     | \$85,000         |
| \$69,816         | Phil King          | \$46,000         |
| \$15,500         | Ken Paxton         | \$100,000        |
| \$7,000          | Wayne Christian    | \$100,000        |
| <b>\$620,851</b> | <b>TOTALS</b>      | <b>\$331,000</b> |

### **Mutual Sponsorship: Bonnema Contributions To Paxton' Campaign**

| Date          | Amount          |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 11/29/2007    | \$2,500         |
| 11/25/2008    | \$2,500         |
| 9/10/2009     | \$5,000         |
| <b>TOTAL:</b> | <b>\$10,000</b> |

Through the reviled civil justice system the plaintiffs won a 2011 state-court judgment obligating Bonnema to repay \$100,000 over five years.<sup>2</sup> That amounts to four cents on every dollar invested—including the \$331,000 put up by four plaintiffs championed by Texans for Lawsuit Reform.

Are such spoils of Texas' fabled lawsuit lottery so tantalizing, y'all, that even alleged tort reformers can't resist their siren call?

## **NOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> "2 Statewide GOP Candidates Fell Victim to Energy Trading Scheme," *Dallas Morning News*, February 25, 2014.

"Rivals Blast Paxton Over Failed Investment," *Dallas Morning News*, February 27, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> [Case CV10-1871](#), 43<sup>rd</sup> District Court, Parker County.