

# LOBBY WATCH

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Justice DeLayed & Denied:

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## What Public-Integrity Eunuchs See In Attorney General Abbott

**With the Same Donors and Redistricting Goals as TRMPAC, Greg Abbott Was Not the One To Bring DeLay to Justice. So Let's Put Him In Charge!**

Republicans again have proposed taking the public-integrity unit that prosecutes political crooks such as Tom DeLay away from the Travis County District Attorney's Office. They would entrust it to the Texas Attorney General instead. The author of one such bill (HB 1928), Arlington Rep. Bill Zedler, told *Texas Monthly*, "I've always been puzzled why a statewide function should be undertaken by a local elected official."<sup>1</sup>

Tackling "**Zedler's Conundrum**," this *Lobby Watch* assesses the chances that Attorney General Greg Abbott would have brought DeLay to justice. In the first obstacle, the sponsors of DeLay's crooked PAC and Attorney General Greg Abbot overlapped.

Over a three-year period, DeLay's Texans for a Republican Majority PAC (TRMPAC) reported to the Texas Ethics Commission that it raised \$702,800. Just 31 donors (see next page) supplied 95 percent of this money.<sup>2</sup> In the same period, 23 big TRMPAC donors contributed \$1,629,555 to Greg Abbott (who was first elected attorney general in 2002).

TRMPAC famously did not tell the Texas Ethics Commission about the more than \$600,000 in legally problematic corporate funds that it raised.<sup>3</sup> Many out-of-state corporations that had no interest in Austin or Abbott simply wanted to buy influence with Congressman DeLay.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, Abbott took \$197,877 more from executives or PACs affiliated with nine of TRMPAC's corporate contributors. Taken together, TRMPAC-crossover donors account for 18 percent of the \$10.1 million that Abbott raised over the three-year period.

Apart from the fact that he took 18 cents of every dollar that he raised from TRMPAC donors, Abbott shared the redistricting goals that prompted DeLay to break Texas election law. One TRMPAC-Abbott crossover donor was the law firm Locke Liddell & Sapp. Locke Liddell attorney Andy Taylor advised TRMPAC before Abbott hired Taylor to help the state implement DeLay's congressional redistricting scheme. This prompted Senator Royce **West's Conundrum**. "Why," he asked, "is the AG allowing Tom DeLay's attorney to draw the map for the state of Texas?"<sup>5</sup>



Mr. Public Integrity.

TRMPAC's sordid history offers precedent for Texas officials succumbing to crass political pressure. Bankrupt ex-TRMPAC Treasurer Bill Ceverha had to file financial disclosures after his appointment to a state pension board. Reporting that a TRMPAC-Abbott crossover donor gave him a "check," Ceverha refused to disclose its dollar value. Voting in secret in 2006, *Texas Ethics Commissioners* then ruled that

Ceverha had no obligation to disclose how much money he took from Houston homebuilder Bob Perry—a top TRMPAC-Abbott benefactor.<sup>6</sup>

An attorney general public integrity unit never would have brought Tom DeLay to justice. That's the point of Zedler's bill and a similar one by Rep. Wayne Christian (HB 1712).<sup>7</sup>

## Top TRMPAC Contributors Gave Heavily to Attorney General Greg Abbott (Contributions from June 7, 2001 To June 30, 2004)<sup>2</sup>

TRMPAC Amount	Abbott Amount	Contributor	City	Affiliation
\$150,000	\$2,500	Farmers Employee & Agent PAC	Austin	Farmers Insurance Group
\$145,000	\$637,500	Bob J. Perry	Houston	Perry Homes
\$100,000	168,344	James R. Leininger	San Antonio	Kinetic Concepts, Inc.
\$55,000	\$160,000	T. Boone Pickens	Dallas	BP Capital
\$25,000	\$0	Burlington Northern & Santa Fe	Topeka, KS	Burlington Northern & Santa Fe
\$25,000	\$80,000	John V. Lattimore	McKinney	Lattimore Properties, Inc.
\$25,000	\$0	Nat'l Republican Legislators Assn.	Washington	Nat'l Republican Legislators Assn.
\$10,000	\$95,000	Louis Beecherl	Dallas	Beecherl Investments
\$10,000	*\$7,000	Contran Corp.	Dallas	Contran Corp.
\$10,000	\$0	Houston H. Harte	San Antonio	Harte-Hanks Communication
\$10,000	\$22,500	Vance Miller	Dallas	Henry S. Miller Co.
\$10,000	\$0	Benjamin Streusand	Woodlands	Home Loan Corporation
\$10,000	\$27,500	Charles J. Wyly, Jr.	Dallas	Wyly Brothers
\$10,000	\$27,500	Sam Wyly	Dallas	Wyly Brothers
\$5,000	\$7,000	Ebby Halliday Acers	Dallas	Ebby Halliday Realtors
\$5,000	*\$50,000	Belmont Oil & Gas Corp.	Irving	Belmont Oil & Gas Corp.
\$5,000	\$3,500	John Carona Campaign	Dallas	State Senator
\$5,000	\$0	Ida M. Lightner	Dallas	Electospace Systems
\$5,000	\$51,211	Locke Liddell & Sapp LLP	Houston	Locke Liddell & Sapp
\$5,000	\$1,000	Frederick R. Meyer	Dallas	Aladdin Industries, Inc.
\$5,000	\$35,000	Reed Morian	Houston	D X Service Co, Inc.
\$5,000	\$70,000	Peter O'Donnell	Dallas	First National Bank
\$5,000	\$0	Will Perry	Missouri City	WC Perry Properties, Inc.
\$5,000	\$5,000	James D.Pitcock	Sugarland	Williams Bros. Construction
\$5,000	\$150,000	Robert Rowling	Irving	TRT Holdings, Inc.
\$5,000	\$0	Dale Richard Thompson	Houston	Texas Mortgage Bankers
\$5,000	\$12,000	David Underwood	Houston	Wachovia Securities
\$3,000	\$5,000	Koch PAC	Washington	Koch Industries
\$2,500	\$2,500	Joseph Collmer	Dallas	Collmer Semiconductor
\$2,500	\$9,500	George C. Hixon	San Antonio	Hixon Properties, Inc.
\$2,500	\$0	Mark Nini	Houston	Memorial Development Corp.
<b>\$670,500</b>	<b>\$1,629,555</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>		

Note: Covers TRMPAC money reported to the Ethics Commission—not corporate funds it reported to the IRS.

\*A top executive of this corporate donor gave to Abbott's campaign.

## Abbott Also Took Money from Affiliates of Some Corporate Contributors to TRMPAC

TRMPAC Amount	Corporate Contributor	Corporate Affiliate That Gave To Abbott	Abbott Amount
\$25,000	Philip Morris Mgmt. Corp.	Altria Group PAC	\$2,500
\$20,000	AT&T	AT&T PAC	\$3,000
\$10,000	Reliant Resources, Inc.	Reliant PAC	\$10,000
\$10,000	US Risk	Randall Goss	\$52,000
\$5,000	Maxxam, Inc.	Charles Hurwitz	\$5,000
\$5,000	Silver Eagle Distributors	John Nau III	\$117,127
\$2,500	PacificCare	PacifiCare PAC	\$500
\$1,000	SuperCuts	Alan Sager	\$1,250
\$250	Gulf States Toyota	Gulf States PAC	\$6,500
<b>\$78,750</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$197,877</b>



General Greg Abbott.

TRMPAC reported these corporate funds to the IRS—not the Ethics Commission.

Those who underwrote Abbott and TRMPAC also have been paying the campaign bills of Republican Reps. Bill Zedler and Wayne Christian. Over the past decade, 17 TRMPAC-Abbott crossover donors gave the two lawmakers a total of \$279,033.

The Travis County District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit is not perfect. But it's a world better than the Public Integrity Eunuch that Zedler and Christian propose. •

## Top TRMPAC Contributors Who Backed Reps. Christian & Zedler (Lawmaker Contributions Cover from 2000 Through 2010)

Contributor	TRMPAC Amount	Rep. Christian Amount	Rep. Zedler Amount
Farmers Employee & Agent PAC	\$150,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Bob J. Perry	\$145,000	\$46,500	\$89,500
James R. Leininger	\$100,000	\$20,633	\$48,000
T. Boone Pickens	\$55,000	\$500	\$1,500
Burlington Northern & Santa Fe	\$25,000	\$0	\$500
*Philip Morris/Altria Group	\$25,000	\$2,500	\$1,750
*AT&T	\$20,000	\$11,558	\$9,042
Louis Beecherl	\$10,000	\$0	\$8,000
*Contran Corp.	\$10,000	\$3,500	\$10,250
Vance Miller	\$10,000	\$0	\$500
*Reliant Resources	\$10,000	\$3,250	\$500
Ebby Halliday Acers	\$5,000	\$0	\$300
Locke Liddell & Sapp LLP	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$500
Peter O'Donnell	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Robert Rowling	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Koch PAC	\$3,000	\$250	\$500
*Gulf States Toyota	\$250	\$0	\$500
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$583,250</b>	<b>\$93,691</b>	<b>\$185,342</b>

\*An affiliated PAC or executive of this corporation contributed to the lawmakers.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> "Sneak Attack On Public Integrity Unit?" *Texas Monthly BurkaBlog*, March 31, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> TRMPAC reported to the Texas Ethics Commission that it raised money from July 23, 2002 through April 20, 2004. This report tracks contributions starting on June 7, 2001, when Greg Abbott left the Texas Supreme Court to campaign for attorney general. It stops tracking contributions on June 30, 2004, which marks the end date of the last reporting period in which TRMPAC reported contributions.

<sup>3</sup> TRMPAC reported these funds separately to the IRS.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, "Westar Energy Review Finds Efforts to Sway Key Republicans," Associated Press, June 5, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> "17 Texans Lobbied in 2002 For Multiple TRM-PAC Donors," TPJ's *Lobby Watch*, October 12, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> "The Public's Right to 'No,'" *Texas Observer*, April 7, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> "Bills Aim to Nip Travis DA's Power," *Austin American-Statesman*, April 12, 2011.