

LOBBY WATCH

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Which Doctors Back Whom In Zedler-Turner Race?

- **Medical Board Spat Shows Some Doctors Like Discipline More Than Others**

The *Texas Tribune* recently [exposed](#) how then-Republican Rep. Bill Zedler ran interference for doctors subject to Texas Medical Board disciplinary reviews in 2008. Zedler leveraged legislative privileges to obtain confidential patient medical records. This left *Lobby Watch* wondering which doctors back whom as Zedler seeks to reclaim his House seat from Democratic Rep. Chris Turner of Arlington.¹

Our clinicians injected campaign-contribution data for Turner and Zedler with a barium dye that makes doctor donations glow in the dark.² Lab reports revealed that physicians contributed \$5,234 to Turner and \$8,650 to Zedler from January 2009 through June 2010. Given that Turner raised almost seven times what Zedler did in this period,³ however, doctors supplied 15 percent of Zedler's money compared to 1 percent of Turner's total haul.

Doctors' views of the Texas Medical Board differ. The board subjects a minority of Texas doctors to

disciplinary proceedings. With some overlap, a minority of Texas doctors say that the Medical Board wields too much power over physicians accused of wrongdoing. Last year, Zedler and others endorsed unsuccessful [legislation](#) to curb the Medical Board.⁴

The main doctor trade group, the Texas Medical Association, opposed that bill. Its PAC has contributed \$2,534 to Turner and nothing to Zedler so far this election. No other physician interest made large contributions to Turner.

Five doctors contributed \$1,000 or more to Zedler. The *Tribune* reported that Zedler used his legislative office to intervene at the Medical Board on behalf of two of his doctor donors, who gave him \$25,000 over the past five years. The Medical Board sanctioned the duo, Dallas thoracic surgeon William [Rea](#) and Houston anesthesiologist Vladimir [Redko](#), for serious treatment violations.

Diagnosing Doctors' Contributions To Turner and Zedler (Jan. 2009 through June 2010)

Candidate	Money Raised	Money From Doctor Interests	Share of Money From Doctors	Campaign Cash In Bank 6/30/10
Chris Turner, D	\$376,575	\$5,234	1%	\$321,116
Bill Zedler, R	\$56,160	\$8,650	15%	\$24,761

The Medical Board lists no disciplinary history for the other three doctors who contributed \$1,000 to Zedler’s campaign.

In another donor link to the issue, Zedler received \$3,000 from Beverly Kotsanis of Grapevine. Her spouse, Dr. Constantine Kotsanis, provides alternative treatments for autism. Parents of autistic children allege that the Medical Board targets practitioners who offer alternative treatments for this difficult-to-treat disease. The Medical Board lists no disciplinary history for Dr. Kotsanis. Beverly Kotsanis and Zedler both testified in favor of legislation to overhaul the Medical Board last year.

Zedler told the *Texas Tribune* that health insurers target certain physicians whose claims they don’t want to pay. Zedler said doctors who are “in the pocket” of insurers file Medical Board complaints

against the targeted physicians. Zedler said he accessed confidential records from the Medical Board in an effort to verify this practice (the Medical Board did not reveal the identities of complainants to Zedler). *Lobby Watch* found no health insurance contributions to Turner or Zedler so far this election cycle.

Top Doctor Donors To Zedler

Amount To Zedler	Doctor	City
\$3,000	*Vladimir Redko	Houston
\$1,000	Charles Hamel	Arlington
\$1,000	*William Rea	Dallas
\$1,000	Jacob Rosenstein	Arlington
\$1,000	Kenneth Walker	Arlington

* Disciplined by TX Medical Board.

Notes

¹ Turner beat Zedler with 51 percent of the vote in November 2008.

² This process exposed physician-donors to less radiation than they would encounter flying over West Texas’ Andrews Co.

³ This excludes \$28,100 that Zedler shifted from one campaign account to another.

⁴ H.B. 3816. See also S.B. 2336.