

# LOBBY WATCH

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GOP D-Lite:

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## A Bob-Perry Conduit Arms “Craddick D’s”

- HillCo Cuts \$10,000 Checks To Bailey, Dukes & Flores
- PACs Move \$150,000 To Democratic Allies of Speaker

A third of the \$90,764 in PAC expenditures reported last month by a lobby firm close to embattled Speaker Tom Craddick went to three of the 15 “Craddick D’s.” After these 15 House Democrats helped the Midland Republican retain his Speaker title in January, Craddick rewarded them with plum committee assignments. The \$10,000 checks that Democratic Reps. Kevin Bailey, Dawnna Dukes and Kino Flores recently received from the PAC of HillCo Partners lobby firm were twice the size of any other check that PAC wrote last month.

In 2001 Craddick appointed Bill Miller—a HillCo cofounder and sometimes speaker spokesman—to his speaker transition team. Last year HillCo recruited Craddick’s Democratic House Appropriations Committee vice chair, Rep. Vilma Luna, as a lobbyist.

HillCo’s PAC is a known pass-through for GOP super donor Bob Perry. During the 2006 cycle, Perry supplied 61 percent of the \$1 million that HillCo PAC raised. HillCo PAC was the top 2006 recipient of Perry’s money after the state Republican Party.<sup>1</sup> This September—as HillCo delivered five-figure checks to three Craddick D’s—Perry supplied 87 percent of the money that the PAC raised.<sup>2</sup>

HillCo PAC’s role as a Bob Perry conduit is notable given recent comments of Austin campaign-finance attorney Buck Wood about GOP mega-donors Bob Perry and James Leininger. “Money from the Leingers of the world is going to be used against Republicans who take it,” Wood told the *Austin Chronicle*. “Because they’re buying this candidate who claims he’s representing you, but he’s representing Leininger or Perry.”<sup>3</sup> If money from Leininger and Perry is becoming radioactive for *GOP* candidates, what is it to *Democrats*? And if rich donors are buying candidates, does Craddick-D protection money amount to equity in the Speaker?

The Craddick D’s have put various spins on their Speaker ties. As Craddick survived the last days of the 2007 session by invoking “absolute” House rule, Democratic Reps. Eddie Lucio and Patrick Rose announced that they could no longer support him. Craddick D’s also held a news conference at session’s end to trumpet legislative accomplishments that they attributed to their access to power. Resorting to political jujitsu, Rep. Sylvester Turner even nominated himself as a candidate for Speaker Craddick’s job! Recently, Rep. Robert Puente announced that he will retire at the end of this term.

## Top Recent PAC Contributors To Craddick D's (CDs)

Total To CDs June-August	No. of CDs Backed	PAC	Additional CD Donations In September
\$11,000	11	HillCo PAC	\$30,000
\$10,000	1	TX Hearing Aid Assn.	NA*
\$8,000	4	TX Assn. of Realtors	\$0
\$6,000	6	American Electric Power Committee	\$1,000
\$4,750	6	HOME PAC	\$500
\$4,500	3	Valero Energy Corp. PAC	\$7,500
\$4,500	2	MAXXAM, Inc. PAC	\$0
\$4,000	7	Wholesale Beer Distributors of TX	\$3,000
\$3,500	4	Baker Botts Amicus Fund	\$0
\$2,500	4	TX Consumer Finance Assn.	NA*
\$2,500	1	TX State Assn. of Fire Fighters	NA*
\$2,500	3	TXU TX Power & Energy PAC	\$1,250
\$2,250	5	TX Petro. Marketers & Conven. Store Assn.	\$1,000
\$2,000	2	TXU Electric Delivery PAC	\$0
\$2,000	1	TX Package Stores Assn.	NA*
\$2,000	4	Independent Insurance Agents of TX	\$3,000
\$2,000	2	TX Trial Lawyers Assn. <sup>4</sup>	NA*
\$1,500	2	Winstead PAC	\$0
\$1,500	1	TXU TX Employee PAC	\$0
\$1,500	2	Independent Bankers Assn. of TX	NA*
\$1,250	3	CenterPoint Energy, PAC	\$3,500
\$1,250	2	TX Dental Assn. PAC	\$1,000
\$1,250	1	TX Waterways Operators PAC	\$1,000
\$1,250	1	Kirby Corp. PAC	NA*

\*This PAC does not file monthly. It will not disclose its September contributions until next January.

Although lawmakers will not file new campaign reports until January, many political committees that fund these campaigns file monthly reports that offer a limited preview of this money race. During June, July and August 47 PACs reported contributing a total of almost \$100,000 to Craddick D's. The biggest donors among them (see accompanying table) gave these Democrats another \$52,750 last month. HillCo led donations to the Craddick D's during both periods. It distributed \$41,000 to a dozen Craddick D's,<sup>5</sup> who accounted for 11 percent of HillCo PAC's total payouts in recent months.

The next largest Craddick-D donor was the Texas Hearing Aid Association. It spent a total of \$10,000 this year—giving it all to Rep. Tracy King. If money really is a form of political speech, then Rep. King must be hard of hearing.

The Texas Association of Realtors gave \$5,000 to Rep. Kino Flores and \$1,000 apiece to three other Craddick D's.<sup>6</sup> This represents a tiny fraction of the largesse from Texas' No. 2 PAC. Similarly, three PACs

affiliated with TXU Corp. (now under new management!) gave a total of \$6,000 to six Craddick D's, led by Reps. King and Puente.<sup>7</sup> This was a small share of the disbursements by these power PACs.

American Electric Power PAC gave \$1,000 each to six Craddick D's,<sup>8</sup> accounting for 13 percent of all its handouts. The homebuilders gave \$4,750 to six Craddick D's, led by a \$2,500 to Rep. Ruth McClendon.<sup>9</sup> Craddick D's accounted for 15 percent of PAC dispersals from the homeboys.

Valero's PAC gave \$2,500 to Rep. Puente and \$1,000 apiece to Reps. Deshotel and McClendon. Horseracing PAC Maxxam bet \$2,500 on Rep. Turner and another \$2,000 on Rep. Flores. These two wagers accounted for 39 percent of what Maxxam's PAC spent in this period.

The Wholesale Beer PAC backed more Craddick D's than any PAC other than HillCo. It gave \$1,000 to Rep. Kino Flores and \$500 apiece to six other Craddick D's.<sup>10</sup> These Democrats received 10 percent of all the money that the beer PAC tapped in recent months.

## Recently Reported PAC Contributions To Craddick D's

PAC Money Received June-August	September Amount	Representative	Home	Notable Committee Assignments
\$15,308	\$12,250	Kino Flores	Palmview	Licensing & Admin. Procedures (C)
\$14,750	\$500	Tracy King	Batesville	Border & Int'l Affairs (C)
\$11,450	\$500	Ryan Guillen	Rio Grande	Appropriations (VC); Calendars
\$8,750	\$2,500	Sylvester Turner	Houston	Appropriations; Calendars; Reg'd Industries
\$8,250	\$2,750	Robert Puente	San Antonio	Natural Resources (C)
\$7,750	\$750	Aaron Pena	Edinburg	Criminal Jurisprudence (C); Ways & Means
\$7,272	\$10,250	Kevin Bailey	Houston	Urban Affairs (C); Business & Industry
\$5,500	\$1,250	Ruth McClendon	San Antonio	Rules & Resolutions (C); Appropriations
\$5,000	\$500	Eddie Lucio III	Brownsville	Appropriations; Environmental Regulation
\$4,750	\$0	Joe Deshotel	Beaumont	Economic Development (C); Redistricting
\$3,512	\$0	Harold Dutton	Houston	Juvenile Justice (C)
\$2,750	\$2,000	Helen Giddings	Dallas	Business & Industry (C); House Admin (VC)
\$2,250	\$8,000	Patrick Rose	Dripping Sp.	Human Services (C)
\$1,250	\$11,250	Dawnna Dukes	Austin	Appropriations; Calendars
\$1,000	\$250	Norma Chavez	El Paso	Calendars (VC); Appropriations
<b>\$99,542</b>	<b>\$52,750</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Perry gave the Republican Party \$835,000 that cycle.

<sup>2</sup> That month Bob Perry gave HillCo PAC \$75,000 and six HillCo lobbyists kicked in a total of \$11,668 more.

<sup>3</sup> "Mystery men mysterious no more," *Austin Chronicle*, October 25, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Craddick recently accused trial lawyers of bankrolling his challengers. In this case, their PAC gave \$1,000 checks to Craddick lieutenants Guillen and Pena. *Lobby Watch* previously reported that the Trial Lawyer PAC in June contributed \$1,000 to Rep. Senfronia Thompson, a non-Craddick Democrat seeking the Speaker's title. See "AT&T Leads Craddick's Early PAC Backers," October 17, 2007.

[http://www.tpj.org/page\\_view.jsp?pageid=1217&pubid=980](http://www.tpj.org/page_view.jsp?pageid=1217&pubid=980)

<sup>5</sup> Reps. Chavez, McClendon and Turner are the three Craddick D's who have not received a HillCo check recently.

<sup>6</sup> Reps. Norma Chavez, Ruth McClendon and Aaron Pena.

<sup>7</sup> They collectively gave \$1,500 to Reps. King and Puente, \$1,000 to Reps. Guillen and Lucio and \$500 to Reps. Flores and Pena.

<sup>8</sup> Reps. Guillen, King, Lucio, Pena, Rose and Turner.

<sup>9</sup> Home PAC also gave \$500 to Reps. Deshotel, Dutton, Flores and Giddings and \$250 to Rep. Bailey.

<sup>10</sup> Reps. Bailey, Deshotel, Dutton, Guillen, Lucio and Pena.