

LOBBY WATCH



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Operation Vouchsafe:

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Dr. Leininger Injects \$5 Million Into Election; Many Candidates Fail On His Life Support

- Doc supplies 79% to 96% of six candidates' total war chests.
- He quadruples his dosages of previous cycles.
- Democrats get zip.

Texas' No. 2 individual political donor, conservative Republican activist Dr. James Leininger, injected more than \$5 million into Texas state politics this election cycle—none of which went to a Democrat. This spending quadrupled what Leininger pumped into previous state elections. The money tracked here covers January 2005 through the eve of the November 2006 election.

legislature looks even less receptive to vouchers than its predecessor. Meanwhile, Leininger's meddling has fostered support for a pending bill (HB 111) that would bar any individual from dumping more than \$100,000 into an election cycle.

Leininger Spending Quadruples

Election Cycle	Leininger Contributions
2001-2002	\$1,346,850
2003-2004	\$1,311,142
2005-2006	\$5,044,006

Leininger moved \$1,819,564 of his money directly, while funneling \$3.2 million more through three pet PACs that depended on him for 98 percent of their funds. To track the final destination of Leininger's money, this report treats contributions made by these three Leininger-controlled PACs (Texas Republican Legislative Campaign Committee, Future of Texas Alliance and Texans for School Choice) as if they came directly from Leininger himself.

Leininger spent heavily going into the primaries to promote conservative challengers to moderate Republicans who had stiffed his school-voucher agenda. Yet his aggressive checkbook politics flunked this year's primary and general elections. The next

Leininger contributed \$1,557,531 of his \$5 million total to 14 general-purpose PACs that he does not control. These conservative PACs bolster Texas' Republican majority, push vouchers, seek weaker tort laws and oppose gay unions and abortion.

Leininger-Controlled PACs

PAC	Total Raised In '06 Cycle	Total From Leininger	Leininger's Share of Total
TX Republican Legislative Campaign Committee	\$2,360,807	\$2,358,707	99%
Future of TX Alliance	\$682,445	\$620,000	91%
Texans for School Choice	\$181,190	\$180,000	99%
TOTALS:	\$3,224,442	\$3,158,707	98%

Leininger's Other Favorite PACs

Amount of Contributions	Recipient PAC	Description
\$425,102	Republican Party of TX	Republican
\$390,000	Texans For Lawsuit Reform	Weak tort laws
\$300,000	Associated Republicans of TX	Republican business PAC
\$135,000	Stars Over TX	Backs House Republicans
\$100,000	Texans FOR Marriage	Anti-gay marriage
\$91,100	TX Opportunity PAC	Backs conservative Republicans
\$89,244	All Children Matter, TX	Vouchers
\$13,000	TX Club for Growth	Backs conservative Republicans
\$12,000	TX Right To Life PAC	Anti-Abortion
\$1,000	TX Alliance for Life	Anti-Abortion

Leininger gave his remaining \$3.5 million to 64 Republican candidates, with 90 percent of this money going to House candidates. Twenty losers accounted for 59 percent of Leininger's total candidate contributions.

Leininger Contributions By Outcome

Outcome	Leininger Amount	Number of Recipients	Average Contribution	% of Money
Winners	\$1,431,443	43	\$33,289	41%
Losers	\$2,050,032	20	\$102,502	59%
No '06 Election	\$5,000	1	\$5,000	<1%
TOTALS:	\$3,486,475	64	\$54,476	100%

Candidates who lost in the GOP primary ate up 47 percent of all the money that Leininger gave to candidates in the 2006 cycle. Of the 10 House candidates that received \$50,000 or more from Leininger, five perished in the primary and just two survived the general. These two winners, Nathan Macias and Wayne Christian, may not have survived

with their independence intact. Both candidates amassed war chests of more than \$500,000 apiece, with Leininger providing 84 percent of Macias' total and 85 percent of Christian's. Leininger also bankrolled a stunning 96 percent of the \$542,130 that Mark Williams raised for his failed primary challenge to incumbent Tommy Merritt of Longview.

Doctored Candidates: Leininger Underwrote Major Shares of These Campaigns

House Candidate	Office	Total Raised In '06 Cycle	Amount From Leininger	Share From Leininger	Incumbency Status	Outcome
Mark Williams	H-7	\$542,130	\$519,030	96%	Challenger	Primary Loser
Van Wilson	H-83	\$578,982	\$503,366	87%	Challenger	Primary Loser
Nathan Macias	H-73	\$542,422	\$461,464	85%	Challenger	Winner
Wayne Christian	H-9	\$537,186	\$452,804	84%	Challenger	Winner
Chris Hatley	H-99	\$324,837	\$255,478	79%	Challenger	Primary Loser
Dale Hopkins	H-54	\$310,025	\$249,816	81%	Open Seat	Primary Loser
George Antuna	H-118	\$695,543	\$165,000	24%	Open Seat	Loser
Talmadge Heflin	H-149	\$631,970	\$83,000	13%	Challenger	Loser
Kent Grusendorf	H-94	\$466,098	\$54,122	12%	Incumbent	Primary Loser
Michael Esparaza	H-35	\$296,484	\$50,000	17%	Challenger	Loser
Nelson Balido	H-125	\$181,448	\$40,000	22%	Challenger	Loser
TOTALS:		\$5,107,125	\$2,834,080	55%		

Leininger Contributions By Incumbency Status

Status	Amount of Contributions	Number of Recipients	Average Contribution	% of Money
Challenger	\$2,421,142	11	\$220,104	69%
Open Seat	\$542,938	15	\$36,196	16%
Incumbent	\$522,395	38	\$13,747	15%
TOTAL:	\$3,486,475	64	\$54,476	100%

The heavy attrition rate of Leininger's candidates reflects his high-stakes strategy of trying to replace incumbents who resisted his voucher agenda with candidates who will play his game. Challengers accounted for almost 70 percent of all the money that

Leininger gave to candidates. Placing his biggest electoral bet to date, Leininger largely crapped out. With a couple notable exceptions this appears to leave vouchers to stand—or fall—next session on the merits.

Leininger Contributions by Office

Office	Leininger Total	Number of Recipients	Average Contribution	% of Money
House	\$3,071,345	38	\$80,825	88%
Senate	\$65,000	4	\$16,250	2%
Statewide*	\$293,130	10	\$29,313	8%
Judicial*	\$57,000	12	\$4,750	2%
TOTAL:	\$3,486,475	64	\$54,476	100%

*Statewide judicial candidates are categorized as "Judicial."

All Leininger-Backed Candidates In the 2006 Cycle

Leininger Total In 2006 Cycle	Candidate	Office-District	Incumbency Status	Outcome
\$519,030	Mark Williams	House-7	Challenger	Primary Loser
\$503,366	Van Wilson	House-83	Challenger	Primary Loser
\$461,464	Nathan Macias	House-73	Challenger	Winner
\$452,804	Wayne Christian	House-9	Challenger	Winner
\$255,478	Chris Hatley	House-99	Challenger	Primary Loser
\$249,816	Dale Hopkins	House-54	Open Seat	Primary Loser
\$165,000	George Antuna	House-118	Open Seat	Loser
\$100,000	David Dewhurst	Lt. Governor	Incumbent	Winner
\$83,000	Talmadge Heflin	House-149	Challenger	Loser
\$60,664	Greg Abbott	Attorney General	Incumbent	Winner
\$57,466	Rick Perry	Governor	Incumbent	Winner
\$54,122	Kent Grusendorf	House-94	Incumbent	Primary Loser
\$50,000	Michael Esparaza	House-35	Challenger	Loser
\$40,000	Nelson Balido	House-125	Challenger	Loser
\$35,000	Ken Mercer	Education Board-5	Challenger	Winner
\$26,574	Betty Brown	House-4	Incumbent	Winner
\$25,000	Glenn Hegar	Senate-18	Open Seat	Winner
\$25,000	Martha Wong	House-134	Incumbent	Loser
\$25,000	Dan Patrick	Senate-7	Open Seat	Winner
\$23,000	Gene Seaman	House-32	Incumbent	Loser
\$21,220	Scott Campbell	House-72	Incumbent	Primary Loser
\$20,000	Ben Bentzin	House-48	Challenger	Withdrew
\$19,949	David Swinford	House-87	Incumbent	Winner

\$15,000	Rob Beckham	House-71	Open Seat	Primary Loser
\$13,547	Brandon Creighton	House-16	Open Seat	Winner
\$10,000	Don Willett	Supreme Court	Incumbent	Winner
\$10,000	Jane Nelson	Senate-12	Incumbent	Winner
\$10,000	Elizabeth A. Jones	Railroad Com.	Incumbent	Winner
\$10,000	Cynthia Dunbar	Education Board-10	Open Seat	Winner
\$10,000	Susan Combs	Comptroller	Open Seat	Winner
\$8,075	Tan Parker	House-63	Open Seat	Winner
\$7,920	Charlie Howard	House-26	Incumbent	Winner
\$7,000	Linda Harper-Brown	House-105	Incumbent	Winner
\$6,016	Dan Flynn	House-2	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,202	Anna Mowery	House-97	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Marialyn Barnard	District Judge-225	Open Seat	Loser
\$5,000	Karen Angelini	Appeals Court-4	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Victor Carrillo	Railroad Com.	Incumbent	NA
\$5,000	Bob Deuell	Senate-2	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Rene Diaz	District Judge-224	Incumbent	Loser
\$5,000	Nathan Hecht	Supreme Court	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Jim Landtroop	House-85	Open Seat	Loser
\$5,000	Jodie Laubenberg	House-89	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Janet Littlejohn	District Judge-150	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	David Medina	Supreme Court	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	David Puryear	Appeals Court-3	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Elvira Reyna	House-101	Incumbent	Primary Loser
\$5,000	Alan Waldrop	Appeals Court-3	Incumbent	Winner
\$5,000	Will Wilson	Appeals Court-3	Open Seat	Loser
\$3,500	Joe Straus	House-121	Incumbent	Winner
\$3,287	Leo Berman	House-6	Incumbent	Winner
\$2,959	Joe Crabb	House-127	Incumbent	Winner
\$2,882	Fred Hill	House-112	Incumbent	Winner
\$2,500	Jerry Patterson	Land Com.	Incumbent	Winner
\$2,500	Todd Staples	Agriculture Com.	Open Seat	Winner
\$2,000	Dan Branch	House-108	Incumbent	Winner
\$2,000	Patricia Harless	House-126	Open Seat	Winner
\$2,000	Bill Zedler	House-96	Incumbent	Winner
\$2,000	John Zerwas	House-28	Open Seat	Winner
\$1,346	Larry Phillips	House-62	Incumbent	Winner
\$1,000	Phylis Speedlin	Appeals Court-4	Incumbent	Winner
\$1,000	Diane Rivera	District Judge-45	Challenger	Loser
\$1,000	Mike Krusee	House-52	Incumbent	Winner
\$787	Rob Eissler	House-15	Incumbent	Winner