

News Release

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Bush Got \$1.4 Million From Officials Whom He Appointed to State Office

Reform Group Calls for End to Texas' Patronage System

Austin - Governor George W. Bush's two gubernatorial campaigns raked in \$1.4 million from 122 individuals whom Bush appointed to 50 leading state boards and commissions, a new Texans for Public Justice study reveals. This works out to an average of \$11,259 *per appointed donor*.

Texas' gubernatorial appointment powers are highly susceptible to political patronage abuse, [*Governor Bush's Well-Appointed Officials*](#) concludes, because the state imposes no limits on how much money an individual can give candidates for state office. Within this indulgent system, individual appointees have contributed as much as \$141,000 to the political campaigns of the person who appointed them to public office.

As a result of this patronage system, Texas governors pass over more qualified individuals in order to reward big donors with plum state posts. Many of these big donors have vast economic interests that have prompted ethical conflicts. At least eight of the 50 state boards analyzed in this report have been plagued by mismanagement and ethics scandals in recent years.

"One simple reform could demolish this state's patronage system and give people better, cleaner government," said Texans for Public Justice Director Craig McDonald. "Once Texas imposes \$1,000 contribution limits, our governors will no longer be tempted to pass over more-qualified people in order to reward big contributors."

Half of this \$1.4 million in appointee money came from the state's vast higher education patronage system. Bush's gubernatorial campaigns raked in a \$679,106 jackpot from 76 regents whom Bush appointed to the boards of the eight public universities analyzed in the report. Bush's single biggest cash cows were the UT System Board of Regents (for a total of \$432,606) and the Parks and Wildlife Commission (\$201,877), prestigious appointments associated with the twin Lone Star passions of UT Longhorn football and hunting.

Bush's most generous appointee, UT Regent Vice Chair Tom Loeffler (\$141,000): voted to license a UT cancer treatment to a company that later gave him stock options worth tens of thousands of dollars; and sat on the board of the scandal-ridden UT Investment Management Co., which awarded lucrative contracts to the investment firms of some of Bush's top donors. Special interests also paid Loeffler and his lobby firm to stop the Texas Department of Health from cracking down on makers of ephedrine diet remedies, which were linked to eight Texas deaths.

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[Texans for Public Justice](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan research and advocacy organization that tracks the role of money in Texas politics.