

LOBBY WATCH

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Free-Spending Conservatism:

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Leininger Clan Injected \$3.1 Million Into Texas Politics in Last 5 years

Conservative activist James Leininger—Texas' No. 2 individual donor—is making headlines again for trying to defeat moderate Republican Primary candidates who opposed his school-voucher agenda. From 2001 through 2005, Leininger's family contributed more than \$3.1 million to conservative PACs and Republican candidates in Texas, second only to Houston homebuilder Bob Perry, whose family spent \$11 million in that period. This spending reflects Leininger's agenda, which includes vouchers, home schooling, weaker tort laws and abortion restrictions.

The Leiningers' varied agenda keeps their political machine spinning year after year. When Republicans made a big push to take over the Texas House in 2002, Leininger was there, contributing heavily to Tom DeLay's Texans for a Republican Majority PAC (\$142,500) and several leading TRMPAC-backed candidates.

Yet the Leiningers spent almost as much in the next election cycle. During the 2004 cycle they heavily backed constitutional amendments

prohibiting gay marriages and establishing weaker tort laws. Meanwhile they invested in legislative candidates in advance of their failed 2005 push for school vouchers.

Leiningers Spend Like Clockwork

Period	Amount
2001-2002	\$1,373,850
2003-2004	\$1,318,741
2005	\$452,450
TOTAL:	\$3,145,041

The Republican Party, especially its more conservative wing, has been the top beneficiary of the Leiningers' political spending, with the Republican Party of Texas receiving \$500,470 directly from the Leiningers over the past five years. The next largest beneficiary is Texas' largest special-interest PAC, Texans for Lawsuit Reform, which got \$350,500 from the Leiningers.

The Leiningers' favorite statewide candidates in this period were Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst (\$225,000), Attorney General Greg Abbott (\$198,844) and Governor Rick Perry (\$173,068). The Leiningers' favorite legislative candidates were failed Senate candidate John Shields of San Antonio and failed House candidate Talmadge Heflin of Houston. The latter went to work for Leininger's Texas Public Policy Foundation think tank after voters threw him out in 2004.

Meet the Leiningers

Leininger Donor	Amount
James & Cecelia	\$3,098,441
Peter (brother)	\$29,350
John (brother)	\$10,250
Berneta (mother)	\$7,000
TOTAL:	\$3,145,041

Recipients of Leininger Largess, 2001 Through 2005

Recipient	Office Sought Or Held	Amount
Republican Party of TX	GOP	\$500,470
Texans For Lawsuit Reform	Backs weak tort laws	\$350,500
David Dewhurst	Lt. Governor	\$225,000
Greg Abbott	Attorney General	\$198,844
Texans For Governmental Integrity	Leininger-controlled PAC	\$193,000
Rick Perry	Governor	\$173,068
Texans for a Republican Majority	GOP	\$142,500
John Shields	Senate	\$123,481
Stars Over Texas	Backs Speaker Craddick	\$103,135
All Children Matter	Pro-voucher	\$102,000
Texans FOR Marriage	Hetero. marriage amend.	\$100,000
Yes on 12	Weak tort laws	\$100,000
Carole Keeton Rylander	Comptroller	\$76,000
Talmadge L.Heflin	House	\$51,000
Kevin P. Eltife	Senate	\$50,000
TX Republican Legis. Campaign Com.	Targets moderate Repubs	\$50,000
Jack Stick	House	\$36,000
Robert F. Deuell	Senate	\$35,000
Kevin M. Kolb	House	\$30,700
D. Bryan Hughes	House	\$30,000
Texas Right To Life	Anti-abortion	\$30,000
Billy Clemons	House	\$25,000
John Cornyn	Attorney General	\$25,000
Victor Carrillo	Railroad Commissioner	\$25,000
Kenneth B. Mercer	House	\$21,000
Susan Combs	Agriculture Commissioner	\$20,000
Ed Harrison	Senate	\$20,000
Judy Strickland	Board of Education	\$20,000
Jodie A. Laubenberg	House	\$17,500
Nelson H. Balido	House	\$17,000
Associated Republicans of TX	GOP	\$15,000
Texas Club for Growth	Leininger-controlled PAC	\$13,000
Craig Estes	Senate	\$12,000
Jane Nelson	Senate	\$11,000
Ben Bentzin	House	\$10,000
Walter W. Christian	House	\$10,000
Dallas Co. Republican Party	GOP	\$10,000
Elizabeth Jones	Railroad Commissioner	\$10,000
Teresa S. Leo	Board of Education	\$10,000
Jerry E. Patterson	Land Commisisoner	\$10,000
Kel G. Seliger	Senate	\$10,000
Ann L. Witt	House	\$10,000
TX Home School Coalition	Home schooling	\$9,500
Jim Valdez	Senate	\$9,500
Paul Green	Supreme Court	\$7,000
Rene Diaz	District court judge	\$5,500
Scott A. Brister	Supreme Court	\$5,000
Betty J. Brown	House	\$5,000
Scott E. Campbell	House	\$5,000
Barbara Calhoun Cargill	Board of Education	\$5,000
Dan Flynn	House	\$5,000
Rick Green	House	\$5,000
Michael W. Hamilton	House	\$5,000
Linda L. Harper-Brown	House	\$5,000
Charles F. Howard	House	\$5,000
James F. Landtroop	House	\$5,000

Recipient	Office Sought Or Held	Amount
David Medina	Supreme Court	\$5,000
Michael H. Schneider	Supreme Court	\$5,000
Jesse W. Wainwright	Supreme Court	\$5,000
Don Willett	Supreme Court	\$5,000
Florence Shapiro	Senate	\$2,500
Relvin Kent Sharp	House	\$2,500
TX Republican Legislative Caucus	GOP	\$2,500
Frank J. Corte	House	\$1,600
Rebecca Simmons	Court of Appeals judge	\$1,500
Michael Williams	Railroad Commissioner	\$1,250
Kris J. Gillespie	House	\$1,000
Phillip S. King	House	\$1,000
W. Kenneth Paxton	House	\$1,000
Deborah A. Riddle	House	\$1,000
Eugene J. Seaman	House	\$1,000
Joe Straus	House	\$1,000
William W. Zedler	House	\$1,000
South TX Republicans	GOP	\$750
Tom Craddick	House Speaker	\$643
Judicial Roundup PAC	Backs judicial candidates	\$500
Lori D. Massey	District court judge	\$500
Wilson Co. Republican Party	GOP	\$100
TOTAL:		\$3,145,041