

# News Release

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Texans for Public Justice \*\* 609 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite E, \*\* Austin, TX 78701

For Immediate Release:  
Wednesday, April 19, 2006

Contact: Craig McDonald, Andrew Wheat  
Phone: (512) 472-9770

## Lobby Spending Jumped \$9 Million During the 2005 Special Sessions

### • Lobbyists Gear Up For Yet Another Special-Session Windfall

**Austin, Texas:** As Governor Perry convenes the legislature—and lobby—for yet another special session on school taxes, a new report released by Texans for Public Justice analyzes the special interests that increased their lobby spending \$9.3 million during last summer’s two special sessions. So-called “sin-tax” industries and other businesses with a keen interest in school taxation posted some of the largest increases in lobby spending, according to the new report [Special Sessions For Special Interests](#).

“The lobby is sharpening its knives again as this special session tackles the Sharp Commission’s proposal to close Texas’ gaping business-tax loopholes,” said Texans For Public Justice Director Craig McDonald. “The business lobby’s motto is: ‘Everybody must pay their fair share of school taxes—except me.’”

To measure lobby-spending growth, Texans For Public Justice compared a “snapshot” of Texas Ethics Commission lobby filings at the end of the regular session in late May 2005 to a snapshot taken three months later—after the end of last year’s second special session. Key findings are:

- Special interests reported a \$9.3 million increase in lobby spending during the three months from the regular session’s end to the close of the second special session last year.
- The Chickasaw Nation—which operates Oklahoma’s largest gambling facilities—was the fastest-growing major lobby client. The tribe, which has an interest in blocking the expansion of Texas gaming, increased its Texas lobby expenditures by 200 percent during the 2005 special sessions.
- Others pushed to expand Texas gambling activities. MEC Lonestar, owner of Lone Star Parkway, as well as a real estate company with a big stake in the proposed Austin Jockey Club racetrack, both doubled their lobby special-sessions spending in 2005. “Sin-tax” opponent RJ Reynolds raised its spending 67 percent.
- A business group opposing tax hikes, the Texas Businesses for Education Excellence, increased lobby spending 44 percent. Two fans of business-tax loopholes, the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts and the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants, increased their spending 28 percent apiece.
- Time Warner Cable, which hired Tom DeLay’s brother, Randy, during the special session, increased its spending 53 percent. Yet rival SBC Corp. (now AT&T), Texas’ No. 1 lobby client, spent far more and walked away from the second special session with its own sweetheart bill.

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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.