



# ★ TEXAS SUPREME COURT ★ DOLLAR DOCKET

*In Texas, 48% of judges and 79% of lawyers say contributions significantly influence judicial decisions. - Texas Supreme Court poll*

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## Dearth of Court Clerks Unrelated To Their Perks

**T**all tales from Texas' high court are encouraging the Legislature to "fix" the court's "clerk perks" scandal by simply legalizing the practice.

A controversy has erupted over the private bonuses and other subsidies that court clerks receive from law firms with cases before the court—subsidies that appear to break state "Bribery and Corrupt Influence" laws.

Chief Justice Tom Phillips suggests that these subsidies must be legalized to attract quality clerks. He has told the media and legislators that the recent clerk-perk scandal has helped cause a "drastic decline" in clerk applications.

This is a half truth. Court data reveal that the big drop in clerk applicants occurred four years *before* the clerk-perk scandal broke. Applications dropped from 126 in 1996 to 44 in 1997. The court received 68 applications this year.

New lawyers seek clerkships to add experience and prestige to their resumes. By trying to preserve rather than end unethical perks, the court further tarnishes its own prestige—driving more would-be clerks from its door.

### Applicant Decline Predates Scandal

## March Dollar Docket

Cases heard by the Texas Supreme Court in March and the corresponding contributions to justices from the parties and/or attorneys.

### March 7, 2001

*Southwestern Electric Co. v. Grant* \$326,980  
\$0

*Riyad Bank v. Gailani* \$249,121  
\$0

*M.D. Anderson v. Novak* \$0  
\$0

### March 21, 2001

*Collins v. Ison-Newsome* \$43,736  
\$61,999

*Wagner & Brown Ltd. v. Horwood* \$44,500  
\$1,950

*McAllen Medical v. Cortez* \$3,172  
\$4,700

### March 28, 2001

*Allstate Ins. Co. v. Bonner* \$70,850  
\$0

*In re A.D.* \$0

*American Motorists Ins. Co. v. Fodge* \$0  
\$0

**Grand Total for March 2001: \$807,008**

