



News Release

Texans for Public Justice ** 609 W. 18th Street, Suite E, ** Austin, TX 78701

For Immediate Release:
November 27, 2001

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

Tort Tycoons Poured Millions into 2000 Texas Elections

Report Tracks *Texans for Lawsuit Reform's* Top Donors

Austin, TX: Two dozen top supporters of Texans for Lawsuit Reform (TLR) poured \$4.5 million into state political campaigns in the 2000 election cycle, a new study reports. TLR's PAC raised \$1.5 million and spent \$1.4 million to influence Texas politics in the 2000 cycle, ranking it among the five biggest PACs in Texas for the third straight election cycle. TLR's top 24 donors independently spent another \$3.1 million on Texas candidates and PACs, making them king makers who can determine the outcome of close races.

Created in 1994 to roll back the legal liabilities of Texas businesses, TLR received nearly half of its 2000-cycle money (\$691,000) from just five families that made fortunes in highly litigious industries. The PAC received 80 percent of its money from just 24 such interests. In turn, TLR directed 92 percent of all its PAC expenditures to benefit Republican candidates.

"Rarely have so few spent so much to counter the interests of so many Texans," said Texans for Public Justice Director Craig McDonald. "If the state's 20 million consumers had the clout of the TLR tycoons, Texas would be a much healthier and safer place to live and to work."

Major findings of the [*Texans for Lawsuit Reform*](#) report include:

- Just two Republican senate candidates (Todd Staples and Bob Deuell) received 73 percent of TLR's PAC money. Staples got almost half of his TLR money in the last week of his successful campaign, thereby hiding his dependence on TLR until after the election.
- Newly elected Senator Leticia Van de Putte received one-third of the \$111,293 that TLR gave to Democrats. With no GOP challenger, she used this money to defeat a trial lawyer in the primary.
- TLR spread its remaining money around giving an average of \$2,200 to more than 100 incumbent statewide and legislative officeholders.

Copies of [*Texans for Lawsuit Reform*](#), which is based on disclosure reports filed with the Texas Ethics Commission, are available from Texans for Public Justice or at <http://www.tpj.org>.

###

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