

# News from TPJ

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Texans for Public Justice \* 609 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite E, \* Austin, TX 78701 \* [www.tpj.org](http://www.tpj.org)

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Contact: TPJ  
(512) 472-9770

## Court to Hear Tom DeLay's Criminal Appeal on Wednesday

Long-Delayed Appeals Hearing Comes 10 Years after Felon  
Committed Political Money Laundering, Three Years After He Danced  
With Stars and Two Years after His Criminal Conviction

**Austin, Texas:** Ten years after Tom DeLay committed political money laundering to illegally influence Texas' 2002 elections, defense attorneys will try to convince Austin's 3<sup>rd</sup> Court of Appeals on Wednesday that his two-year-old conviction should be overturned. Two Republicans and one Democratic judge are scheduled to hear oral arguments in the case.

An Austin jury found DeLay guilty in November 2010 of money laundering and conspiracy in a scheme to funnel illegal corporate funds to Texas legislative candidates in 2002. The trial judge sentenced DeLay to three years in prison and five years probation. One of DeLay's top aides, Jim Ellis, pleaded guilty to related charges in June and was sentenced to four years probation. DeLay aide John Colyandro still awaits trial in the case. DeLay has been free on bond during his extended appeal.

Three Republican justices on the six-judge 3<sup>rd</sup> Court of Appeals recused themselves from DeLay's case. After DeLay complained that Democratic Justice Diane Henson was biased, Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson replaced her with Republican Justice David Gaultney of the 9<sup>th</sup> Court of Appeals. DeLay's team also will make their case to Democratic Chief Justice J. Woodfin Jones and Republican Justice Melissa Goodwin.

"DeLay's crimes continue to haunt Texas," said Texans for Public Justice Director Craig McDonald. "He conspired to steal an election so he could redraw Texas' political maps. We cannot redo that election, but we can hold him belatedly accountable for his crimes."

DeLay's legal team will argue that the evidence that prosecutors presented at trial was insufficient to convict him. Reformers are concerned that the Republican reconfiguring of the appellate panel might hand DeLay a get-out-of-jail free card. "The politics may be on DeLay's side, even if the law isn't," McDonald said.

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