



# News Release



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

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*Amicus Curie:*

## **Recusal Urged For All Texas Justices In Radioactive Contributor Case**

- **Justices Took \$90,500 from nuclear billionaire Harold Simmons.**

Austin—Citing \$98,000 in radioactive political contributions that Texas’ Supreme Court justices have taken from principals of Waste Control Specialists, Texans for Public Justice called on the justices to recuse themselves from a related appeal filed at the high court on June 2.

Dallas billionaire and Waste Control owner Harold Simmons has given the justices a total of \$90,500. Simmons’ donations to the justices range from \$5,000 up to \$18,500 for Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson. Justices took a total of \$7,500 more from Waste Control Vice Chair Kent Hance before he became Texas Tech University chancellor in late 2006.

Justice Harriet O’Neill leaves the court June 20. Debra Lehrmann, whom Governor Rick Perry recently appointed to fill O’Neill’s term, took \$5,000 from Simmons. (Perry took \$620,000 from Simmons since 2001.)

### **Harold Simmons’ Radioactive Contributions To Texas Supreme Court Justices (2000 to Feb. 2010)**

<b>Justice</b>	<b>Harold Simmons’ Donations</b>	<b>Kent Hance’s Donations</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Wallace Jefferson	\$18,500	\$2,000	\$20,500
Don Willett	\$12,500	\$1,000	\$13,500
Phil Johnson	\$11,250	\$2,000	\$13,250
Jesse Wainwright	\$10,750	\$0	\$10,750
Nathan Hecht	\$8,500	\$0	\$8,500
David Medina	\$8,000	\$1,000	\$9,000
Paul Green	\$6,000	\$1,000	\$7,000
Eva Guzman	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Debra Lehrmann	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
Harriet O’Neill	\$5,000	\$500	\$5,500
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$90,500</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$98,000</b>

Residents of Andrews County, just East of Texas' New Mexico border, voted in May 2009 on whether or not to issue public bonds to help Waste Control finance a low-level radioactive waste dump there. The measure passed by three votes: 642 to 639. Local voters Peggy Pryor and Melodye Pryor filed a lawsuit challenging the validity of 90 votes (*Pryor v. Richard Dolgener, County Judge of Andrews Co.*). Exercising Pryor restraint, the trial court and El Paso's 8<sup>th</sup> Court of Appeals ruled against the sisters. Waste Control filed briefs urging the court to certify the vote. Yesterday the plaintiffs appealed the rulings to the Texas Supreme Court.

“The \$90,500 that the justices took from Harold Simmons hits the court like a radioactive dirty bomb,” said Texans for Public Justice Research Director Andrew Wheat. “All nine justices should recuse themselves from any involvement in this case.”

### **Nuclear Accidents in Andrews County Are As Improbable As Huge Oil Spills in the Gulf**



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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.