

News Release

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Governor Perry's Mansion Spending Violates Campaign Laws, TPJ Alleges

Complaint Urges Texas Ethics Commission to Make Governor's Campaign Itemize Mansion-Related Expenditures, As Required By Law

(Austin)—Texans for Public Justice filed a Texas Ethics Commission complaint today alleging that Governor Rick Perry's campaign violated campaign disclosure law by failing to itemize how it spent \$816,000 on such mansion-related expenditures as food, beverages, alcohol and cable television.

Rather than itemizing such expenditures, as required by law, Texans for Rick Perry routinely reports lump-sum "Mansion Fund" expenditures of as much as \$63,989. Since 2001, the campaign reported 145 "Mansion Fund" expenditures totaling more than \$816,000. TPJ's complaint alleges that the campaign is required to itemize each underlying "Mansion-Fund" expenditure, reporting the name of the vendor, as well as the amount, date and purpose of each transaction. The Ethics Commission similarly prohibits campaigns from reporting lump-sum expenditures for credit card bills because this prevents the public from seeing when the campaign paid what to whom. The Ethics Commission has treated campaign disclosures containing unitemized credit-card expenditures as late or incomplete reports subject to a penalty of \$500 per report. TPJ's complaint covers five reports that the governor's campaign filed over the past two years.

Under the Public Information Act, TPJ obtained a copy of a related "Mansion Fund" expense ledger that the Governor's Office initially provided to the Associated Press. The ledger contains entries for several hundred payments from October 2007 through December 2009 totaling \$129,020. The ledger lists payments to vendors of food, alcohol, flowers, cable television, entertainment and other expenses. The campaign-related ledger is covered by the Public Information Act because it was maintained by a state employee. Campaigns are required to disclose such itemized expenditures in regular campaign reports that the Ethics Commission posts on the Internet.

"The law requires politicians to disclose every expenditure so the public can see if they are spending campaign money on their own, personal creature comforts," said Craig McDonald, Director of Texans for Public Justice. "The Governor owes the public full disclosure whenever he uses special interest-supplied campaign money to cover his entertainment bills."

The Associated Press reported on May 18, 2010 that the Governor's Office has spent almost \$600,000 in taxpayer funds on the "temporary mansion" that the governor has occupied since the fall of 2007. Governor Perry has tapped campaign donors for another \$129,020 in expenses attributed to the temporary mansion.

View TPJ's [complaint filed with Ethics Commission](#).

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