

News Release

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

For Immediate Release:
October 7, 2008

Contact: Craig McDonald
PH: (512) 472-9770

Uncovering Massive Campaign Conflicts, TPJ Calls For Halt To 'Payola Justice'

- High Court Candidates Take Two-Thirds of Campaign Funds From Those With Business Before That Court.
- Time To End Courtroom Conflicts, Watchdog Says.

Austin: A new study finds that the six current, major-party candidates for the Texas Supreme Court took two-thirds of the \$2.3 million that they raised from January 2007 through June 2008 from lawyers and litigants who have had business before that court since 2005.

The new report by Texans For Public Justice, "Courtroom Contributions Stain Supreme Court Campaigns," finds that the three incumbent Republican justices now running for reelection raised almost \$1.6 million. These justices took 65 percent of their campaign funds from "courtroom contributors" who had recent business before the Supreme Court. Forty percent of the cases before the three incumbent justices involved one or more campaign contributors.

'Courtroom Contributors' Supply 66 Percent of Supreme Court Candidates' Campaign Funds

GOP Justice Seeking Reelection	Total Raised Jan. '07 to July '08	Courtroom Funds As Share of Total
Wallace Jefferson*	\$661,219	60%
Phil Johnson	\$473,683	65%
Dale Wainwright	\$450,718	71%
TOTALS:	\$1,585,620	65%

Democratic Challenger	Total Raised Jan. '07 to July '08	Courtroom Funds As Share of Total
Jim Jordan	\$161,480	64%
Linda Yañez (D)	\$306,571	68%
Sam Houston (D)	\$254,116	74%
TOTALS:	\$722,167	69%

*Chief Justice

"The evidence that justice is for sale at the Supreme Court continues to grow," said Texans for Public Justice Director Craig McDonald. "This court's rulings in favor of the corporate-defense interests that bankroll its campaigns has become all too predictable. To restore justice to Texas courtrooms we need a simple new rule that prohibits judges from hearing cases involving campaign contributors. Today, the main people bankrolling judicial campaigns are those with a direct interest in the court's rulings. We must eliminate the incentive that special interests now have to give money to Texas judges. When judges take money from lawyers or litigants with business in their courtroom it should be treated as a criminal bribe."

TPJ called upon the governor and legislature to make cleaning up Texas courts a priority in the coming legislative session.

*Texans for Public Justice is a non-profit, non-partisan research organization
that tracks the role of money in Texas politics.*

###