

Texans For Public Justice

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October 31, 2001

Honorable John Cornyn
Cornyn for U.S. Senate Campaign
807 Brazos, Suite 902
Austin, TX 78701

BY FACSIMILE

Attorney General Cornyn:

I'm writing to request a list of the names, addresses, occupations and business affiliations of your supporters that have pledged to raise and/or have raised money for your U.S. Senate campaign in excess of the \$1,000 limit on contributions to candidates for federal offices.

The media have reported that you are recruiting contributors to deliver to your campaign amounts of money that greatly exceed the \$1,000 limit. Those reports stated that you have created special categories for individuals who pledge to bundle contributions (e.g. individuals pledging to bundle \$10,000 are called "Benefactors," those bundling \$25,000 are "Underwriters" and those bundling \$50,000 are designated "Patriots").

Bundling operations that circumvent the \$1,000 contribution limit break the spirit of the Federal Election Campaign Act. This \$1,000 limit was enacted to avoid the appearance that federal officials can be unduly influenced by the amount of money contributed by—or credited to—a single donor. The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently upheld the reasonableness of these limits, noting that the appearance of corruption can be just as corrosive to the integrity of our political institutions as actual corruption. If your campaign creates a secret network of "Patriots" who privately deliver amounts of money that greatly exceed the legal limit for individual contributions, you will take this country back to the pre-Watergate days, when big donors exploited secret slush funds to win special government favors. For this reason, I urge you to dismantle this bundling operation and to run your campaign within the letter and spirit of federal campaign limits—as hundreds of congressional candidates have done before you.

At the very least, the public expects—and is entitled to—full disclosure of all private financing of public elections. If you insist upon allowing individuals to give your campaign bundled contributions in excess of \$1,000, you have an ethical obligation to disclose the identities of this special class of donors and to disclose the amount of money that they pledge and deliver. If these donors do not expect to be rewarded with political favoritism, they should have no objection to such full and immediate disclosure. As the "open-government" attorney general, I'm confident that you will recognize the public's right to full and complete disclosure of who pays for your Senate campaign.

Sincerely,

Craig McDonald
Director, Texans for Public Justice