

LOBBY WATCH



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Just One Elected Judge Is Untainted!

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Houston Judges Got \$200,550 From Enron and Its Law Firm

Supreme Court Candidates Ray & Wainwright Are Among Them.

The PACs and employees of Enron and its law firm gave \$200,550 to the 22 civil state district judges elected in Harris County since 1998.

At a time when Houston courts could face explosive Enron litigation, just four civil district judges there have been elected without Enron money. Just one of these judges, Mark Davidson, took no money from Enron's law firm, Vinson & Elkins.

These findings are all the more disturbing given that Enron had 79 cases before these judges during this time, according to a recent study by Austin-based Campaigns for People.

Each of the 22 judges had at least one Enron case between 1998 and 2001, with three judges juggling seven Enron cases apiece (Judges Caroline Baker, Harvey Brown, Jr. and Scott Link).

Apart from the scope of this problem in Houston, nothing is new about Texas judges taking money from big-donor interests with cases in their courts. Nonetheless, Enron's spectacular collapse reinvigorated public scrutiny of such conflicts.

Enron Assistant General Counsel Richard Sanders doubled as the campaign treasurer of two Harris County district judges: Bruce Oakley and Sherry Radack (who was appointed to a 1st Court of Appeals vacancy in late 2001).

In their most recent elections, Harris County's 22 elected civil district judges took an average of \$7,691 apiece from Enron and Vinson & Elkins. This money accounted for 6 percent of the \$3.6 million that these judges raised.

The jurists who took the most money directly from Enron's PAC and executives were Judges Martha Hill Jamison (\$9,500) and Sherry Radack (\$6,500). Judge Jane Bland took the most combined money from Enron and its law firm (\$26,500).

Judge Bland also took the greatest share of her hefty judicial war chest from Enron and Vinson & Elkins donors (12 percent). Next came Judge Tracy Christopher, who got 10 percent of her modest war chest from these sources.

More...

Enron Links To Elected Civil District Judges In Houston, 1998-2001

	Enron Contributions	Vinson & Elkins Contributions	Enron + V&E Contributions	No. of Enron Cases
TOTAL:	\$31,350	\$169,200	\$200,550	79
AVERAGE:	\$1,425	\$7,691	\$9,116	4

Houston Civil District Judges With the Most Enron and Vinson & Elkins Money

Dist	Harris Co. Judge (Year Elected)	Enron + V&E Money	Enron Money	V&E Money	Total Money	Enron + V&E Share	Enron Cases
281	Jane Bland ('98)	\$26,500	\$1,600	\$24,900	\$222,135	12%	2
55	Sherry Radack* ('98)	\$26,250	\$6,500	\$19,750	\$377,851	7%	4
164	Martha Hill Jamison ('00)	\$25,550	\$9,500	\$16,050	\$533,952	5%	3
189	Jeff Work ('98)	\$12,600	\$750	\$11,850	\$157,221	8%	3
127	Sharolyn Wood ('00)	\$12,300	\$1,000	\$11,300	\$305,418	4%	6
129	Patrick Mizell ('00)	\$10,500	\$1,000	\$9,500	\$121,650	7%	1
152	Harvey Brown Jr. ('00)	\$9,450	\$1,000	\$8,450	\$156,200	6%	7
190	John Devine ('98)	\$8,400	\$250	\$8,150	\$225,077	4%	6
270	Brent Gamble ('98)	\$8,200	\$1,000	\$7,200	\$132,889	6%	2
215	Levi Benton ('00)	\$7,950	\$1,000	\$6,950	\$139,217	6%	2

*Appointed to a 1st Court of Appeals vacancy in late 2001.

Houston's highest-profile district judges are Texas Supreme Court candidates Dale Wainwright and Elizabeth Ray. An April 9th Republican runoff could determine which of these judges will rule on future Enron litigation before the state's highest civil court.

Neither candidate claims the moral high ground on Enron money. While Judge Ray took more money from Enron and its law firm (\$7,450), these sources accounted for a slightly higher percentage of the war chest of Judge Wainwright (6 percent), who had three times as many Enron cases as Judge Ray.

Houston Civil District Judges With Greatest Share of Money From Enron and V&E

Dist.	Harris Co. Judge (Year Elected)	Enron + V&E Share	Enron Money	V&E Money	Enron + V&E Money	Total Money	Enron Cases
281	Jane Bland ('98)	12%	\$1,600	\$24,900	\$26,500	\$222,135	2
295	Tracy Christopher ('98)	10%	\$0	\$250	\$250	\$2,500	3
129	Patrick Mizell ('00)	9%	\$1,000	\$9,500	\$10,500	\$121,650	1
133	Lamar McCorkle ('00)	8%	\$500	\$6,300	\$6,800	\$81,325	1
189	Jeff Work ('98)	8%	\$750	\$11,850	\$12,600	\$157,221	3
55	Sherry Radack* ('98)	7%	\$6,500	\$19,750	\$26,250	\$377,851	4
270	Brent Gamble ('98)	6%	\$1,000	\$7,200	\$8,200	\$132,889	2
152	Harvey Brown Jr. ('00)	6%	\$1,000	\$8,450	\$9,450	\$156,200	7
215	Levi Benton ('00)	6%	\$1,000	\$6,950	\$7,950	\$139,217	2
334	Dale Wainwright ('00)	6%	\$1,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$109,110	3
165	Elizabeth Ray ('00)	5%	\$2,000	\$5,450	\$7,450	\$140,126	1

*Appointed to a 1st Court of Appeals vacancy in late 2001.