



# News Release



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## Texas Supreme Court Fundraising Closely Tied to Court's Case Load

40% of Justices' Contributions  
Tied to Sources Litigating Supreme Court Cases

Austin: Seven Texas Supreme Court justices elected since 1994 raised a total of \$9,166,450 in contributions of at least \$100 for their most recent elections. Sources closely linked to litigants with cases before the same court contributed \$3.7 million, or 40 percent of the grand total, a new study by Texans for

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- ‘Tort Dodgers’ led the way in individual giving to the court. Developers **Richard and David Weekley** gave more—\$60,000—than any other family. Of the top 16 families contributing to the court, 12 are big donors to Texas’ biggest special-interest PAC, **Texans for Lawsuit Reform**.
- Corporate PACs and executives gave heavily, contributing \$1.4 million to the seven justices. **Enron Corp.**, which had three cases before the court, was the court’s biggest corporate booster, donating \$78,700 to the seven justices. **HEB Grocery**, which had one case during the period (and has another one now pending), contributed \$52,169.
- ‘Bundled’ contributions proliferate. Numerous employees of the same law firm or corporation contribute to the same justice on the same day. **Baker & Botts** lawyers excel at this art, having given Chief Justice Phillips (a former employee) 48 checks on one day and 32 checks to Justice Baker on another day. **Enron** delivered the justices’ biggest corporate bundles.

“In 1987, ‘60 Minutes’ ran an expose on corruption in the Texas Supreme Court called ‘Justice for Sale,’ ” said report co-author Andrew Wheat. “Once perceived as a pro-plaintiff court controlled by high-rolling trial lawyers, 10 years after ‘Justice for Sale,’ this study demonstrates that the court has come full circle and is now a pro-corporate court funded by corporations and their law firms. Whenever parties before the court are also major contributors to the judges you wind up with cross-fertilizations that smell more like manure than justice.”

*Payola Justice* includes five “Payola Case Studies” of actual Supreme Court cases that illustrate the perils of permitting parties before the court to double as big contributors. The report also includes an appendix that lists the 138 Supreme Court cases from the period studied in which interested parties and law firms contributed at least \$20,000 to one or more of the seven justices.

The report concludes that Texans will continue to be served tainted justice until the state stops electing