

DeLay's Dirty Dozen

House Majority Leader Tom DeLay has been a busy man these last few years. Whether bribing congressmen, threatening political opponents, vacationing with lobbyists, or gutting House ethics rules, it's been hard to keep up with all the Hammer's activities. Here are twelve highlights from DeLay's illustrious career:

DELAY RAISES CORPORATE CASH FOR TRMPAC: DeLay is embroiled in a scandal in Texas for his active participation in illegally funneling corporate funds to assist state political campaigns. DeLay's political action committee, Texans for a Republican Majority (TRMPAC), is under criminal investigation for using corporate money to finance Texas campaigns. DeLay has tried to distance himself from the group, but documents show DeLay "personally forwarded at least one large check" to the group and was "in direct contact with lobbyists for some of the nation's largest companies" on TRMPAC's behalf. [Source: NYT, [3/10/05](#); Salon, [10/04/04](#)]

DELAY BRIBES CONGRESSMAN TO VOTE FOR MEDICARE: DeLay has admitted offering to endorse Sen. Nick Smith's (R-MI) son Brad, who was running for Congress at the time, in exchange for Smith's "yea" vote on the Medicare bill. His actions violated House rules and earned DeLay a "public admonishment" from the Ethics Committee. Smith originally alleged - and then retracted after pressure from House leaders - that DeLay also offered a \$100,000 bribe for his vote. DeLay extended the roll call on the Medicare bill for nearly three hours in order "to avoid an embarrassing loss." [Slate, [10/1/04](#); WP, [10/1/04](#)]

DELAY USES TAXPAYER MONEY FOR PARTISAN STUNT: The House ethics panel rebuked DeLay for using government resources to help locate a private plane he thought was carrying Texas Democratic legislators. DeLay was trying to force the legislators back to the capitol so he could push through his "bitterly disputed congressional redistricting." The ethics report cited House rules that bar members from taking "any official action on the basis of the partisan affiliation...of the individuals involved" and said DeLay's behavior raised "serious concerns under such "standards of conduct." [WP, [10/7/04](#)]

DELAY PAYS FOR GOLF TOURNAMENTS WITH CASH MEANT FOR KIDS: DeLay used a children's charity, Celebrations for Children Inc., as cover for collecting soft money from anonymous interest groups, some of which was used for "dinners, a golf tournament, a rock concert, Broadway tickets and other fundraising events" at the Republican convention in New

York. Because the money was supposedly for charity, companies wishing to curry favor with DeLay were able to do so without revealing themselves as campaign donors. Federal laws governing tax-exempt charities allow no more than an insubstantial portion of a group's revenue to be spent on activities other than the charity's main stated purpose. [CBS, [11/14/03](#); WP, [3/24/04](#)]

DELAY PROMISES 'SEAT AT TABLE' FOR DONOR: In one of its three public rebukes, the House Ethics Committee cited the belief on the part of executives at an energy company, Westar Energy Inc., that a \$56,500 contribution to a political action committee associated with DeLay would get them a "seat at the table" where key energy legislation was being drafted. DeLay also participated in Westar's golf fundraiser at The Homestead resort in the summer of 2002, " just as the House-Senate conference on major energy legislation...was about to get underway." [WP, [10/7/04](#)]

DELAY TAKES MONEY FROM TEXAS PRISON COMPANY WITH LEGISLATION PENDING: DeLay "took a \$100,000 check from a private prison company" - the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) - at a fundraiser for his children's charity, the DeLay Foundation for Kids. CCA - whose 20-year history has been "fraught with malfeasance, mismanagement, and abuse" - was part of an ongoing lobby for a bill that would privatize up to half of Texas's jails. DeLay is known for wielding major influence over the Republican-led legislature that will decide on the matter. [Knight Ridder, [11/30/04](#); Texas Observer, [6/6/03](#)]

DELAY BLOCKS LEGISLATION FOR PARTISAN VENDETTA: In 1999, DeLay received a "private rebuke" for threatening retaliation against the Electronic Industries Association when the trade group named a Democrat to head its Washington operation. To punish the group, DeLay stopped two uncontroversial trade bills that would have benefited the EIA and told the association it would lose all GOP access unless it hired a Republican instead. The group still hired the Democrat, but a little later, the EIA quietly hired a former House Republican staff member who promptly showed up at a fundraiser for DeLay's ARMPAC. [Texas Observer, [2/4/00](#); Slate, [12/5/98](#)]

DELAY TAKES SHADY DONATIONS FOR LEGAL DEFENSE FUND: The list of recent donors to DeLay's legal defense fund includes two lawmakers placed on the House Ethics Committee this year (they replaced conservatives who were purged for being critical of DeLay), and corporations implicated in DeLay's alleged fundraising violations. Corporate donors include Bacardi U.S.A., the rum maker that has also been indicted in the Texas investigation, and Reliant Energy, "another major contributor to a Texas political action committee formed by Mr. DeLay that is the focus of the

criminal inquiry." In December, DeLay was forced to return funds from registered lobbyists because those contributions violated House ethics rules. [NYT, 3/13/05; Time, 3/13/05]

DELAY LEAVES ETHICS BEHIND ON EUROPEAN VACATION: DeLay enjoyed a luxurious vacation at the Four Seasons Hotel in London in mid-2000, paid for by an Indian tribe and a gambling services company, both of which opposed gambling legislation DeLay voted against two months later. The payment was funneled through lobbyist Jack Abramoff, best known for teaming up with right-wing religious fundamentalist Ralph Reed to close down a Texas casino operated by the Tigua Indians in 2002, then persuading the tribe to pay the two of them \$4.2 million to lobby Washington lawmakers, including DeLay, to reopen it. According to expense accounts obtained by the Journal, Abramoff financed DeLay and DeLay's staff's stay at the Four Seasons hotel to the tune of \$4,285.35. The total reimbursement for expenses in London was \$13,318.50. [WP, 3/12/05; Raw Story, 2/25/05; WP, 9/29/04]

DELAY LEAVES HOUSE RULES BEHIND ON ASIAN VACATION: DeLay accepted an expense-paid trip to South Korea which, in direct violation of House rules, was paid for by a South Korean lobbying group. The Korea-US Exchange Council, a group registered with the Foreign Agents Registration Act, was created with help from DeLay's former chief of staff. The cost to send DeLay, his wife and three of his lawmaker friends to Seoul for three days was \$106,921, the fourth largest cost for any single trip taken by lawmakers between January 2000 and September 2004. [WP, 3/10/05]

DELAY KICKS ETHICS OUT OF HOUSE: DeLay and his allies in the House have sought to cripple the House Ethics Committee. The committee, which rebuked DeLay three times last year, was purged of its most "responsible" members last month and is currently "paralyzed" by a proposed rules change that "would prevent the committee from launching any investigation without the support of at least one Republican—a restriction designed to protect the majority leader." [WP, 2/5/05; WP, 10/7/04; Time, 3/13/05]

DELAY TRIES TO CHANGE RULES TO PROTECT POWER: DeLay was the driving force behind the decision by House leaders to abandon an 11-year-old party rule that "required leaders to step aside temporarily if indicted." The idea was dropped only after rank-and-file lawmakers complained "the party was sending the wrong message." [NYT, 11/18/04; WP, 3/11/05]