



Madam Chair:

February 7, 2013

Ex-Rep. Truitt Services Same Interests in Lobby as in House

Ousted by Voters, the Author of Weak Predatory-Loan Laws Claims Her Payday.

As House Pensions, Investments & Financial Services Committee Chair in 2011, Republican Rep. Vicki Truitt authored bills servicing the very interests that hired her as a lobbyist days after she left office last month.

Texas operates the nation’s biggest, fastest legislative revolving door. Its lawmakers cannot—or will not—limit themselves from immediately converting their legislative histories into lavish lobby incomes. While there often is continuity between the interests that revolving-door lawmakers service in the Capitol and the lobby, Truitt stands out for the sheer seamlessness of this unseemly behavior.

After losing her seat in the 2012 primary, Truitt left office on January 8, 2013. Payday lender ACE Cash Express agreed to pay her up to \$50,000 to lobby just 17 days later. ACE President Jay Shipowitz testified in 2011 that if the legislature passed Senator Wendy Davis’s

tough [bill](#) clamping down on the excesses of predatory lenders, “we will be forced to shut our stores in Texas.”¹

In the 2010 election cycle Truitt took more [predatory-lender money](#) than any other rank-and-file lawmaker. This investment paid dividends in 2011, when madam chair championed the watered-down legislation that lawmakers passed instead of the Davis bill.²

The fact that predatory-lending measures are back before the legislature this session is one indicator of how little lawmakers did to solve these problem in 2011. This round, Vicki Truitt—who championed the industry in the House—is doing so in the lobby.

Moving with sly swiftness, the Texas Retired Teachers Association agreed five days after Truitt left office to pay her up to \$100,000 to lobby this year. In her last session, Truitt authored an obscure [bill](#). It rescued the Teachers Retire--

Truitt’s Maiden Revolving-Door Clients

Initial Truitt Clients	Min. Value of Contracts	Max. Value of Contracts
ACE Cash Express	\$25,000	\$50,000
TX Retired Teachers Assn.	\$50,000	\$100,000
TOTALS	\$75,000	\$150,000

ment System of Texas (TRS) from an Attorney General opinion that ordered the agency to disclose *aggregate* data about taxpayer-subsidized pensions paid to 103 ex-lawmaker lobbyists.³

Due to similar laws that lawmakers passed in recent years, Texans for Public Justice lost a [lawsuit](#) this week to force the Texas Employee Retirement System to disclose aggregate data on revolving-door pensions.⁴

The day of that court decision, the man who kicked Truitt through the revolving door—freshman Rep. Giovanni Capriglione—filed a [bill](#) to make “public” retirement systems more transparent. Such reforms ironically generate business for revolvers like Truitt. •



Newly minted lobbyist Vicki Truitt.

Houses of Ill Repute, Then and Now



Notes

¹ “Payday Lending Weighed,” *Dallas Morning News*, February 23, 2011.

² Lawmakers passed Truitt’s [HB 2592](#) (imposing some disclosure requirements) and [HB 2594](#) (imposing some licensing and regulatory requirements). Truitt’s [HB 2593](#) (limiting rollovers on auto-title loans) did not pass.

³ Upon enactment of Truitt’s bill, the Attorney General and TRS agreed to disclose nothing to Texans for Public Justice.

⁴ “Pension Details to Stay a Secret,” *Austin American-Statesman*, February 6, 2013.