

LOBBY WATCH



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Betting Large:

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Did Bundled Bucks Push Perry to Play the Ponies?

- **Racing interests laid down over \$232,000 to Guv on a single day**

A long list of horse racing interests, from veterinarians to horse breeders to owners of competing tracks, all made contributions to Rick Perry's campaign on Feb. 11, 2004. At least 67 separate contributions came from these interests, totaling at least \$232,800. These donors appear to have one common interest: horse racing.

These 67 donors delivered a significant bundle of money despite the fact that Perry's next election was two and one-half years away. On April 13th, just two months after these contributions rolled in, Perry called the special session on school finance, the centerpiece of which was Perry's plan to allow slot machines in horse and dog racing tracks throughout Texas. Perry's plan would be a massive boon to the Texas racing industry.

Through a yet unknown circumstance, this bundle of racing contributions was delivered to the Governor on a single day. In all, Perry reported raising \$307,745 on Feb. 11th, more than three times what he raised on any other day in the first half of 2004. Of this, at least \$232,800 (76%) came from donors with ties to the racing industry.

Dominating the list of donors were the race track owners. Maxxam, Inc., which owns two tracks and is applying for a third, gave \$50,000. Harlan Crow, whose Crow Holdings has a \$10 million stake in the Lone Star Park in Grand Prairie, gave \$25,000. James Helzer of the LRP Group gave \$20,000. In all, track owners and operators contributed \$142,500 to Perry on

this single day. Horse owners, breeders, veterinarians and other industry workers contributed an additional \$89,300, led by horse breeder Mike Rutherford (\$10,000) and three trade associations (\$15,000 combined). Rounding out the interests, slot machine maker Gordon Graves donated \$1,000 to Perry.

Giving a Bundle

Interest	Feb. 11 th Money
Track Owners	\$142,500
Horse Industry	\$89,300
Slot makers	\$1,00
TOTAL:	\$232,800

Neck and Neck Competition

The owners of two groups pursuing permits for competing tracks in Laredo managed to come together by both contributing to Perry on Feb. 11th. Maxxam donated \$50,000, making it Perry's second largest overall donor for the six month reporting period. Challenging Maxxam for the right to run a Laredo horse track is the LRP Group. Major owners of this group donated \$42,000 on February 11, including James Helzer (\$20,000), the LaMantia family (\$10,000), Robert & Gordon Johnson (\$10,000), and the Straus family (\$2,000).

The size of these contributions and the fact that they all came the same day raises interesting questions. What did these donors expect from the Governor? Did Perry float his slot machine plans to the lobby two months before calling the special session? Were these 67 checks bundled and delivered by a single lobbyist?

Perry's Top Racing Donors on Feb 11, 2004

Contributor	Amount	Interest	City
Maxxam Texas PAC	\$50,000	Sam Houston Park/Valley Race Park/Laredo Race Park	Houston
Harlan Crow	\$25,000	Lone Star Park	Dallas
James Helzer	\$20,000	LRP Group	Arlington
Robert and Gordon Johnson	\$10,000	LRP Group	Austin
Joe LaMantia Jr.	\$10,000	LRP Group	McAllen
Mike Rutherford	\$10,000	Horse breeder	Houston
Heiligbrodt Racing Stable	\$5,000	Horse breeder	Houston
Texas Thoroughbred Assn. PAC	\$5,000	Horse trade	Austin
Texas Veterinary Medical Assn. PAC	\$5,000	Horse trade	Austin
National Thoroughbred Racing Assn. PAC	\$5,000	Horse trade	Lexington, KY
Holt Hickman	\$5,000	Silver Creek Racing	Fort Worth
Tom Durant	\$5,000	Classic Racing Stables	Grapevine
Gerald Ford	\$5,000	Horse owner	Dallas
Robert Kaminski	\$5,000	Lone Star Park	Dallas
Corey Johnsen	\$5,000	Lone Star Park	Eules
Christopher Hall	\$5,000	Retama Park	Miami Shores, FL
Buz Post	\$5,000	American Paint Horse	Waxahachie
James Pruitt	\$3,000	Horse dealer	Dallas
Heath Taylor	\$3,000	Heath Taylor Racing Stables	Ledbetter
Gwendolyn Eaves	\$2,500	Horse owner	Midland
Ben Hudson	\$2,000	Track Magazine	Morgan Mill
Johnny Trotter	\$2,000	Livestock Investors/Bar -G Feedyard	Hereford
Narciso Flores	\$2,000	Horse owner	Houston
Jacque Tanton	\$2,000	Horse owner	Granbury
George Temple	\$2,000	Horse owner	Terrell
Jerry Windham	\$2,000	American Quarter Horse Assn.	College Station

While Perry's slot machine plan didn't make it to the final wire, his failure to finish didn't keep him out of the money. LRP Group's Joe LaMantia gave the

governor an additional \$5,000 on June 16, 2004, one month after the special session collapsed.