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Sen. Tate's Supporters Lobbied In Front Of His Committee, Gave To His Campaign

<http://www.kunc.org/post/sen-tates-supporters-lobbied-front-his-committee-gave-his-campaign>

Five women lobbyists who voiced support for Sen. Jack Tate after sexual harassment allegations against him also did business before the committee he chairs earlier this year.

Last month, KUNC reported on formal complaints against Tate, R-Centennial, Sen. Randy Baumgardner, R-Hot Sulphur Springs, and Lebsack, D-Thornton.

Three are chairmen of legislative committees. But only Lebsack has been removed from his committee chairmanship.

Tate is the only lawmaker women lobbyists have come forward to vouch for.

Tate chairs the Senate Business, Labor and Technology Committee. It deals with interests including liquor, marijuana, telecommunications and insurance. The lobbyists supporting him represent companies such as CenturyLink, Walmart, liquor organizations and others.

All five women lobbyists worked on bills sponsored by Tate or before his committee. Three of them donated to his campaign.

They've also come under fire from other women for their support in a series of Facebook posts, where some questioned their motivations, drawing objections from some of the lobbyists in lengthy comment threads.

Colorado Common Cause Executive Director Elena Nunez talked about the potential for conflicts.

"I think some of the conversations around some of the latest allegations and defending some legislators and not others really reveals that," she said. "The dynamic really reveals the challenge of confronting sexual harassment in a political context."

For example, three of the women – Micki Hackenberger, Megan Dubray and Joan Green – lobbied in a support of a bill on liquor sales in supermarkets and chain stores that passed Tate's committee. Ultimately, Senate Bill 143 failed by a single vote on the Senate floor.

Supporting a key lawmaker

Dubray told KUNC last month that her experiences with Tate were always positive. KUNC originally reported that an intern left her job at the Capitol because Tate made her feel so uncomfortable. The intern has since filed a formal complaint against Tate.

In a text message, Dubray declined to discuss Tate or the sexual harassment allegations.

"I believe I've spoken enough on the matter," she wrote.

In 2015, Tate sponsored and passed a bill (House Bill 1390) that would have allowed lenders to charge higher interest rates on subprime loans. Dubray represented Springleaf Financial, and was among only a few lobbyists listed as supporting the measure, which Gov. John Hickenlooper vetoed.

Earlier this year, Dubray lobbied on three bills sponsored by Tate, though she opposed one of them. She also lobbied on 16 other bills heard before his committee, representing CenturyLink, Walmart and others.

Eight of the 19 bills Axiom Strategies President Micki Hackenberger lobbied on came before Tate's committee, including two sponsored by the senator. Hackenberger lobbied against one of Tate's bills that ultimately became law. She represents the Colorado Cannabis Chamber of Commerce, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of Colorado and others.

All five women also had bills before committees chaired by Lebsock and Baumgardner. Hackenberger said she has not had problems with any of the other accused lawmakers.

"My personal experience with them has been nothing but professional," Hackenberger said.

Tate is also a key figure in the debate over the state's employee retirement system, which is a hot topic for the legislature in 2018. Three of the five women have or will lobby on such bills.

Hackenberger's firm is representing the Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association before the legislature this year. Dubray represented PERA for the last three years and continues to. Joan Andrew Green Turner represents the Colorado County Employee Retirement Association, which operates its own retirement system and monitors bills related to PERA.

Turner replied to an email inquiry with this statement: "With the variety of clients I represent, I have a lot of bills before a lot of committees each legislative session – as you can well see."

Three of the five lobbyists who spoke out in support of Tate also gave money to his 2016 Senate campaign – Hackenberger (\$800), Turner (\$200) and Cindy Sovine Miller (\$400).

And some of their clients gave big bucks to the Senate Majority Fund, which spent more than \$26,000 supporting Tate in 2016. Among those donations:

- Business organization Colorado Concern, one of Dubray's clients, donated \$97,500 to the Majority Fund.
- Walmart, another Dubray client, donated \$15,000 to the fund in late 2014.

- The Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of Colorado, represented by Hackenberger, donated \$11,500 to the Majority Fund and \$600 to Tate.
- The Distilled Beverage Council of the United State, represented by Turner, donated \$5,000 to the fund.

Free public relations support for Tate?

A Denver public relations expert who has worked with one of the lobbyists is helping Tate deal with the negative publicity surrounding the allegations. Wendy Aiello, president of Aiello Public Relations, said she's providing her advice to Tate at no charge.

But she said she didn't want to discuss his situation beyond that.

Nunez said such free services might be a problem given Colorado's gift ban, which prohibits gift of more than \$59, including services provided.

"What's the line between commenting on a story and doing ongoing PR or defense, which would be a thing of value that another legislator might have to pay for?" Nunez asked. "If you're doing it for free, you're really violating the gift ban by providing these services."

When told about the gift law, Aiello told KUNC she'd "investigate" it.

Lobbyist Megan Dubray is listed as "of counsel" to Aiello's firm, and cites working as relations manager for the firm in the past.

Axiom Strategies President Micki Hackenberger said she talked with Aiello before submitting a written statement in support of Tate to a Denver television station last month.

Hackenberger and lobbyist Cindy Sovine Miller both said their support for Tate didn't mean they were discounting women who made allegations against him.

"I made a statement based on my personal experience," Hackenberger said. "I have not commented and I cannot comment on the other people who have made allegations."

Sovine Miller, who represents the Drug Policy Alliance, Denver Relief Counseling and others, reiterated her support of Tate originally voiced to Colorado Politics. She said there needs to be a larger conversation about sexual harassment.

"I would actually do it over again," she said of her defense of Tate. "This really touches on very important issues that we need to be talking about. What is considered acceptable behavior to one person might not be acceptable to another."

The women were criticized on Facebook for their support of Tate by Colorado Democratic Party Chairwoman and former state senator Morgan Carroll and Holly Tarry, one of the women who filed a complaint against Lebsack.

Several lobbyists countered that criticism in the Facebook comment threads.

And Sovine Miller said she spoke on Tate's behalf without consulting anyone else.

"I know Micki and I know Meg, but I didn't talk to either of them until after we were being lambasted by our female colleagues," she said.

Greenfield Recorder
December 8, 2017

Ex-state senator charged with racketeering

<http://www.recorder.com/Ex-state-senator-charged-with-accepting-bribes-kickbacks-14232567>

A former Massachusetts state senator was charged Friday with accepting up to \$1 million in bribes and kickbacks in exchange for helping companies and then laundering the money through his law office, disguising it as legal fees.

Brian Joyce, 55, was arrested at his Westport home shortly before sunrise Friday, hours before authorities unsealed a 113-count indictment stemming from a two-year investigation that charges the Democrat with racketeering, extortion, wire fraud and money laundering.

“We believe Mr. Joyce was greedy, plain and simple,” FBI Special Agent in Charge Hank Shaw said.

Acting U.S. Attorney William Weinreb said that Joyce, who represented more than 100,000 residents as a state legislator, ran his public office as a “criminal enterprise.”

“He had a duty to serve (his constituents) honestly, and he violated that duty by accepting bribes and kickbacks in exchange for his official action,” Weinreb said.

Joyce pleaded not guilty in Worcester’s federal courthouse Friday before being released on \$250,000 bond. His attorney, Howard Cooper, told The Associated Press earlier Friday that he still was reviewing the charges and did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment after Joyce’s court appearance.

Joyce’s law office in Canton was raided by the FBI in February 2016 in what was then described as “court-authorized activity in connection with an ongoing federal investigation.” Cooper said at the time that Joyce was cooperating and believed he had done nothing wrong.

Joyce, who had served as assistant majority leader and represented his district since 1998, said shortly after the investigation was announced last year he would not seek re-election to the Senate.

Joyce is accused of participating in number of complex schemes dating back to 2010 that netted him hundreds of thousands of dollars and concealing the payments by using his law office as a “money laundering conduit.” Prosecutors say he also lied to the state’s ethics commission and used the panel as a “cloak of legitimacy for his corrupt schemes.”

In one case, prosecutors alleged Joyce used his position to exert influence on behalf of a New York-based energy brokerage business and formed a shell company to collect secret kickbacks from the firm. In another scheme, prosecutors say Joyce pressured a local planning board to approve a waiver sought by a developer, who gave Joyce a Jeep from one of the developer’s car dealerships.

The indictment also accuses Joyce of taking legislative action to aid a coffee franchise whose owner was paying him tens of thousands of dollars for “purported legal fees” and providing him with hundreds of pounds of free coffee.

Weinreb would not say whether charges would be brought against any of the companies accused to be involved in the schemes but said the investigation remains ongoing.

In 2015, then-Senate President Stan Rosenberg asked the ethics commission to review Joyce's conduct after The Boston Globe reported on potential conflicts of interest focusing on whether he used his position to boost his law practice.

In an unrelated case last year, Joyce agreed to pay nearly \$5,000 to resolve issues raised by state campaign finance regulators, including using campaign funds for his son's 2014 high school graduation party. Joyce said there had been no finding of wrongdoing on his part in that case.

The arrest is the second blow to the state Senate in the past week.

Rosenberg announced Monday he was stepping aside as president of the chamber during a Senate Ethics Committee investigation into the circumstances surrounding reported sexual misconduct allegations by several men against his husband, Bryon Hefner.

Harriette Chandler, a Worcester Democrat who is serving as acting Senate president, said in a statement about Joyce that she's confident the "justice system will come to a fair and just conclusion in the days to come."

Republican Gov. Charlie Baker called the allegations against Joyce disturbing.

"People in public life need to respect the offices they hold and that means not using them for personal gain, and if the feds believe there's enough there to justify an indictment then the investigation needs to be thorough and move forward accordingly," Baker said.

The Intercept December 8, 2017

Lobbyists bring holiday cheer to lawmakers and congressional staff with glitzy parties

<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/08/congress-lobbyist-holiday-parties/>

As lawmakers scramble to place the final touches on the biggest overhaul of the United States tax code in three decades, lobbyists hope to bring some holiday cheer with a lavish schedule of daily holiday parties and receptions for legislators and their staff.

The annual tradition of serving limitless supplies of free hors d'oeuvres and wine has gone on for years, uninterrupted by any administration or Congress, despite Democratic and Republican promises to crack down on special-interest influence.

Throughout Washington, D.C., this month, special-interest groups will be hosting scores of glitzy holiday parties. In years' past, legislators, congressional staff, and government officials have been routinely invited to and attended these events.

"Businesses and their lobbyists use holiday receptions as significant influence-peddling events," said Craig Holman, an ethics and campaign finance expert with Public Citizen.

The Intercept obtained several of the invites making the rounds on Capitol Hill this holiday season. The events include parties hosted by CropLife America, the trade group representing the pesticide industry;

the Financial Services Roundtable, a lobby group for banks such as Citigroup and JPMorgan; and Lockheed Martin, the world's largest defense contractor:

- **Motion Picture Association of America Holiday Reception:** November 29, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., 1301 K Street, NW, 900E
- **OCC and Options Industry Holiday Party:** November 30, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Charlie Palmer Steak, 101 Constitution Ave., NW
- **Lockheed Martin Holiday Reception:** December 5, 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Phoenix Park Hotel, 520 N. Capitol St., NW
- **Microsoft Holiday Open House:** December 5, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center, 901 K Street, NW, 11th Floor
- **American Trucking Association “Deck the Hauls” Holiday Party:** December 5, 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m., Charlie Palmer Steak 101 Constitution Ave., NW
- **Airlines for America Holiday Party:** December 6, 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m., U.S. Capitol HC-5
- **CME Group Holiday Reception:** December 5, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Oyamel, 401 7th Street, NW
- **National Retail Federation Holiday Party:** December 6, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., 1101 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1200
- **Consumer Technology Association:** December 6, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00p.m., CTA Innovation House, 21 D Street, SE
- **CropLife America Open House:** December 7, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., The Mayflower Hotel, State Room, 1127 Connecticut Ave., NW
- **U.S. Chamber of Commerce Holiday Reception:** December 7, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., 1615 H Street, NW
- **Financial Services Roundtable Holiday Celebration:** December 12, 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., 600 13th St. NW, Suite 400
- **American Gas Association Holiday Reception:** December 12, 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Barrel, 613 Pennsylvania Ave, SE
- **Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America Holiday Party:** December 12, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Eastern Market – North Hall, 225 7th Street, SE
- **Google – Big Moments of 2017:** December 12, 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. • **TechNet Holiday Party:** December 13, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., Fig & Olive, 934 Palmer Alley, NW
- **Nuclear Energy Institute Congressional Holiday Charity Reception:** December 13, 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Charlie Palmer Steak, 101 Constitution Avenue, NW
- **National Association of Broadcasters Holiday Reception:** December 14, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., 1771 N Street, NW

• **American Insurance Association Holiday Reception:** December 14, 5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 750

While ethics rules prohibit lobbyists from taking lawmakers and staff out to dinner or lunch, nothing prevents a lobbyist from throwing a reception or holiday party. The House Ethics Committee requires that events must be attended by 25 people and “relate to the Members’ or employees’ official duties.” The committee also notes that food must be served in small portions.

Special-interest groups rely on that carve-out to throw opulent events loosely related to a policy agenda, where they serve hors d’oeuvres that don’t approach the size of a full serving of a meal. Event tickets often carry a disclaimer that the reception or party “has been planned to comply with congressional ethics rules for such events,” but there’s little stopping interest groups from hosting luxurious events designed to please public officials.

Ethics rules were supposedly tightened through the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, a reform bill passed after the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal. Abramoff, who wined and dined public officials, once owned a steakhouse called Signatures that regularly hosted lavish receptions and holiday parties for lawmakers Abramoff and his associates were attempting to influence. The high-flying lobbyist and 22 others, including one member of Congress, were convicted of corruption and bribery charges.

But social media posts show that lawmakers and staff routinely attending lobbyist parties, especially during the holiday season.

The parties serve a dual purpose. Special-interest groups gain access to decision-makers in public office and simultaneously get a prestige boost as a result of the attendance of VIP politicians. In 2015, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio posed for the cameras with former Sen. Al D’Amato, now a prominent corporate lobbyist, at D’Amato’s holiday reception.

Businessman Paxton Baker posted a selfie on Instagram next to a grinning Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., at the American Trucking Association holiday party this week. Enzi is one of the members chosen by Republican Senate leadership to conference with the House of Representatives to finalize the tax reform legislation.

“While all such receptions must still treat all attendees equally — no special gifts for lawmakers or staff — the receptions nowadays flaunt the rules against lavishness, with the blessing of the congressional ethics committees, who could insist on reasonable frugality but do not,” Holman said.

The Kansas City Star
December 13, 2017

Paul Davis says Congress should disclose names of members who settle harassment cases

<http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article189594184.html>

Democratic candidate Paul Davis says Congress should disclose the names of lawmakers who have settled sexual harassment cases with taxpayer dollars.

Davis, a Lawrence attorney and former state lawmaker, is seeking the seat in Kansas' 2nd District. U.S. Rep. Lynn Jenkins, a Topeka Republican, plans to retire at the end of her current term.

Davis, who lost a tight race for governor against Sam Brownback in 2014, unveiled a series of transparency proposals Wednesday as he seeks to become the first Democrat to win a congressional seat in Kansas in 10 years. His proposals included several progressive wish-list items, including an amendment to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision, which opened the door to unlimited spending by corporations and unions.

During an interview with The Star, Davis addressed an additional transparency concern that has gained national notice in recent weeks: the confidentiality of Congress members' sexual harassment settlements.

"These are our taxpayer dollars that are being used to settle these suits. And whether it's a sexual harassment lawsuit or it's an employment discrimination lawsuit or anything else, the public does need to know," Davis said when asked if he would support greater disclosure in these cases.

"Certainly we want to protect the identities of the victims in those circumstances, but it's our taxpayer dollars and we ought to know what's going on."

The issue has been a focal point after BuzzFeed reported last month on a \$27,000 settlement in a case of alleged harassment by Rep. John Conyers, a Michigan Democrat who subsequently resigned his seat after more than five decades in Congress.

Davis said he would support changing a 1995 law that requires that settlements against members of Congress be kept confidential.

He repeatedly emphasized the need for transparency reforms in Washington. He called for legislation that would create stronger disclosure requirements on political spending and stricter regulations on online ads.

He tied the push for tax cuts to the influence of political donors and said passing a constitutional amendment to undo Citizens United would help restore fairness to the political system.

"There's a lot of people who are very wealthy ... who are putting more and more money into politics, obscene amounts of money," he said.

"I fundamentally disagree with the notion that some organization can swoop in right before an election, spending millions of dollars ... and we call that free speech," he said. "Congress and state legislatures ought to have the right to rein that in."

Jeff Glendening, the Kansas director of Americans for Prosperity, an anti-tax group with ties to Wichita-based Koch Industries, criticized Davis' proposals that would require AFP to disclose its donors.

"Just surprised that he's trying to replace the First Amendment of the Constitution with another amendment," Glendening said after reviewing Davis' plan. "We really believe that supporters of our cause have the right to speak out without retribution and that is what the First Amendment is there to protect, free speech."

Tiffany Muller, the president of End Citizens United, a national group that backs Davis' campaign, noted reports that the Koch network was tying its plans to spend \$400 million in the 2018 election on behalf of GOP candidates to whether Congress succeeds in passing tax cuts.

"That's not about equity and free speech. That's about buying Congress in order to pad their bottom line," said Muller, a Kansas native and former member of the Topeka City Council.

Davis has so far raised more money than all of the Republicans in the race combined, more than \$400,000 as of September. He emphasized that the bulk of his money has come from individual donors, but did not commit to refusing money from corporations or political action committees.

During the interview, Davis weighed in on a variety of other issues, including health care, a topic which is very personal because of his family's history. Paul Davis weighs in on health care, a topic which is very personal because of his family's history.

Paul Davis' daughter was born with sagittal craniosynostosis. She had to have surgery when she was six-months-old to repair her cranial structure.

Davis' daughter, Caroline, 7, was born with sagittal craniosynostosis, a condition in which an infant's skull fuses prematurely before the brain is fully formed. The condition can be fatal in severe cases. Caroline had to have surgery when she was 6 months old to repair her cranial structure.

"We had to fight with the insurance company to get her procedure covered. Had we not had insurance, no way we could have afforded that. It was a very, very expensive surgery. I think it gives you a spotlight in on the struggles that many families are having with obtaining good health care coverage," Davis said.

He accused Republicans of trying to sabotage the Affordable Care Act, but also acknowledged that there were problems with the law, which was former President Barack Obama's signature policy, including a failure to curb prescription drug costs.

He said bipartisanship would be needed to improve the law and stabilize the health care market in the long term.

**The Post and Courier
December 13, 2017**

Rep. Rick Quinn pleads guilty in S.C. corruption case in deal that drops charges for kingpin father

https://www.postandcourier.com/news/rep-rick-quinn-pleads-guilty-in-s-c-corruption-case/article_b53b8ac6-df8b-11e7-bc1d-578c47bc52b4.html

South Carolina Rep. Rick Quinn could be sentenced to a year in prison after pleading guilty Wednesday to misconduct in office in the criminal case against him and his father, longtime GOP powerbroker Richard Quinn.

The Lexington lawmaker agreed to plead guilty to one misdemeanor count, knowing prosecutors were still seeking prison time. Quinn, 52, resigned his seat ahead of the hearing at the Richland County courthouse, ending 22 years in the House. That makes him the second legislator to resign this year in the Statehouse corruption probe that has largely focused on the Quinns.

Circuit Judge Carmen Mullen accepted the plea deal but delayed sentencing. Rick Quinn also faces a \$1,000 fine.

The plea deal dropped illegal lobbying and felony conspiracy charges against his 73-year-old father. Richard Quinn's firm is pleading guilty to misdemeanor failure to register as a lobbyist, punishable by a maximum \$2,500 fine. He agreed to pay an additional \$3,000 in restitution.

Rick Quinn was facing a more severe misconduct in office charge and a conspiracy count, which could have sent him to prison for more than a decade. But he admitted only to failing to include the University of South Carolina on his 2016 economic interest statement. The school leased office space in 2015 from a company tenuously linked to Quinn, said his attorney, Matthew Richardson.

With Rick Quinn's sentence still unknown, the father and son declined to talk to reporters after the hearing.

First Circuit Solicitor David Pascoe, the special prosecutor assigned to the Statehouse probe, said he had planned to prove at trial that Rick Quinn failed to disclose more than \$4 million paid to the Quinn firms since 2010 from clients with lobbyists. Rick Quinn ran a mail marketing firm but Pascoe argued that this was a thinly veiled effort to conceal the lawmaker's substantial involvement in his father's influential consulting operation. Clients of his father's firm have included presidential candidates, top state legislators, large state agencies and major corporations. The Quinns have long maintained they kept their businesses separate.

"I can tell you without a doubt that public statement has been an absolute fabrication — an absolute lie to the public," Pascoe said.

Pascoe said Rick Quinn lied repeatedly to cover up that he was breaking state laws on campaign disclosure and lobbying.

"He did lobby legislators on behalf of his clients and sponsor legislation on behalf of his clients," he said.

Asking Mullen to sentence Quinn to "every day of that year," Pascoe said that after a four-year investigation, "people needed to see what's been going on in Columbia, and there's been no one more corrupt than Rick Quinn and no entity more corrupt than Richard Quinn and Associates. There is not a legislator who could consciously duplicate this level of corruption."

Mullen questioned why Pascoe was not taking the case to trial if that's so.

"If your evidence is as damning, in your words, and as extensive as you said, why are you allowing them to plead guilty?" she asked.

Pascoe's answer made clear the Statehouse probe is far from over. Many had speculated it would end with the Quinns. But Pascoe said he's bringing Richard Quinn before the state grand jury to testify next month.

Quinn's attorney, Johnny Gasser, countered that all of Pascoe's allegations would have been "easily explained" by witnesses and experts at trial. He said Quinn didn't need to disclose the money because he was not an owner or employee of his father's firm. He said Quinn recused himself from votes benefiting his father's clients 15 times.

"These issues are very subjective," Gasser told the judge in asking for probation. Quinn "went out of his way to get legal advice before he did it and after he did it."

For months, Rick Quinn has adamantly denied doing anything illegal, calling the case a political witchhunt by a Democratic prosecutor against GOP lawmakers. He has accused Pascoe of going after his family for political retribution after twice pursuing a bid for attorney general. After trying unsuccessfully for months to get Pascoe kicked off the case, his attorney pushed for a trial date, saying the lawmaker was eager to clear his name before the filing period to run for election opens in mid-March.

That changed in recent days. Before court started Wednesday, he said he decided to end the ordeal for his family's sake. While his trial was set to get underway in late February, a court date for his father may have been more than a year away. The father of two teared up as he told the judge he's pleading guilty partly out of concern for his father and his wife.

Earlier Wednesday, Quinn resigned from the House.

"My service in the state Legislature has been one of the greatest honors of my life," Rick Quinn wrote in a letter turned in to House Speaker Jay Lucas that did not mention the case or plea.

Quinn was first elected to the House in 1988. He lost re-election in the 2004 GOP primary while serving as House majority leader, but Lexington voters sent him back to the House six years later.

The plea deal does end Pascoe's case against the Quinns, though his probe into the political consulting dynasty entangled at least four other former and current legislators and disintegrated the business built over four decades. Formerly long-time clients who have dropped the Quinns include Gov. Henry McMaster and Attorney General Alan Wilson.

Beyond running Wilson's successful campaigns, Richard Quinn did public relations work for the state's chief prosecutor. Pascoe said even after he told Wilson that Rick Quinn needed to be investigated, Wilson continued to have Richard Quinn write press releases for him and even asked his firm to draft a letter to state law enforcement about the case. Wilson has said he had Quinn check one letter for spelling and grammar.

Pascoe has accused Richard Quinn of paying legislators at least \$1.3 million to do his bidding for business clients that paid millions for his far-reaching influence into all levels of state government.

Pascoe's investigation has zeroed in on the Quinns since the 2014 prosecution of former House Speaker Bobby Harrell, who pleaded guilty to misdemeanor campaign spending violations involving his private airplane and resigned.

The Quinns' plea deal comes nine months after State Law Enforcement Division agents raided Richard Quinn's Columbia offices and hauled off crates of documents.

Some of the state's biggest firms and agencies, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, AT&T and the State Ports Authority, have also been subpoenaed to turn over documents. Pascoe also accused Rick Quinn of steering more than \$250,000 to family companies from the House Republican Caucus when he was majority leader from 1999 to 2004. Gasser pointed to advisory opinions from both the House Ethics Committee and the attorney general's office that what Quinn did was legal.

Also indicted on criminal conspiracy charges are suspended Sen. John Courson and former Reps. Tracy Edge and Jim Harrison, both of whom worked for Richard Quinn while in the Legislature. All three face misconduct in office charges as well. The allegations against Edge, R-Myrtle Beach; and Harrison, R-Columbia, stem from their work for Quinn, while Courson, R-Columbia, is accused of funneling nearly \$160,000 in campaign cash for personal use through Richard Quinn's firm. Pascoe has said that money constituted "kickbacks." All three deny the allegations.

Former Rep. Jim Merrill, R-Charleston, pleaded guilty in September to misdemeanor misconduct in office. Indicted last December, the former House majority leader was the first person since Harrell charged in the probe. Merrill, who owned his own public relations and political consulting firm, received one year of probation after admitting he didn't report income from clients and should've recused himself from a vote.

Pascoe said Merrill provided information crucial to the case against the Quinns.

**International Business Times
December 12, 2017**

Billion Dollar Arms Deal For Saudi Allies, Whose Lobbyists Give Heavily To Congress

<http://www.ibtimes.com/political-capital/billion-dollar-arms-deals-saudi-allies-whose-lobbyists-give-heavily-congress>

The Saudi Arabian-led war with Yemen has been raging for more than two years, with massive loss of life and humanitarian impact on the Yemeni side. Nonetheless, the United States continues to support the Saudi coalition through arms sales and military logistics support. Two multi-billion dollar deals were secured for Saudi allies Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. An International Business Times review of federal documents found that those countries are represented in Washington by powerful lobbying firms that have given substantial campaign contributions to politicians tasked with overseeing foreign policy and arms sales.

In May, the UAE secured a \$2 billion arms deal for 160 Patriot missiles manufactured by Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. In September, a weapons deal to Bahrain worth \$3.8 billion was approved. Bahrain's deal included 19 F-16 jets made by Lockheed and 221 anti-tank missiles produced by Raytheon. Saudi Arabia also received its own package, with \$500 million worth of precision-guided munitions and 40 Blackhawk helicopters, both of which were secured through lobbying by former Republican Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon, as IBT previously reported.

According to the latest United Nations figures, 5,144 Yemeni civilians were killed, primarily through Saudi airstrikes, since the war began in 2015. The war has caused massive internal displacement and crippled infrastructure, leading to a cholera epidemic that the World Health Organization estimates 650,000 people in Yemen have contracted the disease and millions are severely food insecure.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the UAE have sprawling networks of influence in Washington, but the main power brokers for Bahrain and the UAE are Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld and DLA Piper, the latter of which represents both Gulf monarchies. Justice Department filings reviewed by IBT show that the

UAE pays Akin Gump roughly \$57,000 a month for its services and DLA Piper another \$15,000 per month. Bahrain pays DLA Piper nearly \$53,000 per month, according to the latest available records.

Last week, IBT published an investigation detailing how lobbyists for foreign powers contributed and fundraised nearly \$10 million for political campaigns in the 2016 election cycle. The practice of registered foreign agents giving to politicians raises questions of them acting as financial pass-throughs for foreign nationals who cannot otherwise contribute to campaigns directly themselves.

Since 2015, the political action committees of Akin Gump and DLA Piper, as well as their employees, have contributed \$255,370 to senators currently sitting on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, according to Federal Election Commission data reviewed by IBT. Congress is notified whenever a large foreign military sale is given State Department approval and given the opportunity to block the sale. Such a move would normally originate in the powerful SFRC or the corresponding House committee that is tasked with managing international relations.

For instance, in June, Sen. Bob Corker, who chairs the SFRC, said he would block any future arms sales to Gulf Arab states. But in September, Corker signaled that he would allow the deal to pass unimpeded.

According to its FARA filings, DLA has regularly been in contact with Rep. Darrell Issa, holding frequent meetings and phone calls. Issa expressed early support for the Saudi-led bombing campaign in Yemen, saying in March 2015: "We must make it clear that we will support our allies and punish our enemies through steadfast resolve and decisive action."

DLA's power in Washington also comes from the revolving door of former elected officials who now work as lobbyists, including Saxby Chambliss, a two-term Republican Senator from Georgia, who was the ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, which also plays a significant role in international affairs.

Support for the deal also came from the defense companies themselves. Lockheed Martin specifically lobbied both the House and Senate in support of the F-16 sale to Bahrain in the third quarter of this year, according to federal lobbying disclosures reviewed by IBT. As Congress's role in the foreign military sales process is only to step in and block a sale, such lobbying activity is directed at preemptively assuring that a block vote does not materialize.

Raytheon similarly lobbied on "issues associated with Congressional notifications of proposed foreign military and direct commercial sales," which refers to Congress's ability to block foreign weapons sales, as well as U.S. defense cooperation with countries in the Middle East.

AJC
December 12, 2017

Alabama shakes: On eve of a nail-biter, Steve Bannon disses the University of Roll Tide

<http://www.ajc.com/news/alabama-shakes-eve-nail-biter-steve-bannon-disses-the-university-roll-tide/62r4HopoRx8EorfeiraFjM/>

For his last event of the campaign, former Alabama chief justice and U.S. Senate candidate Roy Moore imported a host of conservative activists, including U.S. Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, former Milwaukee County sheriff David Clarke – and Steve Bannon.

Moore faces Democrat Doug Jones, who has been buoyed by allegations that Moore, as a young prosecutor, showed an unhealthy interest in dating girls as young as 14. On Monday in Midland City, Ala., Moore boosters emphasized his strong endorsement from President Donald Trump. From the Associated Press:

Trump's campaign architect and former White House adviser Steve Bannon told Moore supporters Monday evening that the race is a "national election" that will determine whether the "Trump miracle" continues. Moore says he is aligned with the president and he makes similar arguments to Trump, blasting "the elite" in the "swamp" of Washington, D.C.

But there was more to Bannon's appearance, which was captured by Al.com:

Breitbart News executive chairman Steve Bannon mocked MSNBC host Joe Scarborough by telling the crowd he went to much better schools – Georgetown and Harvard – than the former Florida Congressman.

The issue? Scarborough is a graduate of the University of Alabama – the largest university in the state his candidate wants to represent in the U.S. Senate. Moore himself attended the school, graduating from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1977.

Oops.

The Twittered response from Scarborough:

**Hey Bannon, you only went to Harvard because you couldn't get into Alabama.
#RollDamnTide**<https://t.co/AUj9U3CihU>

— Joe Scarborough (@JoeNBC) December 12, 2017

Alabama native and former U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice also weighed in on the contest. According to AL.com, Rice didn't mention any names, but her comments included this:

"It is imperative for Americans to remain focused on our priorities and not give way to side shows and antics. I know that Alabamans need an independent voice in Washington. But we must also insist that our representatives are dignified, decent, and respectful of the values we hold dear."

Part of the tension surrounding tonight's vote count is the fact that polls have been all over the map. A Fox News poll puts Jones up by 10 points. Several others are showing Moore ahead. Fivethirtyeight.com says different methodology – live-calling versus robo-calls – may be to blame. It's not a sure thing.

Automated polls are barred from contacting cell phones, which could skew results toward the choice of older populations. On the other hand, Moore supporters may be more willing to confess their support for their troubled candidate to a machine rather than a real human being.

The Gallup organization is offering up a few stats on why tonight is such a tall mountain for Doug Jones:

— Only a handful of states have a greater Republican edge than Alabama. Half of the state's residents identify as Republicans or lean toward the Republican Party, while a third identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party. And Republicans typically have a much higher turnout in non-presidential elections than do Democrats.

— When it comes to approval of the Republican president, most Alabamians have a positive view of Trump's performance, with 55 percent approving over the first half of this year

— which is on the higher end of approval among the states. During that same period, Trump's approval nationwide was 41percent.

— Alabama ranks among the top states for church attendance. Nearly two-thirds report going to church on a weekly or nearly weekly basis. Evangelicals provide the base of Roy Moore's support.

Mayor-elect Keisha Lance Bottoms isn't waiting for the recount that her rival Mary Norwood ordered up. On Monday, she called on Norwood to concede the election again, as Norwood seeks evidence of "voter intimidation." Said Bottoms: "Mary Norwood is now questioning the very same board she was supposed to clean up. Be that as it may, I look forward to naming my transition co-chairs tomorrow." (Greg Bluestein)

We've told you about how Congress has been slow to top off funding for the popular parent program to PeachCare. Now state officials are warning that current money, initially projected to last until this spring, could dry up months earlier than they thought.

Lawmakers on Capitol Hill let the deadline pass for the Children's Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, on Oct. 1, the theory being that most states had enough money in their arsenals to bridge the gap for a few weeks until Congress approved more revenue sources. But with a rumored five-year deal potentially weeks away, the feds have diverted some states' excess money to others running low on funds.

The Georgia Department of Community Health told Georgia Health News' Andy Miller that if Georgia's funds are siphoned elsewhere, money could run out in January rather than March.

Pitchforks are being brought out in South Carolina. Santee Cooper chairman Leighton Lord is refusing to resign from the state-owned utility, days after S.C. Gov. Henry McMaster vowed to fire him over the utility's response to a \$9 billion nuclear construction fiasco, according to The State newspaper.

In Georgia, the AJC's Anastacia Ondieki reports that the fate of two new nuclear reactors under construction at Plant Vogtle could be known as early as next week.

The PSC hadn't been scheduled to decide whether work should continue until February. Already behind schedule and over budget, the reactors are the only surviving nuclear construction project in the United States. From Ondieki:

The decision to change the date follows letter exchanges last week between Georgia Power CEO Paul Bowers and Georgia Public Service Commission chair Stan Wise, in the wake of proposed tax reforms in Congress.

The proposed changes would reduce the corporate tax rates from 35 percent to 20 percent. Tax benefits from the current tax rate are higher than the proposed rate.

The news came at a Monday hearing that included comments from critics. However, former state lawmaker John Noel, a Democrat running for the PSC seat now held by Republican Chuck Eaton, tells us that Wise refused to allow him to speak – citing his status as a candidate.

"I've never heard of that," Noel wrote us. "Probably mad I called for his resignation a month ago."

Wise, a supporter of continued nuclear construction, has said he would resign after the Vogtle matter is settled. In November, Noel counseled him not to wait.

Lindy Miller, another Democrat eyeing Eaton's seat, was also shut down when she attempted to speak before the PSC on Monday. Here's her Facebook response:

Republican candidate for lieutenant governor David Shafer continued to pile up endorsements on Tuesday. The latest comes from the 37,000-member Georgia Association of Realtors That's a body that not only votes, but writes a great many checks. The press release cites Shafer's record on private property rights.

We have been informed that long-time state Capitol lobbyists Chuck McMullen and Amy Odom have signed on with Parker Poe Consulting, a firm affiliated with the Washington-based BGR Group, founded 30 years ago by former Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour.

For what it's worth, Amazon has at least one lobbyist at the Georgia statehouse for the upcoming session: Jacob Oster is an energy policy specialist who will be advocating on the shipping giant's behalf.

TIME
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A Former State Senator Allegedly Took 700 Pounds of Dunkin' Donuts Coffee as a Bribe

<http://time.com/5057310/brian-joyce-senator-indictment/>

Former Massachusetts Sen. Brian Joyce was charged Friday with taking more than \$1 million in bribes — including, according to a 102-page indictment, 704 pounds of free Dunkin' Donuts coffee.

The former Democratic legislator apparently took bribes from a variety of companies and individuals looking to trade in on his influence, then laundered the money through his law offices, intentionally making the sums look like legal fees, the Associated Press reports. Joyce was arrested at his home on Friday morning, and has been charged with a litany of crimes including racketeering, extortion, wire fraud and money laundering, according to AP. Joyce pleaded not guilty in Worcester's federal courthouse Friday.

Among Joyce's more colorful alleged exploits, according to the indictment, was taking hundreds of pounds of free coffee from a Dunkin' Donuts franchise owner, in addition to more than \$125,000 in "purported legal fees." The document says Joyce specifically asked in an email for "no decaf" and said "we like k cups at my office if possible."

Among other bribes, Joyce also reportedly received a Jeep worth almost \$35,000, monetary kickbacks from an energy company and more.

"We believe Mr. Joyce was greedy, plain and simple," Harold Shaw, head of the Boston FBI office, said during a news conference Friday.