



**NAMES IN THE NEWS:
BOB J. PERRY**

**TOP TEXAS DONOR ADDS HIS TWO CENTS
TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DEBATE**

by
MARK DIXON
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In the state of Texas, everything is big, including the size of the unlimited contributions that wealthy individuals and PACs are allowed by law to give to their candidates. Texas homebuilder Bob J. Perry has made national news in recent days because of his financial role in a television ad attacking Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry. But it's not his first foray into campaign giving, and his activity spans both national and state politics. Since 1998, Perry has contributed at least \$5.46 million to state-level candidates and political party committees around the country, including nearly \$4.85 million in his home state.

A longtime Republican donor, Perry gave \$20,000 to George Bush's 1998 campaign for governor of Texas. But federal law strictly limits the amount he can give directly to Bush's presidential campaign. And the recent passage of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act, also known as the McCain-Feingold Act, now keeps wealthy donors from making big soft-money contributions to national party committees.

However, a loophole has allowed former soft-money donors to redirect their money to so-called "527 committees," or nonprofit groups formed under a section of the Internal Revenue Service tax code. These committees can take unlimited contributions and spend them on political efforts, including television commercials such as the recent anti-Kerry ad that questions Kerry's Vietnam War record and has raised the ire of politicians in both parties. The \$500,000 ad was paid for by a 527 group called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, whose largest donor is Bob J. Perry. Perry has contributed at least \$100,000 to the committee so far.

While this kind of spending is making waves in the current federal election season, a donor who spends a mere \$100,000 to influence an election in Texas runs the risk of being drowned out in the flood of unlimited contributions allowed in state politics there. Donors to Texas elections must pump up the volume to be heard, and Bob Perry consistently has done this in his home state. In the 2002 election cycle, Texas state-level candidates and party committees raised \$278 million. Bob Perry's Texas contributions in the 2002 cycle, including those from his wife and his business, Perry Homes, totaled \$3.25 million.

The Perry's political giving in Texas increased substantially that election cycle. In 1998, they gave \$846,000. In 2000, they gave \$749,000.

And in recent years, Perry, his wife and business have given another \$617,700 to Republican candidates and committees in 14 other states.

In the Texas 2002 elections, Perry gave \$910,000 to Republican Party committees and \$2.34 million to candidates. Of the money given to candidates, 95 percent went to Republican candidates and 5 percent went to Democrats. Perry also backed winners — 88 percent of his money to candidates went to winning candidates, while 8 percent went to candidates who lost the general election and the rest, 4 percent, went to candidates who lost in the primary election.

Perry gave generously to several candidates for statewide office, but also supported legislative and judicial candidates. He gave contributions totaling \$1.1 million to 104 state House and Senate candidates of both political parties, as well as contributions totaling \$53,250 to eight judicial candidates.

The following table details his giving to statewide candidates and party committees.

**PERRY CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEXAS STATEWIDE CANDIDATES AND COMMITTEES,
2002 ELECTION CYCLE**

| RECIPIENT | PARTY | OFFICE | STATUS | AMOUNT |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Greg Abbott | R | Attorney General | Won | \$537,500 |
| Susan Combs | R | Commissioner of Agriculture | Won | \$80,000 |
| Dan Montgomery | R | Board of Education District 5 | Won | \$1,000 |
| Carole Keeton Rylander | R | Comptroller of Public Accounts | Won | \$100,000 |
| Rick Perry (no relation) | R | Governor | Won | \$100,000 |
| David Dewhurst | R | Lt. Governor | Won | \$115,000 |
| Jerry Patterson | R | General Land Commissioner | Won | \$150,000 |
| Michael L. Williams | R | Railroad Commissioner | Won | \$95,000 |
| Republican Party of Texas | R | Party Committee | | \$905,000 |
| Texas Republican Legislative Caucus | R | Party Committee | | \$5,000 |
| | | | TOTAL | \$2,088,500 |

Perry's contributions haven't stopped at the Texas borders. The Institute's database¹ shows that Perry, his wife and his business contributed throughout the country, from the 1998 election cycle to the present. The contributions typically went to Republican gubernatorial candidates and to Republican Party committees.

The amounts Perry gave varied widely, but the differences are more indicative of the different rules placed on campaign financing from state to state, rather than lower levels of support for Republicans in other states.

For example, Florida places limits of \$500 per candidate per primary or general election on contributions. Perry and his wife gave the maximum amount, \$500 each, to support Jeb Bush in his successful 1998 and 2002 gubernatorial campaigns in Florida.

But in New Mexico, which has no contribution limits, Perry and his wife were able to give \$238,000 to the Republican gubernatorial candidate, John A. Sanchez, who lost in the general election.

The following table details Perry's contributions to state-level candidates and committees outside of Texas, beginning with the 1998 election cycle.

¹ The database includes information for 42 states in the 1998 election cycle and all 50 states for the 2000 and 2002 election cycle. Data for the 2004 cycle is still being compiled and is incomplete.

PERRY CONTRIBUTIONS TO NON-TEXAS CANDIDATES AND COMMITTEES, 1998 TO PRESENT

| STATE | YEAR | RECIPIENT | OFFICE | PARTY | STATUS | AMOUNT |
|----------------|-------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Arkansas | 2002 | Republican Party of Arkansas | | R | | \$50,000 |
| Arizona | 2002 | Matt Salmon | Governor | R | Lost | \$700 |
| California | 1998 | Dan Lungren | Governor | R | Lost | \$15,000 |
| California | 2002 | Bill Simon | Governor | R | Lost | \$5,000 |
| Colorado | 1998 | Joe Rogers | Lt. Governor | R | Won | \$1,000 |
| Colorado | 2000 | Joe Rogers | Lt. Governor | R | Did Not Run | \$2,500 |
| Florida | 1998 | Jeb Bush | Governor | R | Won | \$1,000 |
| Florida | 2002 | Jeb Bush | Governor | R | Won | \$1,000 |
| Florida | 2002 | Republican Party of Florida | Party Committee | | | \$5,000 |
| Georgia | 2002 | William J. Byrne | Governor | R | Lost | \$10,000 |
| Kentucky | 2003 | Ernie Fletcher/Stephen B. Pence | Governor | R | Won | \$2,000 |
| Louisiana | 2002 | Republican Party of Louisiana | Party Committee | | | \$200,000 |
| Louisiana | 2003 | Bobby Jindal | Governor | R | Lost | \$10,000 |
| Louisiana | 2003 | Suzanne Haik Terrell | Attorney General | R | Lost | \$10,000 |
| Mississippi | 2003 | Haley Barbour | Governor | R | Won | \$15,000 |
| North Carolina | 2000 | N. Leo Daughtry | Governor | R | Lost | \$2,500 |
| New Mexico | 2002 | John A. Sanchez | Governor | R | Lost | \$238,000 |
| New Mexico | 2004 | Republican Party of New Mexico | Party Committee | | | \$37,500 |
| Oklahoma | 2002 | Stephen Michael Largent | Governor | R | Lost | \$2,000 |
| South Carolina | 2002 | Mark Sanford | Governor | R | Won | \$7,000 |
| Virginia | 2001 | Mark L. Earley | Governor | R | Lost | \$2,500 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | \$617,700 |