

(Continued)

ber of other Republican legislators voted for it.

"Governor Keating was the biggest proponent of the tort reform legislation and he received political contributions from business organizations and lawyers who supported the bill. Representative Cozort has also received contributions from those business interests.

"Since Representative Cozort is apparently in the business of questioning people's motives, maybe he should extend his inquiries to include Governor Keating and himself.

"I thought the reason people voted for the bill was because they felt it was good tort reform legislation as I did. That's why Senate Democrats supported it. Maybe Representative Cozort had different motives," said Senator Taylor.

The Senate President says Cozort's actions are especially hypocritical in light of his silence on a previous investigation involving Republican legislators.

"If Representative Cozort is so interested in ethical government, why didn't he stand up and protest when Governor Keating fired the special prosecutor who was investigating 'Stampgate?'" asked Senator Taylor, referring to a probe of Republican lawmakers, including Representative Cozort, who were accused of misusing taxpayer-financed stamps.

In 1994, the *Daily Oklahoman* and other news media documented how Cozort and other Republican legislators had used the state-financed stamps to fund their re-election efforts and the campaigns of other GOP candidates. Then-Governor Walters appointed a special counsel to investigate the improprieties, but Governor Keating fired the prosecutor and halted the probe as one of his first official acts in office.

"The transgressions of Republican legislators were well documented by the news media, but Representative Cozort didn't utter a peep when the investigation was killed. I think that silence speaks volumes about Representative Cozort's hypocrisy and utter disregard for ethical or moral conduct," said Senator Taylor.

"If Representative Cozort wants me to create a special committee to continue the investigation of Stampgate, I'll be happy to oblige him. There are many people who have been wanting to get Representative Cozort under oath for a long time. It's been said that truth is to Wayne Cozort what light is to a vampire."

Representative Cozort is drawing his allegations from a newly formed political opinion news letter operated by Republican Party activists.

*The Conservative Review* was created less than 6 months ago and has published only two issues. Its founder is David Dank (husband of Republican Representative Odilia Dank) and its editor is GOP political consultant Mike Hammer.

"The source of these insinuations should disqualify them immediately," said Senator Taylor.

The Senate President wasn't the only Senate Democrat to respond to Representative Cozort's attack. Senator Kevin Easley dismissed the credibility of the Tulsa Republican.

"This is the same guy who introduced a bill this year to legalize prostitution," observed Senator Easley. "Maybe we should ask him what he received in return for that legislation. Was he paid in cash or services?"

