

(Continued)

a full-scale investigation into contributions by Oklahoma trial lawyers to State Senate Democrats.

"*The Conservative Review* has made some very troubling disclosures regarding political donations to the Democrats of the Oklahoma State Senate Political Action Committee by the Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Association Political Action Committee. These donations occurred while the Senate was considering Senate Bill 263, the so-called tort reform law, in 1995.

"*The Review* disclosed that a large amount of contributions — \$33,600 — was made while the bill was before the Senate.

"The contributions disclosed by *The Conservative Review* cry out that in the state Senate, 'legislation is for sale.' The rest of the Legislature does not need this kind of cloud hanging over our heads, and therefore we must do something to end this type of situation from occurring again.

"The best way I know to correct the system is to prohibit campaign contributions at a time when they could help influence the outcome of important legislation.

"I ask the legislative leadership to use bills already in committee to begin the reform process this session.

"In the meantime, these contributions should be investigated further by a state agency or investigative body with the subpoena power necessary to obtain additional information about the contributions.

"We must determine if state ethics law, specifically Title 74, Section 257;20-1-9, has been violated. We must determine if something of value was given or received in exchange for votes on legislation.

"To that end, I have drafted and submitted a resolution for adoption by the House of Representatives. The resolution specifically demands that a full investigation be initiated into the trial lawyers contributions made to the Senate Democrats' PAC in April and May 1995, and it requests that the investigation be conducted in one of the following methods:

- 1) Governor Frank Keating order an investigation by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and turn the results over to the appropriate district attorney; or
- 2) The Attorney General's office gather and present evidence to the current multi-county grand jury regarding the contributions.

"Such an investigation is the only way I know how to determine completely if legislation in the Oklahoma Legislature is for sale."

FROM: HOUSE MEDIA

DATE: 03/07/96

## PRO TEM RESPONDS TO COZORT "HYPOCRISY" URGES HIM TO SHINE LIGHT ON STAMPGATE

■(OKLAHOMA CITY) Saying he's surprised that Representative Wayne Cozort hasn't applied the same ethical scrutiny to himself and his colleagues, the leader of the Oklahoma Senate is dismissing charges leveled by the Tulsa Republican today as "partisan politics at their worst."

"There's not an ounce of truth in the insinuations of Representative Cozort and he knows it," said Senator Stratton Taylor. "This is a thinly veiled partisan attack designed to tar any and all Democratic legislators who voted for tort reform.

The Senate President pointed out that the tort reform legislation in question was initiated, not by the trial lawyers, but by business interests. It was solicited, supported and signed into law by Governor Keating. The bill was also backed by the State Chamber of Commerce and numerous other business organizations. Legislative records indicate that Representative Cozort and a number 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.

"I thought the reason people voted for the bill was because they felt it was good tort reform

(Continued)