

Sept 29 2005 - DELAY FACT CHECK #4

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Getting to know the new Interim Majority Leader Roy Blunt (R-MO)

WHAT SPEAKER HASTERT SAID: "The wisdom of the conference today was to move forward. We have elected Roy Blunt as the temporary leader in the House."

THE FACTS: Here are the facts about who the "wisdom of the [Republican] conference," has chosen as their temporary Majority Leader:

BLUNT HIRED CONSULTANT WHO WAS INDICTED WITH DELAY: "The political committee of Rep. Roy Blunt, who is temporarily replacing Rep. Tom DeLay as House majority leader, has paid roughly \$88,000 in fees since 2003 to a consultant under indictment in Texas with DeLay, according to federal records." Records "show the fund linked to Blunt retains Ellis' firm, J.W. Ellis Co., and has made periodic payments for services." Ellis is one of three political associates of DeLay, R-Texas, who have been indicted in an alleged scheme to use corporate political donations illegally to support candidates in state elections. Ellis also runs DeLay's national political action committee." - Associated Press, 9/29/05

BLUNT DOES FAVORS FOR SON-TURNED-TOBACCO-LOBBYIST: "Only hours after Rep. Roy Blunt was named to the House's third-highest leadership job" he tried "to quietly insert a provision benefiting Philip Morris USA into the 475-page bill creating a Department of Homeland Security...The new majority whip, who has close personal and political ties to the company... Blunt has received large campaign donations from Philip Morris, his son works for the company in Missouri and the House member has a close personal relationship with a Washington lobbyist for the firm." Blunt later married Philip Morris's lobbyist. - Washington Post, 6/11/03

BLUNT DOES FAVORS FOR SON-TURNED-LOBBYIST, PART II: "In April, for instance, Blunt managed to have a provision inserted into a Senate bill, without debate, on behalf of United Parcel Service Inc. and FedEx Corp. The two companies were seeking to block the expansion of a foreign rival's U.S. operations. Blunt's son Andrew also represents UPS in Missouri, as the Wall Street Journal first reported, and the two companies have contributed a total of \$120,000 to Blunt since 2001, according to Federal Election Commission data." - Washington Post, 6/11/03

BLUNT SECURES ETHICS WAIVER AFTER MARRYING TOBACCO LOBBYIST: "Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) had a happier year, marrying a prominent lobbyist and obtaining the House ethics committee's permission not to report their wedding gifts." - Washington Post, 6/17/04

BLUNT USES LOBBYISTS AS DE FACTO WHIPS TO PASS CORPORATE TAX CUT: "Blunt's mobilization of the lobbying community proved crucial in winning passage" of a massive special-interest tax cut bill in 2004. Though the

public opposed the bill, Blunt had a "solution to breaking the logjam: Every major lobbying interest got something... The task of rounding up the votes was delegated by Blunt's whip operation to a coalition of lobbyists, all of whom had clients with huge stakes in the outcome." - Washington Post, 5/17/05

BLUNT USES SAME CONSULTANT UNDER INDICTMENT WITH DELAY: "The political committee of Rep. Roy Blunt, who is temporarily replacing Rep. Tom DeLay as House majority leader, has paid roughly \$88,000 in fees since 2003 to a consultant under indictment in Texas with DeLay, according to federal records... Records on file with the Federal Election Commission show the fund linked to Blunt retains Ellis' firm, J.W. Ellis Co., and has made periodic payments for services. Political Money Line, a nonpartisan Internet tracking service, places the total at about \$88,000." - AP, 9/29/05

BLUNT HAS CLOSE TIES TO LOBBYIST UNDER FEDERAL INVESTIGATION: "Rep. Blunt and his staff have close connections to uber-lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who is the subject of criminal and congressional probes. In June 2003, Mr. Abramoff persuaded Majority Leader Tom DeLay to organize a letter, co-signed by Speaker Hastert, Whip Roy Blunt, and Deputy Whip Eric Cantor, that endorsed a view of gambling law benefitting Mr. Abramoff's client, the Louisiana Coushatta, by blocking gambling competition by another tribe. Mr. Abramoff has donated \$8,500 to Rep. Blunt's leadership PAC, Rely on Your Beliefs. If, as it appears, Rep. Blunt was accepting campaign contributions from Mr. Abramoff in exchange for using his official position so support a view of gambling law that would benefit Mr. Abramoff's client, he would be in violation of the law." - Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility in Washington, 9/27/05

BLUNT TRIES TO GIVE "ONE-OF-A-KIND" EXEMPTION TO COMPANY UNDER FEDERAL INVESTIGATION: "Westar, the biggest electric utility in Kansas, is seeking an exemption that would free it from new oversight by the Securities and Exchange Commission...The company wanted the one-of-a-kind exemption inserted in a wide-ranging energy bill. It was criticized as the kind of loophole that contributed to the failure of Enron Corp....House Republicans were pushing the provision at the request of two Missourians, GOP Reps. Sam Graves and Roy Blunt... state regulators [had] barred the company from splitting off its unregulated business [and] a congressional exemption 'would have the effect of removing an important obstacle to Westar splitting its companies and leaving non-utility debt with the utility companies,' Kansas Corporation Commission chairman John Wine wrote" on the same day Westar disclosed it was the target of a federal investigation. - AP, 10/1/02

Data collected by Working for Change.