

# Legislators - Guilty of Ethics Violations

The following is a list of legislators that were adjudged guilty of violating Texas Ethics Laws and were fined and/or ordered to repay their campaigns. This list will be updated as rulings on the 50 complaints I have filed are ruled upon by the Commission. In other words, 3 down and 47 to go! However, it should be noted that there are many, many more scofflaws (at least 50 more) that I will be exposing in the near future in regards to the Lone Star State.

## No. 1 – Dennis Bonnen – Rep. 25<sup>th</sup> District – Angleton

On June 10, 2008, the Texas Ethics Commission met to consider the complaint I filed in February 2008. “The commission determined that there is credible evidence of violations of section 253.035(a) of the Election Code [converting political contributions to personal use.]. On June 326, Mike admitted he was a scofflaw and agreed to the Commission’s findings of guilt.



It's true; I is ignorant of da law!

The Commission ruled that Denny illegally converted \$130 of political contributions to personal use when he paid for dry cleaning [suits/ties] and ordered that he repay this amount with personal funds to his campaign. The Commission further ruled that the violations “are neither technical nor de minimis [trifling].”

Denny had the chutzpah to tell the Commission in a sworn statement that “he misunderstood the restriction and that he is returning those amounts to his campaign fund.” This comment is asinine at best since the Ethics Commission outlawed such conduct

on December 10, 1994 as set forth below.

Ethics Advisory Opinion No. 104 was issued on Dec 10, 1992 and states: “Legislators **may not** use political contributions to pay laundry and **dry cleaning expenses incurred in Austin.**”

I wonder what part of the words “may not” and “drying cleaning expenses” Denny couldn’t comprehend. Appears that Denny is in need of a remedial class in English, right?

Denny was first elected in 1996 and shortly thereafter he was provided with a copy of the Texas Ethics Laws from the Ethics Commission. Apparently, Denny didn’t take the time to read the Laws or he lacked the necessary intellectual expertise to understand them. Denny would have us believe that from the time he assumed office in 1996 through January 2005 (10 years) that he had no clue that his conduct was illegal.

Since the complaint was filed in February 2008, Denny’s conduct in unlawfully using \$25.86 for “dry cleaning suits/ties” on Jan 25, 1995 cannot be prosecuted because of a three-year statute of limitations. In other words, Denny is allowed to retain these ill-gotten (illegal) gains. I’ve sent Denny an email on July 15, 2008 asking him to voluntarily pay back the \$25.86 to his campaign and provide me with evidence that he so acted, which you can read at the end of this article.

As expected, Denny denied he violated the law when he used campaign funds for the following expenditures:

- ▶ Target, 20070107,1045.44,Food and necessities for Austin rental
- ▶ Wal-Mart, 20070108,755.59,Necessities for Austin rental

In a sworn statement, Denny said the purchases of necessities for his Austin Apartment “were reasonable household expenses incurred in maintaining a resident in Travis County.” Denny went on to testify that “he purchased food to entertain legislators, staff, and others in connection with his role as a candidate and officeholder.” Denny characterized them as “political guests.”

It seems a little odd to me that the Texas Ethics Commission didn’t demand the receipts from Target and Wal-Mart so that everyone would know exactly what “necessities” Denny purchased. For all we know he bought toothpaste, laundry detergent, toilet paper, dishwasher soap and other sundries that would be totally illegal. Is it possible that the Texas Ethics Commission (unlike a real investigator) just ignored the obvious? Hmmm, maybe it’s really not a “search for the truth” if ya know what I mean. Or as State Senator Whitmire would say, “It be none of your damn bidness Mr. California Man!

In the end, Denny was fined \$100 and ordered to pay back the \$130 he illegally spent for personal use. Therefore, the total cost is \$230. However, I’m sure he spent several thousand dollars of campaign funds to employ an attorney to defend the indefensible.

July 15, 2008

To: State Rep. Dennis Bonnen

From: Dave Palmer (aka, the Watchdawg, California Man)

Dear Mike:

I write in regards to the June 30<sup>th</sup> agreement you executed wherein the Texas Ethics Commission found you guilty of illegally using \$130.16 in campaign funds for drying cleaning. The Commission Order states that you were fined \$100 and ordered to repay the \$130.16 to your campaign.

As you know, my complaint also dealt with the \$25.86 you spent on dry cleaning on January 25, 2005. Unfortunately, the statute of limitations tolled on prosecuting you on this matter in 2007. With that said, I am hereby asking that you voluntarily repay the \$25.86 to your campaign. After all Mike, it would be the ethical thing to do, right?

I will be posting this email along with the Commission’s findings on my website under “Texas Reporter.” If you agree to repay the \$25.86 and if you provide me with evidence of said payment, I will of course immediately alert my readers by posting said information on my website.

Thanks for your time and attention to this matter.

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## No. 2 – Mike Jackson – 11<sup>th</sup> District Sen. – Harris/Brazoria/Galveston Counties



On June 10, 2008, the Texas Ethics Commission met to consider the complaint I filed in February 2008. “The commission determined that there is credible evidence of violations of section 253.035(a) of the Election Code [converting political contributions to personal use.]. On June 30, Mike admitted he was a scofflaw and agreed to the Commission’s findings of guilt. The Commission further ruled that the violations “are neither technical nor de minimis [trivial].”

The Commission ruled that Mike illegally “used political contributions to pay dry cleaning expenses” in the amount of \$236.51.

Here’s a photo of Mike being presented with the annual “cleaner’s award” in Austin. This prestigious award is given to a legislator with the best track record for consistently taking his constituents to “the cleaners.”

The Commission fined Mike \$100 and ordered that he repay his campaign the \$236.51 he unlawfully spent.

Due to the three-year statute of limitations for illegally using campaign funds for personal use, the Commission took no action against Mike for paying “Total Fitness” \$900 for “exercise equipment” on January 20, 2004. In other words, Mikey is allowed to retain this equipment even though its purchase was illegal.

I sent Mike the following email asking him to personally reimburse his campaign (unwitting contributors) the \$900 unlawfully obtained. Mike’s response should be interesting if in fact he even provides one.

July 15, 2008

To: State Sen. Mike Jackson

From: Dave Palmer (aka, the Watchdawg, California Man)

Dear Mike:

I write in regards to the June 30<sup>th</sup> agreement you executed wherein the Texas Ethics Commission found you guilty of illegally using \$236.51 in campaign funds for drying cleaning. The Commission Order states that you were fined \$100 and ordered to repay the \$236.51 to your campaign.

As you know, my complaint also dealt with the \$900 you spent to purchase exercise equipment from “Total Fitness” on January 20, 2004. Unfortunately, the statute of limitations tolled on prosecuting you on this matter in 2007. With that said, I am hereby asking that you voluntarily repay the \$900 to your campaign. After all Mike, it would be the ethical thing to do, right?

I will be posting this email along with the Commission’s findings on my website under “Texas Reporter.” If you agree to repay the \$900 and if you provide me with evidence of said payment, I will of course immediately alert my readers by posting said information on my website.

Given the fact that you are the owner of industrial construction and Maintenance Company named “Force Corporation,” I would find it rather difficult to believe that you couldn’t afford to repay this \$900 immediately.

Thanks for your time and attention to this matter.

## No. 3 – Sylvester Turner – 139<sup>th</sup> District Rep. – Houston



On June 10, 2008, the Texas Ethics Commission met to consider the complaint I filed in February 2008. “The commission determined that there is credible evidence of violations of section 253.035(a) of the Election Code [converting political contributions to personal use.]. On June 25, Sylvester admitted he was a scofflaw and agreed to the Commission’s findings of guilt. The Commission further ruled that the violations “”are neither technical nor de minimis [insignificant].”

Sylvester was fined \$100 and ordered to repay his campaign \$110 that he illegally used to pay for personal dry cleaning expenses he incurred in Austin.

Sylvester is an attorney who likes to engage in self-flagellation by announcing that he graduated from Harvard Law School in 1980. Furthermore, Sylvester began his so-called career as a legislator from Houston in 1988. Houstonians didn’t mind Sylvester sitting in the Legislature but they weren’t about to hand over the reigns to him as Mayor of Houston when he ran in 1991. Apparently, they didn’t trust Ol’ Sly to efficiently run the City of Houston. Can ya blame them?

### Sylvester Awards

The Texas House of Representatives presented Sly with the “Crime Fighter of the Year Award. It seems as though there was one lawbreaker (that’d by Sly) that he wasn’t particularly interested in pursuing. After all, illegally using campaign funds for personal use is a criminal misdemeanor in Texas. By Golly, this means Ol’ Sly is a criminal, right? The words criminal and lawyers seem to fit, right?

In 2007, Sly was named the “Most Valuable Player in the Texas House” by Capitol Inside (must be a lobbying group or its equivalent). Sly should have rightfully been named as the “Most Valuable Scofflaw in the Texas House.”

In 2006, a bunch of buffoons from the Houston Bar Foundation gave Sly the “Star of Justice Award.” Star of Justice you say? Should’ve been the “Star of Injustice” award for fleecing his contributors, don’t ya think?

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Lim,Billy,Mr.,,3450 Cerrillos,,Santa Fe,NM,87507,20070131,2296.79,Rent

	Total Living Area	<b>3,076</b>
	Deed Date	<b>10252006</b>

384,073.00 v- Market Value

Lim,Billy,Mr.,,3450 Cerrillos,,Santa Fe,NM,87507,20070705,2250,Refund of deposit for Austin rental

Rent-A-Center,,Austin,20070108,564.34,Washer and dryer rental for 6 months

ABC,,,PO Box 1532,,Kyle,TX,78640,20070220,533.66,Austin rental maintainence

Wow Total Cleaning,,,2711 Hwy 71 E,,Del Valle,TX,78617,20070606,382.93,Austin rental - move out expense

AT&T,,,PO Box 8212,,Aurora,IL,60572,20070109,336.40,Austin rental set-up and two months billing for phone cable and internet

20070308,156.54,Austin rental phone cable internet

20070309,156.54,Austin rental phone cable internet

20070405,126.76,Austin rental phone cable internet

20070509,163.27,Austin rental phone cable internet

Austin Utilities,20070103,249.04,Austin rental utility payment

### City of Austin – Utility for Austin rental

20070126,75.92,Utitlity for Austin rental

20070227,93.82,Utitlity for Austin rental

20070326,138.39,Utitlity for Austin rental

20070424,121.40,Utitlity for Austin rental

20070523,203.17,Utitlity for Austin rental

### Texas Gas Service

20070102,96.23,Gas for Austin rental

20070130,147.46,Gas for Austin rental

20070227,230.83,Gas for Austin rental

20070327,46.24,Gas for Austin rental

20070426,44.14,Gas for Austin rental

20070525,31.77,Gas for Austin rental

Fox Service Company,,,4300 S. Congress,,Austin,TX,78745,20070118,214.00,Service at Austin rental - amount deducted from rent

Lim, Billy, 3450 Cerrillos, Santa Fe, NM – Rental House 20070131, 2296.79, Rent

20070227, 2695.00, Rent

20070327, 2695.00, Rent

20070427, 2695.00, Rent

20070527, 718.67, Rent

## The Mansion at Judges' Hill – Austin Legislative Lodging

20060427,640.87,Lodging during special session

20060130,99.87,Lodging in Austin

20060310,220.10,Lodging in Austin

20060424,199.00,Lodging in Austin

20060505,143.87,Lodging in Austin

20060511,203.87,Lodging in Austin

20060512,85.00,Lodging in Austin

20060516,199.00,Lodging in Austin

20060712,87.21,Lodging in Austin

20061010,319.70,Lodging in Austin

20061109,151.51,Lodging in Austin

20061207,151.51,Lodging in Austin

20050715,80.00,Lodging

20050721,320.00,Lodging

Driskill Hotel,,,,604 Brazos,,Austin,TX,78701,20050728,1717.50,Lodging during special session

20050630,256.07,Lodging in Austin

Target,,,,5300 S Mopac,,Austin,TX,78749,20050109,276.09,Necessities for Austin rental

Randall's,,,,715 Exposition,,Austin,TX,78703,20050109,67.46,Necessities for Austin rental

CVS Pharmacy,,,,500 Congress,,Austin,TX,78701,20050528,15.12,Necessities for Austin rental

Texas Ethics Commission,,,,PO Box 12070,,Austin,TX,78711,20060315,500.00,Late fine for personal financial statement

Texas Ethics Commission,,,,PO Box 12070,,Austin,TX,78711,20060602,500.00,Late penalty

Geren,Charlie,Mr.,,901 W. 9th Street - no property in Travis County

#412,,Austin,TX,78703,20050212,257.92,Austin living expenses -

utilities,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

EXPN,F,115,IND,Geren,Charlie,Mr.,,901 W. 9th Street

#412,,Austin,TX,78703,20050421,5550.00,Austin living expenses -

rent,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

EXPN,F,114,IND,Geren,Charlie,Mr.,,901 W. 9th Street #412,,Austin,TX,78703,20050607,220.53,Austin

living expenses - utilities,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

Geren,Charlie,,P. O. Box 1440,,Fort Worth,TX,76101,20041203,5550.00,Apartment for Dec. 2004 through Feb. 2005

US Bank N.A.,,,PO Box 2188,,Oshkosh,WI,54903-2188,20050124,6706.60,Lease payments



