

Rep. Roy Blunt: Ties to Special Interests Leave Him Unfit to Lead



**Congress Watch
January 2006**

Acknowledgements

Congress Watch Research and Investigations Director Taylor Lincoln and Congress Watch Researcher Conor Kenny were the primary authors of *Rep. Roy Blunt: Ties to Special Interests Leave Him Unfit to Lead*. Congress Watch Director Frank Clemente provided significant editorial guidance. Congress Watch Legislative Assistant Beth O'Brien and Congress Watch intern Eddie Thomas Jr. provided extensive research assistance. Congress Watch Civil Justice Research Director Chris Schmidt served as an editor on the project.

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Executive Summary

Rep. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), the acting majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, was a high school history teacher before he was a congressman. But any idealistic civics teacher would blanch at describing Blunt's sprint to the top of the House Republican leadership. Blunt has exchanged favors with special interests, relied heavily on the unsavory fundraising apparatus of indicted Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Tex.), and passionately embraced the corrupted culture of the Washington, D.C. lobbying world, including cozying up to super-lobbyist turned admitted felon Jack Abramoff.

With DeLay having exited his majority leader's post, a permanent successor will be elected soon. As acting majority leader, Blunt is a strong, and many would say, natural contender to take over from his mentor and the man who has guided his rapid ascent into the senior ranks of U.S. political life. But precisely because of that – because the student has aped the master so well – Blunt is now irrevocably tainted by the same ethical quagmire that has overtaken DeLay.

In what has been described as Washington's worst corruption scandal in decades, recent months have seen headline after headline demonstrate the tawdry union of money and politics in the nation's capital. As one observer has said, the power of money drives out the power of ideas. Polls show Americans of all stripes not only increasingly concerned about a rising tide of sleaze, but also increasingly restive for change.

Thus, as House Republicans prepare to name their next majority leader for the legislative body the Framers meant to be closest to the people, there can be no doubt of the urgent need for reform. Blunt, however, has disqualified himself from consideration by compiling a record that convincingly shows him to be nothing of the reformer the times now demand. Rather, with DeLay, Blunt has stretched the already deformed boundaries of propriety further than they have been pushed before.

In this report, Public Citizen compiles a disturbing dossier on Blunt, based on original research and a comprehensive compilation of news accounts of recent months. In the end, what emerges is a portrait of a legislative leader who not only has surrendered his office to the imperative of moneyed interests, but who has also done so with disturbing zeal and efficiency.

Section I: Blunt's Strong Ties to K Street

Blunt has been one of the central figures in building the "K Street Project," an alliance between corporate lobbyists and the Republican majority in Congress. In this partnership, corporations, trade associations and lobbying firms are pressured to hire only Republicans. Those lobbyists then help the Republican leadership to "whip on the outside" – to get Republican members of the House to vote for the leadership's legislative agenda. The lobbyists also raise enormous sums of money from their clients to ensure that Republicans remain the majority in Congress.

For this fealty, the leadership grants the lobbyists access to the decision-makers and provides legislative favors for their clients. After House Speaker Dennis Hastert voiced concern in 1999

that there was “a vacuum in the outreach to K Street,” DeLay tapped Blunt to be his new right hand man, as chief deputy whip. It paid off personally for Blunt as well.

- **Seventy-three percent of contributions received by Blunt’s political committees since 1999 have come from business PACs and from lobbyists who very often control the PACs.** Of the \$12.8 million Blunt raised through the present, \$9.2 million has come from business PACs and lobbyists.
- **Blunt has received nearly \$429,000 from Capitol Hill lobbyists since 1999.**
- **43 percent – 13 out of 30 – of Blunt’s biggest contributors have hired his former aides as their lobbyists.**
- **Ten of Blunt’s biggest contributors have hired the Alexander Strategy Group (ASG) as their lobbying firm.** The firm has been close to Blunt, as Blunt’s committees have paid ASG \$470,485 from 1999 to 2002 for fundraising and consulting services.¹ ASG’s clients, meanwhile, have funneled \$581,866 into Blunt’s committees since 1999. ASG was forced to shut its doors in January 2006, because of its tight connections with lobbyist Jack Abramoff and the embattled DeLay.
- **Top Blunt aides have landed at Washington lobbying firms.** Between 2001 and 2005, at least six of Blunt’s senior aides went to work for lobbying firms in Washington, including Gregg Hartley, his former chief of staff. Three of these aides have represented “Baby Bell” telephone companies, which have been the biggest industry contributors to Blunt’s political committees.

Section II: Blunt’s Corporate-Subsidized Travel

Blunt has made an art form of exploiting a loophole in Federal Election Commission (FEC) rules that allows party honchos to order up corporate jets, typically in order to attend fundraisers around the country, and then repay the jet owners only a fraction of the cost. Moreover, most of these companies have made campaign contributions to Blunt that are greater than the airfare reimbursements they have received from his political committees – in effect, reimbursing Blunt for his reimbursements to them, and resulting in free travel.

- **Blunt and candidates he has supported through his leadership PAC have taken at least 140 subsidized flights on corporate jets since 2001.** Blunt personally flew on at least 100 of the flights. In effect, the companies that own the jets have handsomely subsidized the political activities of Blunt and the candidates he supports. Blunt’s political committees have reimbursed the jets’ owners only \$193,744 for the trips, which represents the cost of first class plane tickets, as permitted by campaign finance regulations. But Public Citizen estimates the actual costs of leasing these jets, depending on the method of calculation, would have been between \$925,000 and \$2 million. These estimates are based on the going rates for chartering, or operating, a jet.

- **Blunt's reimbursements to companies for subsidized jet travel were often dwarfed by their campaign contributions to him.** The 23 companies that have provided two or more flights to Blunt have contributed an average of \$27,916 to his campaign committees (only three of the companies did not contribute at all). Blunt has reimbursed these companies an average of \$7,314 for airfare. Only four of these companies received more in airfare reimbursements from Blunt than they made in contributions to his political committees.
- **The corporations that have flown Blunt around the country acknowledge that they make their jets available in exchange for special access to lawmakers.** BellSouth, which has shuttled Blunt or candidates financed by his leadership PAC 20 times since 2000, furnishes its jets to "people who are friendly to us," and those "important to us," a company spokesman said. "They could be in a position to help or hinder legislative action that might be beneficial."
- **Blunt traveled aboard the jet of businessman Brent Wilkes, who is the subject of a Department of Justice investigation.** Companies owned by Brent Wilkes, identified as a co-conspirator in the bribery plea agreement of former Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-Calif.), has provided four subsidized trips to Blunt's PACs. The total reimbursement for the subsidized trips was only \$2,520, half the \$5,000 that Blunt's PAC received from Wilkes.
- **Blunt evidently accepted free trips from airlines.** Perhaps in appreciation of Blunt's post-Sept. 11 work to deliver them a taxpayer bailout, the airlines evidently provided Blunt with what amounts to a choice perk. On 16 occasions, beginning with the reporting period covering Sept. 11, 2001 through Nov. 5, 2002, Blunt's soft-money PAC reported nearly \$45,000 in "in-kind" contributions from major airlines. Blunt also reported in-kind contributions of \$4,881 from Philip Morris and \$1,440 from U.S. Tobacco, which also appear to have been free airfare.

Section III: Blunt Has Performed Special Favors for His Big Contributors

In his relatively short tenure in Congress, Blunt has demonstrated a willingness to intervene on behalf of industries and corporations that contribute heavily to his political committees, even when these favors entail taxpayer subsidies that would seemingly conflict with his professed conservative ideology.

He has been an attentive advocate for the "Baby Bells," the local phone providers that emerged from the breakup of AT&T, and which have contributed nearly \$540,000 to his campaigns since 1999. Blunt inserted a special favor for tobacco giant Altria into a bill creating the Department of Homeland Security, which was later removed due to an outcry. Altria has contributed at least \$177,000 to Blunt's political committees in recent years. He succeeded in getting inserted into a spending bill for the Iraq war a special provision for domestic shippers, such as United Parcel Service (UPS) and Federal Express, which have contributed nearly \$129,000 to him since 1999. And Blunt has twice led the bailouts for U.S. airlines, which have given more than \$102,000 to his political committees in direct contributions and free airfare.

Baby Bells

- **The Baby Bells have been Blunt's most generous donors.** The local phone legacies of AT&T – BellSouth, Qwest, SBC and Verizon – have contributed nearly \$540,000 to Blunt's political committees since 1999. SBC, which has contributed nearly \$210,000 to Blunt and his PACs since 1999, has even retained Blunt's son, Andrew, as a Missouri lobbyist.
- **The Bells have employed former Blunt staffers.** Three of six former Blunt staffers whom Public Citizen has identified as becoming federal lobbyists have represented Baby Bells, including Blunt's former chief of staff, Gregg Hartley.
- **Blunt, in turn, has been a vocal advocate for the Bells' causes.** He co-sponsored the "Tauzin-Dingell" bill, the Baby Bells' top legislative priority, which would have exempted the companies from sharing their lines with competitors. He co-signed a letter to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) demanding that the agency provide justification for a rule requiring the Baby Bells to lease portions of their networks to competitors. Blunt dubbed the day the FCC refused to grant the Baby Bells their wishes on all line sharing issues "Black Thursday." Blunt has twice issued timely press releases taking the Bells' position when commenting on rulings by the FCC or the courts.

Tobacco Companies

- **Tobacco companies, especially Altria, have given generously to Blunt.** Tobacco companies have given Blunt nearly \$259,000 in cash and possibly thousands more in subsidized corporate jet travel since 1999. Altria Corp. (including subsidiaries Philip Morris, Kraft Foods and former subsidiary Miller Brewing) has given nearly \$217,000.
- **Altria Corp. employs Blunt's wife and son.** Abigail Blunt, the former Abigail Perlman, has been Blunt's wife since October 2003. She was one of Altria's lobbyists to the House of Representatives as recently as the first half of 2005. Blunt's son, Andrew, lobbies for Altria in Missouri.
- **Tobacco companies have shared their jets with Blunt.** Blunt and candidates whose travel he has paid for through his leadership PAC have enjoyed the luxury of subsidized flights aboard the corporate jets of Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds and U.S. Smokeless Tobacco on at least 10 occasions. Blunt's political committees have reimbursed the companies only \$10,584, based on commercial first class airfare rates – providing him with a hefty subsidy from charter, or actual usage, rates. Moreover, Blunt's soft money PAC, now defunct, also reported a \$4,881 in-kind contribution from Philip Morris, most likely for air travel.
- **Altria has helped Blunt staffers travel abroad.** The American Turkish Council, on whose board an Altria executive sits, shuttled four Blunt staffers to Turkey between 2001 and 2004 at a combined cost of nearly \$22,000. Two of the trips, "fact finding" missions undertaken simultaneously by then-Blunt Chief of Staff Gregg Hartley and later Blunt Chief of Staff Amy Field, were specifically underwritten, in part, by Philip Morris and Pfizer.

- **Blunt tried to slip a favor for Altria into the Homeland Security bill.** On Nov. 13, 2002, the same day Blunt was named House majority whip and just hours before House members were to vote on a bill creating the Department of Homeland Security, Blunt instructed his staff to insert language favored by Altria into the bill, which would have made it harder to sell tobacco products over the Internet and would have cracked down on the sale of contraband cigarettes. House Speaker Hastert removed the provision upon learning of it.
- **Altria was generous to Blunt in the days before the Homeland Security vote.** From Oct. 18 to 28, 2002, Blunt's leadership PAC received 37 contributions totaling \$30,900 from employees of Altria and its Philip Morris, Kraft Foods, and Miller Brewing units. Thirty-one of the contributions were received on Oct. 25, a day on which the PAC also received the then-maximum \$1,000 each from three Altria lobbyists: Lindsay Hooper, Walter Steward and Franklin Polk.

Shipping Companies

- **Domestic shipping companies have generously aided Blunt and his family.** UPS has been among Blunt's most faithful contributors, donating \$96,200 in cash and in-kind services to his political committees since 1999. Federal Express has given \$32,499 to the lawmaker. Blunt's son, Andrew, has been employed as a UPS lobbyist in Missouri since September 2002. UPS also furnished a Boeing 727 airplane to Blunt and DeLay to shuttle lobbyists, political supporters and aides to a September 2000 party in Las Vegas. UPS estimated the cost of providing its jet at \$30,000 to \$50,000, which it said would represent an in-kind contribution to DeLay's PAC.
- **Blunt pushed a special favor for UPS and Federal Express in an Iraq war funding bill.** In April 2003, amid deliberations over a \$79 billion spending bill for Iraq, Blunt convinced Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) to insert a provision prohibiting foreign-owned shipping companies such as DHL from receiving lucrative military contracts. Stevens' measure also called for an administrative law judge to rule on a petition filed by UPS and Federal Express that claimed a subsidiary of German-owned DHL Worldwide Express was operating illegally in the United States. A federal administrative law judge ruled in favor of DHL.

Airlines

- **Airlines have given generously to Blunt.** Four companies have contributed \$102,182 in cash and in-kind services to Blunt's political committees since 1999. The airlines' generosity has included nearly \$45,000 in 16 in-kind contributions, which were likely free air travel. The contributions occurred in the reporting period that included the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks through the 2002 election.
- **Blunt led the effort to secure a \$15 billion airline bailout bill after the Sept. 11 attacks.** Blunt met with airline executives a week after the Sept. 11 attacks, then immediately encouraged the White House to endorse a multi-billion dollar aid package. On Sept. 21 – 10

days after the attacks – Congress approved a measure that critics decried as far too generous, providing the airlines with \$5 billion in cash and \$10 billion in loan guarantees.

- **Blunt shepherded a second airline bailout bill in 2003 worth billions.** Another \$3.2 billion in aid to the airlines was included in a supplemental appropriations bill providing money for the war in Iraq, and was approved by the House in April 2003. The White House deemed the amount “excessive,” and Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) complained that the aid package would simply encourage the industry to hire “more lobbyists” to seek future rounds of taxpayer-financed welfare. Flake offered an amendment that would have limited the airline package to \$1.1 billion. Blunt intervened, persuading Flake to withdraw by offering to address larger issues affecting the airline industry later on. After negotiations with the Senate, the package climbed to \$3.8 billion.

Section IV: DeLay and Blunt Joined at the Hip

Nobody is more responsible for Blunt’s rapid rise to the Republican leadership than DeLay. The Texan began advising Blunt at the outset of his congressional career, chose him for his first leadership post and availed Blunt of his fundraising operation.

- **DeLay facilitated Blunt’s rise.** After Blunt arrived in Washington in 1997 to start his congressional career, DeLay took the newcomer under his wing. He suggested that Blunt run for the freshman slot on the Republican Steering Committee, rather than seeking election as freshman class president. Blunt followed DeLay’s advice and won.
- **Blunt tapped DeLay’s fundraising machine.** To raise money for his political committees, Blunt hired the Alexander Strategy Group, which was founded by former DeLay Chief of Staff Ed Buckham. He also hired Jim Ellis, who managed two PACs tied to DeLay. (Ellis has since been indicted, along with DeLay, for money laundering in Texas in connection with his management of Texans for a Republican Majority, or TRMPAC, which was founded by DeLay). Blunt’s PACs paid Alexander Strategy Group \$470,485 from 1999 to 2002, and Blunt’s federal PAC paid Ellis at least \$94,000 from 2003 to 2005.
- **At least one of Blunt’s PACs operated out of the same town house as an illegal soft money operation connected to DeLay operatives.** In 1999, Blunt’s soft money PAC made rent payments and reimbursements for supplies to the U.S. Family Network (USFN), at 132 D. St. SE in Washington, D.C. Buckham and Ellis operated out of the same house. USFN was the recipient of a \$500,000 soft money check in October 1999 from the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), whose finance chair was Abigail Perlman, who became Blunt’s wife in 2003. The money was solicited by Buckham, then a USFN contractor. The USFN subsequently made a secret \$300,000 transfer to Americans for Economic Growth, which used the money to run commercials attacking Democratic congressional candidates. In 2004, the FEC fined the NRCC \$280,000 in connection with its transfer to the USFN.
- **Political committees controlled by DeLay and Blunt have swapped funds.** DeLay’s PACs have transferred \$165,000 to Blunt’s PACs. Blunt’s committees have contributed \$20,000 to

DeLay's legal defense fund and \$17,000 to a charity controlled by DeLay. A DeLay PAC also contributed \$50,000 to the Missouri Republican Party to aid Blunt's son Matt's race to be secretary of state.

- **Blunt and DeLay worked together on RNC convention fetes in 2000 and repaid donors with a trip to Las Vegas.** Blunt and DeLay coordinated festivities at the 2000 Republican National Convention, then organized a trip to Las Vegas to thank the large contributors, who had anted up a total of nearly \$1 million for convention events. UPS furnished a Boeing 727 airplane to Blunt and DeLay to shuttle lobbyists, political supporters and aides to the September 2000 party. The in-kind donation was estimated at \$30,000 to \$50,000.
- **Blunt has helped DeLay's indicted PAC manager.** Ellis, who managed Blunt's political committees from their start, was indicted in September 2004. Rather than distancing himself from the allegations of Ellis's illegal behavior, Blunt increased his support of Ellis. In June 2005, Blunt's federal PAC contributed \$10,000 to Ellis's legal defense fund. Blunt also increased his monthly fees to Ellis for serving as his PAC consultant – from \$3,000 a month in 2004 to \$4,000 a month in 2005.
- **DeLay's PAC contracted with a consulting firm to aid Blunt.** A contract between DeLay's PAC, Americans for a Republican Majority (ARMPAC), and a media consulting firm, Red Sea LLC, called for the firm to assist Blunt, as well as DeLay.

Section V: With DeLay, Blunt Was in League with Felon and Former Lobbyist Jack Abramoff

Membership in DeLay's inner circle carried the privilege of consorting with Jack Abramoff, the DeLay confidant and former super-lobbyist who has pleaded guilty to fraud, tax evasion and conspiracy to bribe public officials in Washington. Separately, he pleaded guilty to fraud in his purchase of a Florida company that operated floating casinos.

- **Abramoff and his clients have been generous to Blunt.** Abramoff was one of only two donors to give Blunt's federal PAC the maximum \$5,000, reported in its first FEC filing in 1999. Abramoff subsequently made three additional contributions to Blunt, bringing his total to \$8,500.
- **Blunt went to bat for an Abramoff Indian gambling client.** In May 2003, Abramoff lobbyist Todd Boulanger drafted a letter to Interior Secretary Gale Norton warning that "we hold you accountable" to prevent "reservation shopping" by the Jena Choctaw Tribe of Louisiana. The Louisiana Coushatta tribe, an Abramoff client, was fighting the Interior Department's recognition of the Jenas because they would provide competition for the Coushattas' casinos. A toned-down version of Boulanger's letter bearing the signatures of Blunt, DeLay and House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) was delivered to Norton in June of that year. Blunt signed two other letters to Norton opposing the Jena Choctaw's efforts to open a casino.

- **Blunt provided access to Abramoff and his employees.** On at least four occasions in 2000 and 2001, Blunt or his aides met with Abramoff or other representatives of his law firm in connection with Abramoff's representation of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The CNMI, which has "political union" status with the United States, employed Abramoff to beat back a movement to impose U.S. labor standards on it, including the minimum wage. At least one of these meetings was between Blunt and a member of Abramoff's Mariana lobbying team.
- **Blunt's former chief of staff recruited Abramoff to work for Cassidy & Associates.** In March 2004, after Abramoff was fired by the law firm Greenberg Traurig for activities for which he later pleaded guilty, he was hired by Cassidy & Associates, a lobbying firm. Gregg Hartley, Blunt's confidant and former chief of staff turned Cassidy lobbyist, recruited Abramoff to the firm.
- **Blunt enjoyed "Friend of Owner" free meal status at Abramoff's restaurant.** Abramoff owned Signatures, a pricey restaurant near Capitol Hill, where he maintained a list of individuals who could dine for free. Blunt was among the lawmakers given this "Friend of Owner" status.

Section VI: Blunt's Political Empire Benefits His Family

Roy Blunt's political success has been instrumental in his sons' blazing ascents to the top of Missouri's political and lobbying cultures, which in turn has created new opportunities for both moneyed interests and other politicians to curry favor with the House leader. Blunt, along with his colleagues and lobbyists with business before him, have helped fill the coffers of son Matt's political committees. Meanwhile, son Andrew took only two years to build a lobbying practice that was the envy of his most established lobbying colleagues.

- **Contributions by Blunt and Washington, D.C.-based lobbyists and corporate executives have helped Matt Blunt twice win statewide election.** Shortly after ascending to chief deputy whip, Blunt began supporting his son Matt's secretary of state campaign. Roy Blunt's soft money leadership PAC contributed \$100,000 to the Missouri Republican Party in June 2000. The party then spent \$160,000 on behalf of Matt Blunt's campaign. Matt Blunt's 2004 campaign for governor was aided by more than \$651,000 from his father's soft money committee, and another \$30,000 from nearly three dozen Washington lobbyists.
- **Blunt's congressional colleagues have contributed significantly to his son.** Eighty-four House Republican lawmakers, 38 percent of the caucus, contributed more than \$65,000 in 2000 to Matt Blunt's campaign for secretary of state.
- **Andrew Blunt rose to the top of the Missouri lobbying world thanks to his father's donors.** Andrew Blunt was 25 when he graduated from law school in 2001. By early 2003, his lobbying clients included such heavyweights as Philip Morris, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, UPS and SBC. These are four of Roy Blunt's top seven corporate contributors since 1999. The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 2005 characterized the rise of Andrew Blunt's lobbying career as "meteoric."

- **Andrew Blunt worked for one of Rep. Blunt’s chief fundraisers.** While in law school in 2000, Andrew Blunt was employed as a “senior consultant” by Thompson Communications, which has worked for Rep. Blunt and Matt Blunt. This political consulting and fundraising company has received \$2.5 million from Rep. Blunt’s political committees since 2001.

Section I: Blunt's Strong Ties to K Street Lobbyists

Roy Blunt has been one of the central figures in building the “K Street Project,” the alliance between lobbyists and the Republican majority in Congress. So if the lobbying establishment and members of Congress now stand stained by corruption and cronyism, Blunt is one of the architects of the scandal.

It was in 1999 that House Speaker Hastert voiced concern about “a vacuum in the outreach to K Street,” said former Blunt Chief of Staff Gregg Hartley. Into that void stepped Blunt. DeLay tapped Blunt to be his new right hand man as chief deputy whip. (DeLay was the Republican whip from 1995 until 2003, when he became majority leader and Blunt succeeded him as whip). Blunt’s new responsibility was to coordinate regular meetings with lobbyists, enlisting them to “work with leadership, in a broad generic way... to whip the vote on the outside,” said Hartley.²

Traditionally, the job of the majority whip and chief deputy whip has been to “whip” members of their party into line on important votes, in order to ensure that the leadership is able to get its agenda through Congress. DeLay and Blunt revolutionized the relationship between members of Congress and the lobbyists by outsourcing part of their work to lobbyists, a development that has seriously compromised the independence of Congress and furnished Washington lobbyists with unprecedented power.

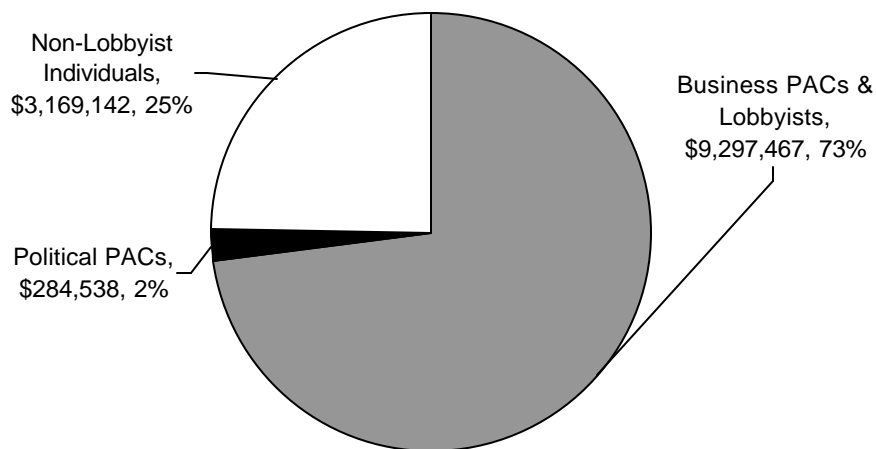
Lobbyists Have Raised Millions for Blunt

Since 1999, Blunt has raised \$12.8 million through his various fundraising committees. He has controlled a campaign committee, a leadership PAC and a “non-federal PAC” that was permitted to accept loosely-regulated soft money checks from corporations until the McCain-Feingold law shut it down after 2002.³ A look at the sources of the money that has flowed into these accounts shows that Blunt has relied largely on lobbyists and corporations to fund his activities:

- 73 percent (\$9.3 million) of the \$12.8 million Blunt has raised between 1999 and 2005 has come from business PACs and from lobbyists.⁴ [Figure 1]
- \$428,966 came from the personal checkbooks of Washington, D.C. area lobbyists.⁵

The union of money and influence can be seen in an examination of Blunt’s biggest contributors – those that have contributed more than \$45,000 since 1999. Each of these donors is a business PAC that has combined political giving to Blunt with hiring of lobbyists who are also connected to Blunt.

**Figure 1: Sources of Contributions to Blunt's Committees,
1999 - 2005**



Source: Contribution data supplied by the Center for Responsive Politics and the Missouri Ethics Commission.

- 43 percent – 13 out of 30 – of Blunt's biggest contributors have hired his former aides as their lobbyists.⁶
- Ten of Blunt's biggest contributors have hired the Alexander Strategy Group as their lobbying firm. The lobbying firm has been close to Blunt, as Blunt's committees have paid Alexander \$470,485 from 1999 to 2002 for fundraising and consulting services. Alexander's clients, meanwhile, have funneled \$581,866 into Blunt's committees since 1999. Alexander Strategy Group was forced to shut its doors in January 2006 because of its tight connections with convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff and the embattled DeLay.⁷

Figure 2:
Top PAC Contributors to Blunt's Committees and Their Lobbying Connections

Political Action Committee	Total Contributions	Employed Former Blunt Aides as Lobbyists
SBC Communications	\$209,540	Yes
Verizon Communications	\$184,500	Yes
Altria Group	\$177,589	Yes
Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)	\$111,000	
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp	\$109,999	Yes
BellSouth Corp	\$105,940	Yes
United Parcel Service	\$96,200	Yes
Union Pacific Corp	\$86,934	
Leggett & Platt	\$84,412	
National Association of Realtors	\$78,500	
General Electric	\$70,000	Yes
American Trucking Assns	\$65,294	
Dairy Farmers of America	\$65,000	Yes
UST Inc	\$61,440	
American Assn of Nurse Anesthetists	\$59,964	Yes
PricewaterhouseCoopers	\$59,500	
American Hospital Assn	\$58,500	
Eli Lilly & Co	\$58,500	
National Association of Convenience Stores	\$58,000	
Enron Corp	\$57,000	
Reliant Energy	\$55,500	
American Airlines	\$55,083	Yes
Wal-Mart Stores	\$53,500	Yes
Boeing Co	\$52,000	Yes
Ernst & Young	\$51,499	
National Auto Dealers Assn	\$51,000	
Diversified Collection Services	\$50,000	
Credit Union National Assn	\$49,500	Yes
Associated Builders & Contractors	\$45,000	
CrackerBarrel	\$45,000	
30 Business Groups	\$2.4 million	13 (43%)

Source: Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission.

Blunt's Staff Pass Through the Revolving Door

One way Blunt has built connections with K Street lobbyists has been through the steady movement of his key aides through the revolving door – from government service to lobbying firms. From 2001 to 2005, at least six of Blunt's senior aides have gone to work for lobbying firms in Washington. [Figure 3]

**Figure 3:
Former Blunt Employees Who Became Lobbyists**

Name	Lobbying Employment	Clients That Have Contributed \$30,000 or More to Blunt Since 1999	Employment with Blunt	Last Year Employed by Blunt
Ali Amirhooshmand	Lobbyist, Cassidy & Associates	Verizon, BellSouth, Wal-Mart	Policy advisor	2005
Samantha Cook	Lobbyist, Fierce & Isakowitz	Credit Union National Association, Altria	Senior legislative assistant	2001*
Jared Craighead	Vice president and lobbyist, Cassidy & Associates [Now senior policy advisor to Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt]	SBC, Verizon, BellSouth, General Electric, Wal-Mart	Special assistant	2003
John Dutton	Lobbyist, Manatt, Phelps and Phillips	None	Legislative director	2003
Gregg Hartley	Vice chairman, chief operating officer and lobbyist, Cassidy & Associates	SBC, Verizon, BellSouth, General Electric, Wal-Mart, Dairy Farmers of America, US Tobacco	Chief of staff	2003
Samantha Poole	Lobbyist, Fierce & Isakowitz	Credit Union National Association, Altria	Senior legislative assistant	2001*
6 Former Aides	5 Current Lobbyists 1 Former Lobbyist			

Source: Lobbying disclosure records filed with the Secretary of the Senate.

Note: The initial lobbying registrations for Cook and Poole were submitted on Mar. 1, 2001 and Oct. 17, 2001. Public Citizen was unable to confirm the date Cook or Poole left Blunt's office. Their initial date of registration as lobbyists is used here instead.

- **Gregg Hartley** worked for Blunt off-and-on for 18 years in Missouri politics, after first being steered to Blunt by then-Missouri Gov. John Ashcroft. Hartley ran Blunt's failed 1992 campaign for governor and his successful 1996 campaign for Congress. He worked four years for Blunt when he was chief deputy whip, but left after Blunt was elevated to majority whip, allowing him to help run the K Street operation from the lobbying side. There, Hartley said, he's still "working with a group of people I know. I know how they look at things, how it affects them in their district, what their voting is, (and) are they likely to be supportive of this issue or not."⁸
- **Jared Craighead** epitomizes the revolving door. He left Blunt's office in 2003, briefly going to work for SBC, one of Blunt's biggest campaign contributors. From there, he was recruited by one of SBC's lobbyists, none other than Gregg Hartley, to work for him at Cassidy & Associates.⁹ Craighead left Cassidy to work for Blunt's son, Matt, now governor of Missouri, as his senior policy advisor.¹⁰

- **Samantha Poole** is Blunt's former senior legislative assistant who is now a lobbyist for Fierce & Isakowitz, a firm run by former National Federation of Independent Business Chief Mark Isakowitz.¹¹ Together, Poole and Isakowitz are part of a 25 or so member "executive committee" of Republican lobbyists who coordinate activities. Also on the committee are former Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie and former DeLay aide Tony Rudy, whose activities were apparently described in detail in the felony plea agreement of former lobbyist Jack Abramoff.¹² Poole's clients at Fierce & Isakowitz include top Blunt donors Credit Union National Association and Miller Brewing, plus powerhouse trade associations including the Business Roundtable, the American Insurance Association, the Recording Industry Association of America, and the National Federation of Independent Business.¹³

Section II: Blunt's Corporate-Subsidized Travel

Blunt was one of the top two users of corporate jets among members of the congressional leadership (along with DeLay) from 2001 through May 2005. He also was the second greatest user of corporate jets among all members of Congress from January 2003 to April 2005.¹⁴ While Blunt apparently made reimbursements at the rate of first class air travel, his use of the jets has nevertheless amounted to a great luxury purchased for dramatically less than it would have cost to charter the jets, or even to operate a jet if he happened to own one.

Spokesmen for several of the companies that have flown Blunt have acknowledged the firms provide their jets to members of Congress specifically in order to give their lobbyists, who accompany members on trips, a chance to spend time with them.¹⁵

Blunt's indulgence in private jets has included flights aboard the airplane of Brent Wilkes, a lobbyist and defense contractor who has been identified as "co-conspirator No. 1" in the plea documents of former Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-Calif.), who resigned after admitted accepting bribes. Wilkes, the plea documents said, spent more than \$636,000 on Cunningham.¹⁶

Blunt's affection for travel perks extends beyond corporate-subsidized jet travel. He has also exhibited a taste for *free* commercial jet travel, campaign finance records suggest. Though Blunt has disparaged the plodding pace of commercial air travel, campaign finance records suggest he has availed himself of commercial carriers when it happened to be free. His soft money PAC reported 16 in-kind contributions from commercial airlines in the months surrounding his coordination of a \$15 billion bailout of the airline industry in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

Blunt's Private Jet Travel

Blunt and candidates whose travel he has paid for through his PAC have taken at least 140 subsidized flights on corporate jets since 2001, according to expenditure records filed by Blunt's campaign account and his federal leadership PAC. Blunt personally flew on at least 100 of the flights, Public Citizen's review of the records indicates.¹⁷ [Figure 4]

Blunt's political accounts have reimbursed these companies \$193,744 for the trips, ostensibly the equivalent rates of first class flights, which is permitted by campaign finance regulations.¹⁸ This sum is almost certainly far less than the actual costs incurred by the companies providing Blunt with subsidized transportation, and is dramatically less than the going rate for charter jet travel.

What the Flights Actually Cost

The cost of using a charter jet – such as a Gulfstream 3, Gulfstream 4 or Gulfstream 5 – typically ranges from \$4,000 to \$7,000 an hour.¹⁹ Assuming, conservatively, that an average flight for Blunt would take two hours each way (about the time it takes to fly between Washington, D.C., and St. Louis), and assuming that the flights were taken on less expensive jets (i.e., those costing about \$4,000 an hour to lease), Blunt's typical round trip flights would have carried \$16,000

Figure 4: Trips On Corporate Jets Reimbursed by Blunt's Political Committees

Company	Total Private Airplane Trips Reimbursed by Blunt's Committee	Trips in Which Blunt's Committees Paid to Fly Other Candidates	Total Reimbursement to Company	Total PAC Contributions to Blunt's Committees
BellSouth	20	6	\$28,586	\$105,940
Sallie Mae	10	6	\$13,800	\$17,000
Burlington Northern Santa Fe	8	0	\$14,761	\$109,999
R.J. Reynolds	7	4	\$7,901	\$19,750
Jay Grant & Associates	7	2	\$9,429	\$0
Baxter Healthcare	6	3	\$11,662	\$4,000
Dairy Farmers of America	6	1	\$8,672	\$65,000
Monsanto Company	6	2	\$3,054	\$2,000
Qualcomm Corp.	6	5	\$5,506	\$20,000
ServiceMaster Company	5	1	\$9,713	\$12,000
Sentrus	5	3	\$6,904	\$0
AFLAC	5	0	\$4,484	\$34,000
Alticor (Amway)	4	0	\$5,115	\$0
Group W Advisors/Transportation (includes Wilkes Co.)	4	3	\$2,520	\$5,000
CenturyTel	4	0	\$2,064	\$500
Cracker Barrel	4	1	\$3,327	\$45,000
Norfolk Southern Corporation	4	0	\$4,375	\$20,500
Golden Rule Financial Corp.	4	2	\$5,392	\$1,000
Clark/Bardes Consulting	3	1	\$4,951	\$1,000
Union Pacific	2	0	\$7,105	\$86,934
Lockheed Martin	2	0	\$4,569	\$24,000
AIG	2	0	\$2,630	\$7,000
USTobacco	2	0	\$1,724	\$61,439
Precision Jet Management	1	0	\$8,117	\$0
Emergent BioSolutions, Inc.	1	0	\$1,018	\$0
Corrections Corporation of America	1	0	\$562	\$0
Coca Cola Enterprises	1	0	\$1,103	\$4,000
King Ranch Inc	1	0	\$1,145	\$1,000
CSX Corporation	1	0	\$1,101	\$27,000
Owens Corning Better Government Fund	1	0	\$1,314	\$20,000
Prime Aire, Inc.	1	0	\$1,353	\$0
Prime Inc	1	0	\$3,000	\$0
Aquila, Inc.	1	0	\$836	\$0
AmeriPlan	1	0	\$2,065	\$0
Altria	1	0	\$1,513	\$177,588
Swisher International Inc	1	0	\$1,108	\$1,000
Northrop Grumman	1	0	\$1,265	\$38,000
23 Organizations	140 Trips	40 Trips	\$193,744	\$642,062

Source: Public Citizen analysis of FEC data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics.

price tags at charter rates. Flights to more distant destinations, such as Arizona and California, which are noted in a few of Blunt's airfare reimbursement items, obviously would cost more.²⁰

Using the \$4,000 per hour charter rates and the average four-hour round-trip estimate, the 140 flights enjoyed since 2001 by Blunt and candidates he has funded with his PACs represent a value of more than \$2.2 million, Public Citizen estimates. If one subtracts the \$193,744 in reimbursements made by Blunt's political committees, he has reaped a net benefit of about \$2 million.

Some defenders of corporate jet travel, however, point out that it does not cost jet owners the charter rate to fly their planes. Indeed, the actual cost to fly a typical corporate jet runs about \$2,000 an hour, according to an estimate provided to Public Citizen.²¹ A round-trip flight from Washington, D.C., to St. Louis, therefore, would cost a private jet owner about \$8,000. Using this more conservative approach, and again assuming that Washington-to-St. Louis reflects the average flight, Blunt has been the beneficiary of at least \$1.1 million for his 140 corporate jet trips since 2001. Minus reimbursements, that represents a net benefit of more than \$925,000.

The ability to call upon a fleet of corporate jets has clearly been important to Blunt. He has said that private jets were essential in allowing him to visit 100 congressional districts in the run-up to the 2004 elections, and he groused that it would have taken "forever" to get to some of the rural Republican districts if he were forced to rely solely on commercial flights.²² The coordinator of Blunt's leadership PAC, Keri Ann Hayes, said Blunt uses corporate jets because "private travel enables him to reach multiple campaign events." Many of these, she added, "are in remote locations."²³

An example of the advantage that corporate jet travel provides to Blunt can be seen in a March 2004 trip, when he used a BellSouth jet to fly from Washington, D.C., to a ski resort in Aspen, Colo., for a fundraiser. Next, the jet carried him to Denver, for another fundraiser. One Sky, a charter jet service consulted by a reporter, could not have accommodated Blunt's trip for less than \$16,108. Yet Blunt's PAC only paid BellSouth \$4,450 – only about a quarter of the charter cost.²⁴

Corporations Use Their Jets as a Way to Lobby Lawmakers

Both Blunt and the corporations that have ferried him around the country acknowledge that companies making their jets available aren't motivated simply by wanting to do a good deed – rather, providing travel represents a calculated effort to give lobbyists special access to lawmakers.

To Blunt, private jet travel is "certainly one of the more helpful things under the law that a company can still do."²⁵ The companies, meanwhile, acknowledge they offer their planes in order to further their causes on Capitol Hill.

- BellSouth, which has shuttled Blunt or candidates he supported 20 times since 2000, furnishes its jets to "people who are friendly to us" and those "important to us," a

spokesman said. “They could be in a position to help or hinder legislative action that might be beneficial.”²⁶

When BellSouth furnishes its planes to members of Congress, the company also ensures the lawmakers will have company. A BellSouth spokesman said he could not recall an instance in which a lawmaker flew on one of the company’s jets *without* being accompanied by a lobbyist.²⁷

- U.S. Smokeless Tobacco bases its decisions on whether to provide its plane on input from executives in its Washington lobbying office.²⁸ The company has been reimbursed by Blunt’s political committees twice since 2001 for airfare. Blunt’s soft money PAC also reported receipt of an in-kind contribution of \$1,453 from UST in 2002, likely a free flight aboard a UST plane.²⁹
- Federal Express views provision of its jets to members of Congress as “part of the cost of doing business.” The company’s lobbyists use the flights as “an opportunity to meet members,” a spokeswoman said.³⁰ Blunt did not report in-kind air travel from Federal Express. Political party records indicate that the company has flown unnamed senior Republicans 11 times since 2001. The records do not indicate which party officials received air travel.³¹

Blunt’s Travel Reimbursements to Companies Are Often Dwarfed by Their Contributions to His Political Committees

Companies that have provided air travel to Blunt have typically been campaign contributors. The majority, in fact, have contributed more to Blunt’s accounts than they have received in airfare reimbursements from the same coffers – effectively making his travel free.

The 23 companies that have provided two or more flights to Blunt have contributed an average of \$27,916 to his campaign committees (only three of the companies have not made any PAC contributions). [Figure 4] Blunt has reimbursed these companies an average of \$7,314 for airfare.³²

Brent Wilkes Subsidized Travel for Blunt and His Colleagues

There may be no better example of companies trading use of their jets for access to lawmakers than Brent Wilkes, a San Diego businessman whose empire has included a purported transportation company (Group W Transportation), a lobbying business (Group W Advisers) and a collection of defense contractors, including San Diego-based ADCS Inc., which has received more than \$80 million in federal contracts since 1996.³³

Wilkes was named as “co-conspirator No. 1” in the plea documents of former Rep. Randy “Duke” Cunningham (R-Calif.), who resigned in November 2005 after he admitted accepting \$2.4 million in bribes. Wilkes, the documents said, spent more than \$636,000 on Cunningham.³⁴

Group W entities provided Blunt’s committees two subsidized flights in both 2002 and 2004.³⁵

Free Miles from Airlines?

Perhaps in appreciation of Blunt's post-Sept. 11 work, in which he helped shepherd the \$15 billion airline bailout bill through Congress, the airlines evidently provided Blunt with a choice perk. Blunt's soft money PAC also reported nearly \$45,000 in "in-kind" contributions from major airlines on 16 occasions in 2001 and 2002.³⁶ [Figure 5] Campaign disclosure records do not provide details about the contributions. Public Citizen asked Keri Ann Hayes, executive director of Blunt's PAC, if the in-kind payments were for air travel.³⁷ She did not respond.

Figure 5: Large In-Kind Contributions to Blunt's Soft Money PAC

Group Name	No. of Reported Ostensible Free Soft Money Reports	Value of Soft Money In-Kind Contributions
American Airlines	9	\$24,082
United Airlines	2	\$10,079
Northwest Airlines	3	\$9,083
Continental Airlines	2	\$1,434
Total	16	\$44,678

Source: Public Citizen analysis of FEC data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics .

Section III: Blunt Has Performed Special Favors for His Big Contributors

In his short tenure in Congress, Blunt has demonstrated a willingness to intervene on behalf of industries and corporations that contribute heavily to his political committees, even when these favors entail government subsidies that seemingly conflict with the conservative ideology he ostensibly embraces.

Among his biggest contributors have been the “Baby Bells,” the legacies of AT&T that have enjoyed local phone service monopolies. For them, Blunt has been quick to applaud or condemn rulings by the courts or the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) affecting the companies. To show their support, the companies have given Blunt \$539,479 in cash and services since 1998, as well as providing use of an airplane. Airlines have been another significant contributor. Blunt has twice served as a chief advocate for airlines seeking government handouts. He has also opposed calls for increased unemployment pay for laid-off airline workers, while supporting less stringent restrictions on the pay of airline executives whose companies get taxpayer handouts. Meanwhile, Blunt has sought to provide favors to the tobacco and shipping industries, both of which employ members of his family as lobbyists. He has received \$258,778 and \$128,699, respectively, from major U.S. tobacco and shipping companies since 1999.

The Baby Bell Companies Have Given Generously to Blunt and His Staffers

Blunt has been a dutiful and attentive advocate for the Bells, co-sponsoring their most publicized bill and offering prompt correspondence, testimony and statements to bolster their policy positions. The congressman, who was a rank-and-file member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, made a chairman-like practice of issuing statements on the day of court and FCC rulings affecting the Baby Bells.

The Bells, meanwhile, have been generous to Blunt:

- Since 1999, the four companies – BellSouth, Qwest, SBC and Verizon – have contributed \$530,479 to Blunt’s campaign accounts and his PACs. [Figure 6]
- BellSouth, which has contributed \$105,940 to Blunt and his PACs since 1999, has also frequently permitted Blunt and candidates financed by his leadership PAC to use the company’s airplanes at subsidized rates. Blunt’s campaign accounts have reimbursed BellSouth \$28,856 since 2001 for 20 trips aboard its corporate planes. These trips could easily have cost more than \$300,000 at charter rates. [See Section II: Blunt’s Corporate Subsidized Travel]
- SBC, which has contributed \$209,539 to Blunt and his PACs since 1999, has hired Blunt’s son, Andrew Blunt, as a lobbyist.³⁸

- Between them, BellSouth and SBC have spent \$3,437 to send Blunt staffers to meetings in Miami and San Diego on telecommunications issues.³⁹
- Three of six former Blunt staffers that Public Citizen has identified as becoming lobbyists have been hired to represent Baby Bells. [Figure 7]

Figure 6: Contributions from Baby Bell Companies to Blunt's Political Committees, 1999-2005

Company	Contributions to Blunt's Federal PAC	Contributions to Blunt's Soft Money PAC*	Contributions to Blunt Campaign Account	Total Contributions
BellSouth Corp	\$29,000	\$50,440	\$26,500	\$105,940
Qwest Communications	\$12,500	\$20,000	\$7,000	\$39,500
SBC Communications	\$32,000	\$139,539	\$38,000	\$209,539
Verizon Communications	\$34,500	\$110,000	\$40,000	\$184,500
Total	\$108,000	\$319,979	\$111,500	\$539,479

Source: Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission.

*Includes in-kind contributions

Figure 7: Former Blunt Staffers Lobbying for the Baby Bells

Name	Lobbying Employment	Clients of Note	Employment with Rep. Blunt	Last Year Employed by Blunt
Ali Amirhooshmand	Lobbyist, Cassidy & Associates	Verizon, BellSouth	Policy advisor	2005
Jared Craighead	Vice president & lobbyist, Cassidy & Associates [Now senior policy advisor to Gov. Matt Blunt (R-Mo.)]	SBC, Verizon, BellSouth	Special assistant	2003
Gregg Hartley	Vice chairman, chief operating officer and lobbyist, Cassidy & Associates	SBC, Verizon, BellSouth	Chief of staff	2003

Source: Lobbying disclosure records filed with the Secretary of the Senate.

Blunt Was Among the Baby Bells' Chief Advocates in Washington

It took some effort, but with Blunt's help, the Baby Bells finally managed an end-run around landmark rules that were designed to create competition, and lower prices for consumers, in local phone service and Internet access.

During the 107th Congress in 2001-2002, the Baby Bells put on a full-court press to enact the bill popularly known as "Tauzin-Dingell," which would have exempted the companies from a requirement to share their lines with competitors offering digital subscriber line (DSL) high-speed Internet access.

The campaign was the most publicized aspect of a battle the Baby Bells have waged since passage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. The law sought to foster competition by requiring the Baby Bells to open their networks, which had been financed by ratepayers when the companies enjoyed monopolies, to other providers. In exchange, the law offered the Bells the right to offer long distance service.

A coalition established by the Bells, called Connect USA, poured \$2.8 million into advertising in 2001 and 2002 – in Washington, D.C. alone – to promote Tauzin-Dingell and related legislation.⁴⁰ The bill, of which Blunt was a co-sponsor, passed the House in 2002 but was blocked in the Senate by Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C), then the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee.⁴¹

After that defeat, the Bells asked the FCC for help. Once again, Blunt was an advocate for their cause. In January 2003, on the eve of the FCC's review of regulations concerning the 1996 act, Blunt was among 22 members of Congress who sent a letter to FCC Chairman Michael Powell, demanding that the FCC justify a FCC rule requiring the Baby Bells to lease portions of their networks to competitors. If there was no justification, the letter instructed, the FCC should bar states from imposing line-sharing requirements on the Baby Bells.⁴²

In February 2003, the FCC issued its long-anticipated "Triennial Review" of the 1996 act. It was a victory for the Bells, but not a complete one. The commission gave the Baby Bells what they sought on DSL: the right to charge as much as they wanted to competing DSL companies seeking to lease their lines. But the commission granted states the right to regulate terms under which the Bells would share their lines with local telephone service providers.⁴³

The Bells were not satisfied with half a loaf. "The FCC's broadband decision shows that the commission understands the need for a national policy that preserves the economic rationale for companies making big investments in technology," SBC said in a statement. "It is anyone's guess why the FCC does not apply the same logic to local phone service."⁴⁴

Blunt immediately backed up SBC and its peers. "I'm all for competition, but it's hardly appropriate to ask one industry to subsidize its competitors," Blunt said in a statement released that day, which was similar to the Baby Bells' talking points.⁴⁵

In hearings conducted the next week by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, on which Blunt served, Blunt dubbed the day of the Triennial Review's release as "Black Thursday."⁴⁶

In March 2004, the District of Columbia appeals court struck down the FCC rules permitting states to set rates when the Baby Bells leased their lines to local phone competitors, moving the Bells closer to their goal.

Again, Blunt immediately rallied to the Bells' cause, issuing a statement the next day calling for the FCC to comply with the court decision "to prevent needless regulations that hamper innovation and stymie job creation."⁴⁷

In December 2004, the Bells won big: The FCC issued new line-sharing rules phasing out the requirement that the Bells lease their lines to local phone competitors at discounted rates. The new rules gave competitors serving large markets a year to strike new deals with the Bells, or build their own networks instead.⁴⁸

Long distance companies, which had sought to counter attacks on their traditional turf by expanding into local phone service, were hobbled by the FCC ruling. In less than a year, SBC struck a deal to acquire AT&T – now a whisper of its former dominance – and Verizon agreed to acquire MCI, both pending regulatory approvals.⁴⁹

In August 2005, the FCC ruled that DSL was an information service rather than a telecommunications service, and was therefore exempt from sharing its lines with DSL competitors.⁵⁰

Finally, the Bells had made a clean sweep of the field, just as they wanted. Their goals were achieved – at least for now.

Blunt Enjoys Big Tobacco's Largesse, Then Gives Back

Tobacco companies, especially Altria Corp, have given generously to Blunt, who has shown a willingness to perform special favors for them.

Since 1999, PACs of tobacco companies Altria Corp. (including subsidiaries Philip Morris and Kraft Foods), R.J. Reynolds and U.S. Smokeless Tobacco have given Blunt \$258,777 in cash and possibly thousands more in subsidized corporate jet travel. [Figure 8]

The industry's affection for Blunt may stem from his close ties to the business, especially to the lobbying arm of tobacco giant Altria. It's a family affair: Abigail Perlman, Blunt's wife since October 2003, is an Altria lobbyist who has lobbied the House of Representatives as recently as the first half of 2005, according to lobbying disclosure forms.⁵¹ One of Blunt's sons, Andrew, is an Altria lobbyist for Altria subsidiaries Philip Morris and Kraft in Missouri.⁵²

Aside from cash, Blunt and the candidates whose travel he has funded through his political committees have enjoyed the subsidized travel aboard the corporate jets of Philip Morris, R.J. Reynolds and U.S. Smokeless Tobacco on at least 10 occasions.⁵³ [See Figure 4, in Section II]

Additionally, Blunt's soft money PAC reported receipt of an in-kind contribution for \$4,881 from Philip Morris for the first quarter of 2002.⁵⁴ Details for the contribution are not available, but the non-cash gift may have been for free airfare. Such a contribution to a soft money account would not have required any reimbursement.

Blunt's staff have also partaken of Altria's largesse. The American Turkish Council, on whose board an Altria executive sits, spent \$21,741 shuttling four Blunt staffers to Turkey between 2001 and 2004. Two of the trips, "fact finding" missions undertaken simultaneously by then-Blunt Chief of Staff Gregg Hartley and later Blunt Chief of Staff Amy Field, were partially underwritten by Philip Morris and Pfizer Inc., according to House records. [Figure 9]

Figure 8: Major Tobacco Company Contributions to Blunt's Political Committees

Company	Contributions to Blunt's Federal PAC	Contributions to Blunt's Soft Money PAC*	Contributions to Blunt Campaign Account	Total
Altria/Philip Morris	\$32,000	\$114,881	\$30,707	\$177,588
RJ Reynolds	\$16,000	\$0	\$3,750	\$19,750
U.S. Smokeless Tobacco (UST)	\$22,500	\$28,939	\$10,000	\$61,440
Total	\$70,500	\$143,820	\$44,457	\$258,777

Source: Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission. * Includes in-kind contributions

Figure 9: American Turkish Council Funded Trips Involving Blunt Staffers

Sponsor	Blunt Staffer	Trip Destination	Trip Purpose	Total Cost	Dates of Travel
American Turkish Council	H. Floyd Gilzow	Turkey	Briefings on Turkish-American relations and internal Turkish political and economic issues.	\$4,930	5/26/2001 - 6/3/2001
American Turkish Council (also paid for by Pfizer Inc. and Philip Morris Co.)	Gregg Hartley	Turkey	Fact-finding trip	\$4,650	5/25/2002 - 6/2/2002
American Turkish Council (also paid for by Pfizer Inc. and Philip Morris Co.)	Amy Field	Turkey	Fact-finding trip	\$4,650	5/25/2002 - 6/2/2002
American Turkish Council	Brian Diffell	New York, N.Y.; Turkey	Fact-finding on transatlantic affairs, Middle East policy issues, internal Turkish affairs	\$7,511	8/13/2004 - 8/21/2004
Total				\$21,741	

Source: Travel disclosure records filed with the Clerk of the House.

A Special Favor for Philip Morris

Quick on the heels of a fundraiser, Blunt made an audacious play to deliver a major coup to the tobacco industry.

Between Oct. 18 and 28, 2002, Blunt's leadership PAC received 37 contributions totaling \$30,900 from employees of Altria, Altria subsidiaries Philip Morris and Kraft Foods, and Miller Brewing, in which Altria held a 36 percent interest in fall 2002. Thirty-one of the contributions were received on Oct. 25, a day on which the PAC also received \$1,000 each from three lobbyists registered to represent Altria: Lindsay Hooper, Walter Steward and Franklin Polk. Philip Morris's PAC had given its maximum \$5,000 to Blunt's leadership PAC earlier in the year.⁵⁵

About two weeks later, on Nov. 13, Blunt was named House majority whip.⁵⁶ He didn't wait long before trying to throw around his weight to help his benefactors. The same day, and just hours before House members were to vote on a bill creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Blunt instructed his staff to insert language into the DHS bill that would have made it harder to sell tobacco products over the Internet and that would have cracked down on sale of contraband cigarettes. John F. Scruggs, Altria's vice president of government affairs, said the provision was "pretty important to us." But it was too bold a play, even in a special interest-friendly Congress: Upon learning of the provision, House Speaker Hastert removed it.⁵⁷

Even Republican members of the Missouri delegation criticized Blunt's action as secretive and against the spirit of House deliberations.

"The thing that troubles me about it is that anytime a bill is changed or modified at the 11th hour, it doesn't give me a chance to consider the merits of the proposal," said Rep. Kenny Hulshof (R-Mo.). "Anything inserted at the end of the process sort of abrogates my responsibility as a legislator."⁵⁸

"Not appropriate," said Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.).⁵⁹

Shipping Companies: Blunt Pushed an Anti-Competitive Measure for UPS and Federal Express

When United Parcel Service and Federal Express needed a delivery, they turned to Blunt, who was happy to oblige.

Blunt used his sway in the House leadership to persuade a leading senator to add a provision to a spending bill for Iraq that would benefit shipping companies UPS and Federal Express, at the expense of competitor DHL Worldwide Express. The deal was this: In April 2003, amid deliberations over a \$79 billion spending bill for Iraq, Blunt convinced Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) to insert a provision barring foreign-owned shipping companies – like DHL – from receiving lucrative military contracts. The provision also called for an administrative law judge to rule on a petition by UPS and Federal Express, in which they charged a subsidiary of German-owned DHL was operating illegally in the United States.⁶⁰

Stevens' measure was adopted and approved, barring DHL from military contracts. But the petition was rejected, when a federal administrative law judge in December 2003 ruled in favor of DHL.⁶¹

UPS and Federal Express have contributed a combined \$128,699 to Blunt's political committees since 1999.

UPS has been especially generous, donating \$96,200 in cash and in-kind services since he ascended to the leadership.⁶² [Figure 10] The shipping company also furnished a Boeing 727 jet to Blunt and DeLay to shuttle lobbyists, political supporters and aides to a September 2000 party in Las Vegas. The event was a fundraiser and a "thank you" to corporations that had anted up more than a million dollars for festivities at that year's Republican National Convention, which Blunt and DeLay had coordinated. The Las Vegas outing netted about \$50,000 in fundraising proceeds. UPS estimated the cost of providing its jet at \$30,000 to \$50,000, which it said would represent an in-kind contribution to DeLay's PAC.⁶³

Aside from its cash contributions, UPS made 15 in-kind contributions to Blunt, totaling \$6,200, in 2001 and 2002.⁶⁴

UPS has also employed Blunt's son, Andrew B. Blunt, as a lobbyist since September 2002.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Federal Express has also been a Blunt contributor, giving \$32,499.

Figure 10: Contributions from United Parcel Service and Federal Express to Blunt's Committees, 1999-2005

Company	Contributions to Blunt's Federal PAC	Contributions to Blunt's Soft Money PAC*	Contributions to Blunt Campaign Account	Total
Federal Express	\$16,000	\$0	\$16,499	\$32,499
United Parcel Service	\$30,000	\$36,200	\$30,000	\$96,200
Total	\$46,000	\$36,200	\$46,499	\$128,699

*Includes in-kind contributions

Source: Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission.

Blunt and the Airlines Aid One Another

When the nation's airlines were grounded after the Sept. 11 attacks, there was a rush to provide aid. But even as what became a \$15 billion package – \$5 billion in grants, plus \$10 billion in loan guarantees – took shape, critics warned it was more of a handout than a helping hand. While airlines clearly suffered in the attacks, the critics said, the carriers' shaky finances were much more of their own making. Before long, fears about the aid package were indeed borne out. As the group Taxpayers for Common Sense put it less than a year later: "Airline lobbyists' dreams came true. All in all, the airline industry got more than triple what the shutdown of air travel

actually cost them.” According to industry testimony, the four-day grounding cost \$340 million per day in lost revenues for four days, the group said, for a total of \$1.36 billion – far less than the \$5 billion in cash compensation they received.⁶⁶

Leading the way for this bloated bailout was Blunt.

Blunt has twice taken up the cause of engineering handouts for the airlines. First, he served as the point person for the \$15 billion relief package. Then, in April 2003, he was instrumental in pushing through Congress a bill that provided \$2.3 billion in additional grants, plus hundreds of millions more in assorted other benefits.⁶⁷ In another instance of the symbiotic relationships that develop between politician and corporate interests in Washington, the major, non-discount commercial airlines have provided Blunt with \$102,178 in contributions since he ascended to the leadership. [Figure 1] They have also furnished him with 16 in-kind donations starting with the reporting period covering Sept. 11, likely for free air travel.

After the attacks, House Speaker Dennis Hastert tapped Blunt as the point person to manage the \$15 billion aid package, and it probably would have been difficult for the airlines to find a more helpful steward.⁶⁸ Blunt met with airline executives a week after the attacks, then immediately encouraged the White House to endorse billions in aid. Just 10 days after 9/11, Congress approved the aid package, which also established a government-funded compensation program for victims’ family members – provided they agreed not to sue the airlines for the four hijackings.⁶⁹

Blunt stressed that the aid package would not be “making up for bad past practices” of the airline industry, which was in great distress at the time.⁷⁰ But two years later, Blunt was again looking to bail out the airlines.

A supplemental House appropriations bill to provide money for the war in Iraq, approved by the House in April 2003, included \$3.2 billion in support for the airlines. The White House deemed the amount “excessive,” and Rep. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) complained the new funds would simply encourage the industry to hire “more lobbyists” in order to seek still more taxpayer-financed welfare. Flake offered an amendment that would have limited the airline package to \$1.1 billion.⁷¹

Enter Blunt once again. He convinced Flake to withdraw his attempt to save taxpayers billions, by offering to address larger issues affecting the airline industry later on.⁷²

The House version of that bill differed from its Senate counterpart in a key way, by imposing less stringent restrictions on the pay of airline executives whose companies received taxpayer subsidies.⁷³ But the compassion of Blunt’s House bill toward airline executives did not extend to laid-off airline workers. Rejecting a Democratic proposal, the Republicans refused to extend unemployment benefits to airline workers who were laid off following Sept. 11.⁷⁴

Airlines Return the Favor

Despite financial travails that prompted them to seek billions in government handouts, the airlines nevertheless managed to contribute more than \$100,000 in cash and in-kind services, mostly air travel, to Blunt's political committees since 1999. [Figure 11]

Figure 11: Airline Contributions to Blunt's Political Committees, 1999-Present

Company	Contributions to Blunt's Federal PAC	Contributions to Blunt's Soft Money PAC*	Contributions to Blunt Campaign Account	Total Contributions
American Airlines	\$16,000	\$24,082	\$15,000	\$55,082
Continental Airlines	\$0	\$1,434	\$7,500	\$8,934
Northwest Airlines	\$3,500	\$9,083	\$5,000	\$17,583
United Airlines	\$7,000	\$10,079	\$3,500	\$20,579
Total	\$26,500	\$44,678	\$31,000	\$102,178

*Includes in-kind contributions

Source: Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission.

When it comes to in-kind contributions, which are a sub-category of the total contributions, what the airlines have to offer is something members of Congress like: free travel. And the airlines indeed appear to have furnished Blunt with this enviable perk, following Blunt's work on the 2001 airline bailout that proved to be so lucrative. On 16 occasions, beginning with the reporting period covering Sept. 11, 2001 and ending Nov. 5, 2002, Blunt reported in-kind contributions from four major airlines totaling nearly \$45,000, most likely for free travel on the carriers. [See Figure 5 in Section II]

Section IV: DeLay and Blunt are Joined at the Hip

Members of the Republican leadership did all they could to downplay the significance of Blunt assuming the title of acting House majority leader in the wake of the abdication by DeLay following DeLay's indictment by a Texas grand jury on Sept. 28, 2005. Republicans portrayed the change as temporary. House Speaker Hastert assured DeLay that he would be closely consulted on decisions and ensured that DeLay's staff would stay in place in the majority leader's office.⁷⁵

But Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.) suggested that it might not matter much that Blunt was replacing DeLay – precisely because Blunt was so much like DeLay. “He’s the ultimate understudy,” Kingston said of Blunt. “We have replaced a superstar with another superstar.”⁷⁶

Blunt has achieved a rapid rise since arriving in Congress in 1997 by hitching his political fortunes, and his fundraising apparatus, to DeLay.

DeLay Facilitated Blunt's Rise

As soon as Blunt arrived in Washington, DeLay took the freshman under his wing. DeLay suggested that Blunt run for the freshman slot on the Republican Steering Committee rather than seeking election as Republican freshman class president.⁷⁷ Blunt followed DeLay's advice and won.

In 1999, DeLay appointed Blunt as chief deputy whip – initiating his uncommonly rise march through the ranks. Former DeLay chief of staff Ed Buckham told the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* that DeLay chose Blunt because Blunt reminded DeLay of himself. “[DeLay] likes the fact that [Blunt] has a faith in God, and that he believes in conservative values.”⁷⁸

Common Denominators in Fundraising Operations

Once DeLay had Blunt positioned, DeLay availed the Missourian of his formidable fundraising operation. Blunt utilized the services of Buckham, DeLay's former chief of staff turned lobbyist, and DeLay's political action committee coordinator, Jim Ellis. Blunt's and DeLay's PACs were apparently run out of the same townhouse.⁷⁹ That townhouse was simultaneously used as the headquarters of a secret soft money operation, under the auspices of the USFN and another non-profit, Americans for Economic Growth, which was administered by Buckham, Ellis and former DeLay campaign manager Robert Mills.⁸⁰ The National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) would later be fined \$280,000 by the FEC for the activities of the soft money operation.⁸¹

Ed Buckham: DeLay's former chief of staff stepped into the role of fundraiser for Blunt soon after the Missourian ascended to the leadership. In 1998, the year he left DeLay's employ, Buckham established Alexander Strategy Group, a lobbying and consulting firm that employed DeLay's wife from 1998-2002.⁸²

With his quick ascendancy to the leadership, Blunt established a federal leadership PAC, which held its first fundraiser on May 26, 1999.⁸³ Soon after, Blunt set up a soft money PAC that would operate through the end of the 2002 election cycle, when the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act forced Blunt to shut it down. The federal PAC made its first payment to the Alexander Strategy Group, a \$5,000 consulting fee, on June 11, 1999. Blunt's PACs would pay Alexander a total \$470,485 through 2002.⁸⁴

Jim Ellis: Ellis, who managed DeLay's PACs, has managed Blunt's federal PAC since its inception. He also was a frequent recipient of reimbursements from Blunt's soft money PAC, suggesting he played a role in it as well.⁸⁵ Ellis also had consulting contracts with the NRCC and the Alexander Strategy Group.⁸⁶ He received periodic reimbursements from Blunt's PACs from June 1999 through 2001. From 2003 to October 2005, he received at least \$94,000 in fundraising and consulting fees from Blunt's federal PAC.⁸⁷

In fall 2004, Ellis was indicted in Texas in connection with his management of another PAC tied to DeLay, Texans for a Republican Majority (TRMPAC).⁸⁸ Ellis and DeLay have been accused of laundering corporate contributions into Texas state elections through TRMPAC.

Rather than distancing himself from the allegations of Ellis's illegal behavior, Blunt has increased his support for him. In June 2005, Blunt's federal PAC contributed \$10,000 to Ellis's legal defense fund. Blunt also increased monthly consulting fees the PAC pays to Ellis. Beginning in February 2005, Blunt's PAC began paying Ellis \$4,000 a month, up from \$3,000 a month previously.⁸⁹

The Townhouse: A townhouse located at 132 D St. SE, in Washington, D.C., served as office space for Buckham and Ellis and was, according to campaign finance reports, the home of Blunt's soft money leadership PAC.⁹⁰ The townhouse was also a beehive for secretive and unauthorized soft money political activities.

The house was purchased in January 1999 by the U.S. Family Network (USFN), a non-profit group about which little was known.⁹¹ The USFN executive director was Robert G. Mills, who was manager of DeLay's 1996 re-election campaign.⁹² Buckham and Ellis began renting space at the house soon after the USFN bought it.⁹³

On Feb. 8, 2000, Blunt's soft money leadership PAC reported making a rent payment for \$1,750 to the USFN at the townhouse. On the same disclosure report, the PAC also reported a \$400 payment to the USFN for "various office supplies."⁹⁴

But Buckham and Ellis were doing more than managing DeLay and Blunt's PACs there. They were also key figures in a soft money scheme in which the USFN accepted a \$500,000 contribution from the NRCC. It then funneled \$300,000 to a different non-profit group, Americans for Economic Growth (AEG), which ran ads attacking vulnerable Democratic members of Congress. The FEC fined the NRCC \$280,000 in 2004 for its contribution to the USFN.⁹⁵

The activities of the NRCC, the USFN, Buckham and Ellis were marked by deception and deviation from NRCC policies. In December 1999, when *Roll Call* brought the \$500,000 contribution to light, Buckham acknowledged he had solicited the contribution from the NRCC. But both Ellis and Buckham denied having any relationship with AEG.⁹⁶ Yet Ellis, it was later revealed, was AEG's registered agent at the time.⁹⁷

The FEC later reported that the USFN had received the \$500,000 from the NRCC on Oct. 20, 1999. Within a week, the group transferred \$300,000 to AEG. The FEC also found that a NRCC representative who "hand delivered the check to Mr. Buckham made statements at the time to the effect that the NRCC did not want to know how the funds would be used."⁹⁸ The NRCC's finance chairman in 1999 was Abigail Perlman, whom Blunt ended up marrying in 2003.⁹⁹

The FEC further concluded that Buckham and Ellis had agreed prior to the arrival of the check that the money would be transferred from the USFN to AEG, which, in turn, would run the advertisements.¹⁰⁰

The USFN suffered a tumultuous month in April 2000. Mills, the executive director, was forced to resign after a news report revealed he had confessed in 1995 to embezzling \$35,000 from the Council for Government Reform, a non-profit group of which he was executive director. "That's a complete surprise to me," said DeLay, who hired Mills to run his 1996 campaign.¹⁰¹

The same month, DeLay's ARMPAC and Alexander Strategy Group (and presumably the USFN and Blunt's PACs) were forced to move out of the townhouse, following neighbors' complaints that its use violated residential zoning laws because it could not be substantiated that anybody lived there.¹⁰²

DeLay's spokesman denied he had any connection to the USFN. "This has nothing to do with Tom DeLay," said Tony Rudy, his spokesman.¹⁰³ But DeLay signed a fundraising letter on the group's behalf in 1999,¹⁰⁴ and Buckham, the group's fundraiser, Mills, its executive director, and Ellis, the registered agent for the group to which the USFN transferred \$300,000, clearly were closely connected to DeLay.

Campaign Transfers Between DeLay and Blunt

After Blunt joined the Republican leadership team, DeLay was a generous contributor to him, and Blunt reciprocated by giving to various DeLay causes.

The first known contribution from DeLay to Blunt was made by an entity called "ARMPAC Convention," a secretive soft money PAC that DeLay established to raise money for the 2000 Republican National Convention. ARMPAC Convention contributed two donations totaling \$150,000 to Blunt's soft money PAC in 2000. The use of the money for non-convention purposes was consistent with DeLay and Blunt's plan, said Gregg Hartley, who served as Blunt's chief of staff before taking a lobbying job in 2004. The two had envisioned using some of the money raised by the committee for other purposes – even if donors were not so informed,¹⁰⁵ "We put together a budget for what we thought we would raise and spend on the convention, and whatever was left over, we were going to use to support candidates," said Hartley.¹⁰⁶

In addition to the \$150,000 Blunt's soft money PAC received from DeLay, Blunt's hard money PAC received \$5,000 contributions – the maximum amount allowed – from DeLay's hard money PAC in 2000, 2001 and 2002.¹⁰⁷

Blunt also has been a generous patron of DeLay's causes, including helping pay his legal bills. Blunt's political committees have contributed \$20,000 to DeLay's legal defense fund, which DeLay formed in response to a lawsuit filed against him by the Democratic Party over his alleged involvement with the USFN.¹⁰⁸ Blunt's PACs have also contributed \$17,000 to DeLay's Foundation.¹⁰⁹

Blunt and DeLay also appear to have coordinated assistance to the Missouri Republican Party, to which Blunt has contributed \$751,000 in PAC money since 1999.¹¹⁰ On Oct. 26, 2000, less than two weeks before voters were to decide on Blunt's son Matt's bid for secretary of state in Missouri, DeLay's Americans for a Republican Majority soft money PAC (which was distinct from the ARMPAC Convention PAC) contributed \$50,000 to the Missouri Republican Party. After the election, the party sent the money back to ARMPAC.¹¹¹

Blunt and DeLay Served as Unofficial Hospitality Chairs for 2000 RNC Convention

Blunt helped DeLay spearhead hospitality events during the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia that were financed by about \$1 million in corporate contributions.¹¹²

Members of Congress were treated to a richly appointed set of Union Pacific box cars – parked on a link of rail specially built for the event – where they could pop in for food and drink. Other perks Blunt and DeLay offered on the donors' largesse included a golf outing, music by Blues Traveler and on-call chauffeur-driven cars.¹¹³

Donors to the event, a list of which was obtained by *USA Today*, included traditional Blunt supporters United Parcel Service, Union Pacific, Philip Morris and SBC. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, a Jack Abramoff client, also contributed.¹¹⁴

Later, UPS furnished a Boeing 727 jet for Blunt and DeLay to shuttle lobbyists, political supporters and aides to a September 2000 party in Las Vegas. The event was largely intended as a “thank you” to corporations that had anted up for the convention festivities. But it also netted about \$50,000. UPS estimated the cost of providing its jet at \$30,000 to \$50,000, which it said was an in-kind contribution to DeLay's PAC. Blunt flew on the UPS plane.¹¹⁵

DeLay's PAC Contracted with a Consulting Firm that Aided Blunt

A contract between DeLay's ARMPAC and a media consulting firm, Red Sea LLC, called for the firm to provide aid to Blunt, as well as DeLay.

The firm furnished ARMPAC with messages and themes, developed e-mail lists and Web content, and served as a consultant for radio “actualities,” which are sound bites that are distributed to media outlets.

ARMPAC's contract with Red Sea identified Blunt as a recipient of Red Sea services. "Work with radio consultant Melissa Hopkins and Assistant Director to develop radio actuality message for Tom DeLay and Roy Blunt," it said. "Review with Radio Consultant the actuality program for 2001 and make recommendations for improvements; help facilitate the taping actualities by Tom DeLay/Roy Blunt and other members."¹¹⁶

Section V: With DeLay, Blunt Was in League with Felon and Former Super-Lobbyist Jack Abramoff

Membership in DeLay's inner circle carried the privilege of consorting with Jack Abramoff, the once high-flying DeLay confidant who is now being investigated by the Justice Department in connection with \$82 million he and a partner received in fees from Indian tribes. He has also pleaded guilty to fraud in his purchase of a Florida company that operated floating casinos.

Abramoff was an early champion and benefactor of Blunt, and later prevailed on the congressman for favors for his Indian gambling clients and offshore textile clients.

Abramoff and His Clients Made Generous Contributions to Blunt

Abramoff stepped up to help Blunt – with endorsements and money – soon after Blunt ascended to the leadership in 1999. “I’ve talked to a number of people around town who are very interested in trying to help Blunt,” Abramoff said shortly after Blunt became chief deputy whip. “I think they see this is a guy who’s going places, this is a guy who’s going to be [in] the mix of things.”¹¹⁷

The first FEC filing by Blunt’s federal PAC lists only two contributions for the maximum \$5,000, one of which was from Abramoff. Abramoff subsequently made three additional contributions to Blunt, bringing his total to \$8,500.¹¹⁸

Also donating in the first reporting period was the U.S. Family Network’s federal PAC, in which Abramoff was a significant player. In 1998 and 1999 the PAC raised \$40,075. Of that, \$11,000 was contributed by Abramoff (\$3,000), his wife (\$3,000) and one of his Indian gambling clients (the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, which gave \$5,000). The Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, which became a client of Abramoff’s in 2000, gave an additional \$5,000.¹¹⁹

The Concorde Garment Manufacturing Corp., a company operating in the Northern Mariana Islands and represented by Abramoff, contributed \$3,000 to Blunt’s soft money PAC in April 2000.¹²⁰

Abramoff even fed the campaign coffers of Blunt’s son, making a \$1,125 contribution in 2000 to Matt Blunt, who was running for Secretary of State in Missouri.¹²¹

Blunt Went to Bat for an Abramoff Indian Gambling Client

In May 2003, Todd Boulanger, a lobbyist who worked with Abramoff, drafted a letter to Interior Secretary Gale Norton, warning that “we hold you accountable” to prevent “reservation shopping” by the Jena Choctaw Tribe of Louisiana.¹²² The Louisiana Coushatta tribe, an Abramoff client, was fighting the Interior Department’s recognition of the Jenas because the Jenas would provide competition for the Coushattas’ casinos. Boulanger circulated the letter by e-mail to Abramoff, then solicited the signatures of Blunt, DeLay and House Speaker Dennis

Hastert. Abramoff soon got what he wanted: as a toned-down version of Boulanger's letter, bearing the signatures of Blunt, DeLay and Hastert, was delivered to Norton in June.¹²³

Blunt signed two other letters to Norton opposing the Jena Choctaw's efforts to open a casino.¹²⁴

Blunt Provided Access to Abramoff and His Employees

On at least four occasions in 2000 and 2001, Blunt or his aides met with Abramoff, or other lobbyists with whom Abramoff worked, in connection with Abramoff's representation of a client from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).¹²⁵ Abramoff represented two such clients in 2000-2001, the CNMI, which has "political union" status with the United States, and the Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association, a trade group.¹²⁶ Three of the meetings occurred in a single month.

These meetings are disclosed in records obtained by the Associated Press from the commonwealth. The Commonwealth hired Abramoff to beat back a movement to impose U.S. labor standards, including the minimum wage.¹²⁷ The records show:

- Abramoff's lobbying firm charged a Northern Mariana client for a meeting on Nov. 27, 2000 with Blunt aide Trevor Blackann.¹²⁸
- A member of Abramoff's Mariana lobbying team met on Sept. 5, 2001 with a Blunt staffer to discuss strategy on minimum wage legislation.¹²⁹
- A member of Abramoff's Mariana lobbying team met with Blunt on Sept. 9, 2001 concerning a minimum wage bill sponsored by Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.).¹³⁰
- A member of Abramoff's Mariana lobbying team met with a Blunt staffer on Sept. 30, 2001 to discuss issues, including the minimum wage legislation.¹³¹

Blunt's Former Chief of Staff Recruited Abramoff to Work for Cassidy and Associates

Gregg Hartley, Blunt's former chief of staff and longtime confidant, recruited Abramoff in March 2004 to work at Cassidy and Associates after Abramoff wore out his welcome at Greenberg Traurig.¹³²

Abramoff had resigned from the law firm after he "disclosed to the firm for the first time personal transactions and related conduct which are unacceptable to the firm" in the words of Richard A. Rosenbaum, a member of Greenberg Traurig's executive committee.¹³³

Hartley, who joined Cassidy in spring 2003, is vice chairman and chief operating officer at the firm.¹³⁴

Blunt Enjoyed “Friend of Owner” Free Meal Status at Abramoff’s Restaurant

Blunt was among the lawmakers who was listed as a “Friend of Owner” at Abramoff’s pricey, Washington, D.C., restaurant, Signatures. Such individuals were designated for complimentary meals. Former employees of the restaurant said that Blunt did not dine frequently at Signatures, and it is not known how many, if any, free meals he received.¹³⁵

Section VI: Blunt's Political Empire Benefits His Family

In a vivid example of how money and influence reinforce one another, Blunt's political success has been instrumental to his sons' blazing rise to the top of Missouri's political and lobbying cultures, which in turn has created new opportunities for both special interests and other politicians to curry favor with the House leader.

Matt Blunt, Roy's oldest son, followed his father's footsteps by becoming Missouri secretary of state in 2000, at age 30. He then became governor in 2004.¹³⁶ Matt Blunt has benefited handsomely from political contributions directly from his father's accounts and their wellspring in congressional influence-peddling; from the Missouri Republican Party, which itself received substantial contributions from Rep. Blunt, and directly from Washington politicians and lobbyists, who write their checks with an eye cocked toward the candidate's father.

Andrew Blunt, a Missouri lobbyist, established a lobbying juggernaut within a year of graduating from law school, largely by signing up clients who happen to be among his father's most generous campaign contributors. While in law school in 2000, Andrew Blunt was employed as a "senior consultant" by Thompson Communications.¹³⁷ Thompson is a Missouri political consulting and fundraising firm that has received more than \$2.5 million in fees from Roy Blunt's political committees since 2001.¹³⁸

Matt Blunt has Received Direct and Indirect Contributions Directly and Indirectly from Rep. Blunt

Shortly after ascending to chief deputy whip, Blunt began amassing the funds from interest groups that enabled him to generously assist his son, Matt's, bids to become secretary of state in 2000 and governor in 2004.

Matt Blunt won the secretary of state's job, assuming the position his father held from 1985 to 1993. He won by a six-point margin, with 51 percent of the vote, and was the only Missouri Republican to win a statewide race in 2000.¹³⁹

But it was through the Missouri Republican Party and Washington lobbyists and politicians that Matt Blunt felt his father's influence most profoundly. Blunt's leadership PAC contributed \$100,000 to the Missouri Republican Party on June 15, 2000.¹⁴⁰ The party proceeded to spend \$160,000 on behalf of Matt Blunt's race.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile, Roy Blunt's congressional colleagues were busy keeping his son's campaign coffers flush. Matt Blunt received more than \$65,000 from 84 House GOP lawmakers – meaning that 38 percent of Republican caucus members saw fit to contribute to a candidate for secretary of state in Missouri.¹⁴² DeLay's PAC contributed \$1,500.¹⁴³

Lobbyists and executives living out-of-state also showed an uncommon interest in this Missouri contest. *The Hill*, a newspaper that covers Congress, observed: "Many of the contributors

seemingly lacked a direct interest in the down-ballot state race, but had significant interests pending before Matt Blunt's father."¹⁴⁴

Contributions included \$4,000 from executives at Freddie Mac, the giant mortgage company, and \$1,000 each from a lobbyist living in Great Falls, Va., and his wife. Telecommunications entities contributed more than \$10,000; railway companies contributed more than \$6,000, and a top lobbyist for Altria, which had recently changed its name from Philip Morris, contributed the \$1,000.¹⁴⁵

Ken Warren, a professor of political science at St. Louis University, characterized Matt Blunt's boost from his father as "typical politics." But, he also speculated that Roy Blunt's help made the difference. "He probably would have lost because it was a close race," Warren said.¹⁴⁶

Roy Blunt once again aided son Matt in his successful bid for governor in 2004. For starters, he contributed \$651,000 in soft money to the Missouri Republican Party between Election Day 2000 and Election Day 2002, when Blunt was forced by law to terminate his soft money PAC.

As in 2000, Roy Blunt's influence was also reflected in the many contributions Matt received from Washington lobbyists for his 2004 gubernatorial race. By October 2004, Matt Blunt had received more than \$30,000 in contributions from nearly three dozen Washington lobbyists.¹⁴⁷

"A lot of people think they're currying favor with Roy," said Woody Cozad, former chairman of the Missouri Republican Party. "There's got to be some of that in there. I'm not a naïf."¹⁴⁸

Some of Blunt's Largest Donors Have Hired Andrew Blunt to Lobby

Still a few months shy of his 30th birthday, Andrew Blunt has amassed a list of lobbying clients the envy of his Missouri lobbying colleagues – a list that bears a striking resemblance to his father's roster of most loyal campaign contributors.¹⁴⁹ In fact, four of Roy Blunt's top seven campaign contributors since 1999 have hired Andrew Blunt as a lobbyist.¹⁵⁰

Last year, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* characterized the rise of Blunt's lobbying career as "meteoric."¹⁵¹

Andrew Blunt was graduated from the University of Missouri School of Law in 2001 at age 25. He began work as a lobbyist that year, and within two years, his clients included such heavyweights as Philip Morris, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, United Parcel Service and SBC.

These companies, including Philip Morris subsidiaries Kraft Foods and Miller Brewing (Philip Morris sold the majority of its interest in Miller in 2002) have collectively contributed \$622,737 to Roy Blunt's campaigns since 1999. [Figure 12]

Andrew Blunt's ties to Philip Morris are perhaps most striking. He began lobbying for the company in January 2002, then also signed up two Philip Morris subsidiaries before September. In November, his father drew the scorn of Republican colleagues for surreptitiously adding a Philip Morris-sought provision into the bill creating the Department of Homeland Security. [See

Section III: Blunt Has Performed Special Favors for His Big Contributors] In October 2003, Roy Blunt married Philip Morris lobbyist Abigail Perlman.¹⁵²

Andrew Blunt also represents Sentrus Inc., a Chesterfield, Mo.-based defense contractor that has furnished Roy Blunt, and candidates financed by Roy Blunt's leadership PAC, with at least five trips aboard its corporate jet. [See Section II: Blunt's Corporate Subsidized Travel]

Figure 12: Lobbying Clients of Andrew Blunt Who Have Made Substantial Contributions to Roy Blunt's Political Committees

Company	Date Started	Companies' Contributions to Blunt Committees, 1999-Present
Philip Morris*	Jan. 7, 2002	\$217,998
Burlington Northern Santa Fe	March 6, 2002	\$106,999
Miller Brewing	Aug. 20, 2002	(See Philip Morris)
Kraft Foods North America	Aug. 20, 2002	(See Philip Morris)
United Parcel Service	Sept. 30, 2002	\$96,200
SBC	Jan, 24, 2003	\$201,540
Total		\$622,737

Source: Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission.

* Includes contributions attributed to parent company Altria, from subsidiary Kraft Foods and from Miller Brewing, a former subsidiary in which Altria retains about a one-fourth stake.

Endnotes

- ¹ This report originally stated that Blunt's committees had paid \$485,485 to Alexander Strategy Group. The figure was overstated because two payments, for \$10,000 and \$5,000, were incorrectly included twice in the FEC data provided to Public Citizen.
- ² Thomas Edsall, "House Majority Whip Exerts Influence by Way of K Street," *Washington Post*, May 17, 2005.
- ³ Blunt's campaign committee is named Friends of Roy Blunt. His federal PAC is named Rely on Your Beliefs, as was his non-federal PAC before it was required to shut down.
- ⁴ Figures represent Public Citizen analysis of Blunt's federal and non-federal committees. Data provided by the Federal Election Commission, IRS and Missouri Ethics Commission. Federal Election Commission data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics.
- ⁵ Public Citizen analysis of Federal Election Commission records. Data provided by the Center for Public Integrity.
- ⁶ Public Citizen analysis of Federal Election Commission records and lobbying disclosure records filed with the Secretary of the Senate.
- ⁷ Jeffrey H. Birnbaum and James V. Grimaldi, "Lobby Firm Is Casualty of Abramoff Investigation," *Washington Post*, Jan. 10, 2006.
- ⁸ Josephine Hearn, "Ex-Blunt aide spreads wings on K St.," *The Hill*, November 18, 2003.
- ⁹ Josephine Hearn, "Ex-Blunt aide spreads wings on K St.," *The Hill*, November 18, 2003.
- ¹⁰ Analysis of data from Public Citizen's Revolving Doors database, available at www.lobbyinginfo.org.
- ¹¹ Lobbying disclosure records maintained by the Secretary of the Senate and Politics and Policy Health Mandates, American Health Line, Nov. 4, 1997.
- ¹² Thomas Edsall, "House Majority Whip Exerts Influence by Way of K Street," *Washington Post*, May 17, 2005 and Jonathan Weisman, "Abramoff Probe Turns Focus on DeLay Aide," *Washington Post*, Jan. 8, 2005.
- ¹³ Lobbying disclosure records filed with the Secretary of the Senate.
- ¹⁴ R. Jeffrey Smith and Derek Willis, "Corporate Flights by Lawmakers Frequent," *Washington Post*, May 5, 2005 and Michael Forsythe, "Congress Flies in Style on Company Jets," *Bloomberg*, April 21, 2005.
- ¹⁵ Michael Forsythe, "Congress Flies in Style on Company Jets," *Bloomberg*, April 21, 2005 and R. Jeffrey Smith and Derek Willis, "Corporate Flights by Lawmakers Frequent," *Washington Post*, May 5, 2005.
- ¹⁶ Matt Kelley and Jim Drinkard, "Contractor spends big on key lawmakers," *USA Today*, Nov. 29, 2005.
- ¹⁷ Public Citizen analysis of Federal Election Commission Data, 2001-2006. Data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics. It is not possible to tell from campaign finance reports if individual payments corresponded with individual trips. In some cases, the campaign reports multiple payments for in-kind airfare to a corporation on the same day, suggesting payments for different individuals aboard the same flights. In other cases, a single payment might have covered two or more trips. In the absence of consistent reporting procedures, this study treats each in-kind airfare expenditure as a round flight trip.
- ¹⁸ Public Citizen analysis of Federal Election Commission Data, 2001-2006. Data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics.
- ¹⁹ Interviews with salespeople for two charter jet services.
- ²⁰ Public Citizen analysis of Federal Election Commission Data, 2001-2006. Data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics.
- ²¹ Interview with salesman for Washington, D.C., charter jet service.
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