

Title: Executives Ante Up for Access to Bush
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Chemical Executives have made an early financial commitment to Texas governor George W. Bush, raising more than \$200,000 for the Republican's presidential campaign.

Executives attending a fundraiser hosted by Dow Chemical chairman and CEO and CMA chairman William Stavropoulos and CMA president and CEO Fred Webber during CMA's annual meeting this June wrote checks to Bush worth more than \$100,000. Separately, OxyChem president and CEO Roger Hirl has raised at least \$100,000 for the campaign.

CMA does not plan to endorse a presidential candidate, but the Bush push reflects its multiyear effort to raise the industry's political spending. CMA plans to boost political action committee (PAC) spending to \$200,000 for the 2000 elections, up from \$135,000 for the 1998 campaign. It also plans to tap the collective power of its members' PACs by raising \$600,000 at 40 chemical industry fundraisers for candidates throughout the U.S.

Stavropoulos says senior executives look favorably upon Bush's gubernatorial record. "He has a proven track record in Texas, which demonstrates that he understands the vital connection between a strong economy and a strong society," says Stavropoulos. "He also has an unusual ability to bring together people from different backgrounds, interests, and ideologies." His own background in business began just upstream of chemicals: Bush worked in oil exploration and drilling in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Attracting support from Democrats—who control the Texas House and are one vote shy of a Senate majority—has enabled Bush to pass a raft of industry-supported legislation during his five years as governor. These include limits on product liability suits, audit privilege protections, electricity deregulation, property tax cuts, and voluntary permitting for chemical plants and refineries with grandfathered emissions.

Mark Nelson, CMA's v.p./federal relations, who joined CMA after retiring as DuPont's top Washington lobbyist early this year, says many in the industry think Bush could clear Washington gridlock, especially on polarized environmental issues such as Superfund and regulatory reform. He expects little improvement if Vice President Al Gore prevails. "Gore has not shown an ability to work well with the Republicans," says Nelson.

Environmentalists blame Republican leaders for the environmental policy gridlock, and say Bush's coalition-building has been exaggerated. Ken Kramer, director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter (Austin), says Bush signed on to environmental provisions in the deregulation bill crafted by House Democrats rather than push for their inclusion. "Bush

has never shown any interest in the environment. It's barely on his radar screen," says Kramer.

Environmental issues have played little part in his campaign other than his call to "reduce regulations that strangle enterprise." One lobbyist says that during his live, satellite-broadcast speech to the chemical industry fundraiser, Bush backtracked on his statement in May that global warming is real. Bush assured the chemical executives that he would not endorse the Kyoto treaty on greenhouse gases.

Only isolated support can be found for Bush's Republican and Democratic rivals. Avery Dennison chairman Charles Miller and Occidental Petroleum chairman Ray Irani have each sent \$2,000 to Gore, and Procter & Gamble chairman Edwin Artzt has given \$2,000 to former senator Bill Bradley (D., NJ).

There is scattered support for several other Republicans including Senator John McCain (AZ) and former cabinet member Elizabeth Dole, who has the backing of fellow Nixon White House aide Jon Huntsman, chairman of Huntsman Corp. He chaired a \$500,000 Washington fundraiser for Dole this spring. Huntsman says Dole is a "truly stalwart American," an astute businesswoman, and a strong advocate for the industry. "She's not a radical environmentalist like Gore," he says. Huntsman says his family hopes Dole and Bush share the ticket (Jon Huntsman Jr., Huntsman's vice chair, serves on Bush's finance committee).

Webber says that the industry can "shift gears pretty quickly" if Dole or another candidate beats Bush for the nomination. But what will the anti-Gore rhetoric and pro-Bush spending mean for industry if Gore wins? Citing tension between Gore and industry, Webber says there is little to lose. "We'll probably always have an adversarial relationship," he says. A Bush victory, he says, will give the industry "access to a leader that's ready, willing, and able to listen."

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