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## Rep Laney Cashed \$1.7 Million From Campaign Coffers

Cash cascade went undocumented

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By: [Seton Motley](#)

Former Speaker of the House and Rep James E. "Pete" Laney (Democrat – Hale Center) cashed checks drawn from his campaign accounts totaling \$1,696,683.00, between August 1995 and December 2003, for undisclosed and unreviewed reimbursements for the use of his personal 8-passenger Piper plane and his 4-seat Cessna, for campaign related travel. The eight-year aircraft cash cascade went undocumented at the Texas Ethics Commission. Over 99% of the money went to Laney himself, with the other 1% used for periodic payments to three different pilots.

That comes out to \$552.42 each day, every day, for eight and a half years.

This story received some press attention in 1996, but several key components have changed, grown or developed since then. The money that Laney has paid himself has nearly tripled since then. There are also new questions regarding his handling of the payments to his pilots, and his lack of payment of payroll taxes for these employees and property taxes for the two planes.

There will be much more on this tomorrow.

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