

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 45th Legislature (1996)

HOUSE

RESOLUTION NO. 1057

By: Cozort

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution calling for an investigation of certain PAC contributions; providing methods for conducting investigation; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, the Oklahoma Legislature adopted Senate Bill No. 263, known as the "tort reform law", on May 23, 1995; and

WHEREAS, The Conservative Review newspaper has made troubling disclosures regarding political donations to the Democrats of the Oklahoma State Senate Political Action Committee by the Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Association Political Action Committee and by individual trial lawyers during the time period that Senate Bill No. 263 was being considered in 1995; and

WHEREAS, The Conservative Review specifically disclosed that the amount of donations to the Senate Democrats' PAC from the trial lawyers' PAC and from individual trial lawyers was \$33,600; and

WHEREAS, The Conservative Review also disclosed that 17 individual trial lawyers contributed a total of \$17,500 to the Senate Democrats' PAC on May 18, 1995, the very same day that a shell bill for Senate Bill No. 263 was sent to a conference committee for final drafting; and

WHEREAS, this large amount of contributions came in the same time period tort reform legislation was being considered by the

Senate, representing another black mark on the way business is done in Oklahoma and surpassing the bounds of suspicion; and

WHEREAS, state law, specifically Rule 257:20-1-9 of the Rules of the Ethics Commission, 74 O.S. Supp. 1995, Ch. 62, App., prohibits a state officer from soliciting or receiving anything of value in return for being influenced in the performance of an official act; and

WHEREAS, state law prohibits private persons from giving anything of value to a public officer to influence official actions; and

WHEREAS, these contributions should be investigated further by a state agency or investigative body with subpoena power to determine a variety of issues, including, but not limited to, whether the Senate Democrats' PAC or any member of the State Senate demanded contributions in exchange for favorable legislation, how the money was collected by the trial lawyers, whether the money was collected by a trial lawyer and submitted to the Senate Democrats' PAC or whether the contributions were collected by a person or persons representing the Senate Democrats' PAC, whether the trial lawyers expected legislation favorable to them in exchange for the donations, or whether Senate Democrats agreed to pass favorable legislation in return for the contributions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 45TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the House of Representatives demands that a full investigation be initiated into contributions made by trial lawyers to the Democrats of the Oklahoma State Senate Political Action Committee in April and May 1995.

THAT the House of Representatives requests that the investigation be conducted in one of the following methods:

1. That Governor Frank Keating order an investigation by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and turn the results over to the appropriate district attorney; or

2. That the Office of the Attorney General gather and present evidence to the current multicounty grand jury regarding the contributions.

THAT copies of this resolution be dispatched to Governor Frank Keating and Attorney General Drew Edmondson.

45-2-9648

SD