



NAMES IN THE NEWS: JOSÉ CUEVAS

TEXAS ALCOHOL COMMISSIONER SEEKS A ROUND OF DONATIONS FOR GOV. PERRY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION HEAD JOSÉ CUEVAS FOUND HIMSELF IN THE limelight last week when *The Dallas Morning News* reported he had solicited political contributions from restaurateurs — part of the community he regulates — for his boss, Gov. Rick Perry.¹

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) “regulates all phases of the alcoholic beverage industry in Texas. The duties of the commission include regulating sales, taxation, importation, manufacturing, transporting, and advertising of alcoholic beverages.”² Cuevas was appointed to the Commission in 2004, and Perry named him Presiding Officer in October 2008. Cuevas owns JumBurrito Restaurants.³

Cuevas sent an email to over 200 people involved with restaurants that have alcohol service, asking for \$1,000 to \$5,000 donations to Perry's campaign.

This report examines contributions made in the 2006 and 2008 elections by businesses affected by TABC: restaurants, bars, liquor stores, beer brewers and bottlers, wine and distilled spirits makers, alcohol distributors.

Analysis shows that restaurant and liquor-related contributors gave consistently and significantly to Gov. Perry and his party. They gave Perry \$539,733 in 2006 and \$457,003 in 2008. Perry was not up for election in 2008, but continued to salt away money, as is common practice. These contributors also heavily favored Republicans over Democrats in both election cycles; Republicans got 69 percent of all contributions in 2006 and 67 percent in 2008.

Restaurant and liquor-related contributors gave Perry \$539,733 in 2006 and \$457,003 in 2008

Cuevas himself made no political contributions to Perry in either 2006 or 2008, though he was a steady, if small, giver to Republican candidates. Lieutenant Gov. David Dewhurst received the most from Cuevas, at \$5,000 over the two cycles. Cuevas also consistently favored giving to Supreme Court candidates.

¹ Wayne Slater, “TABC Chief, a Perry Appointee, Solicits Donations for Governor,” *Dallas Morning News*, Thursday, Oct. 22, 2009, available from <http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/102209dntexfundraising.3ebd400.html>, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.

² “About Us > The Organization,” *Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission*, available from http://www.tabc.state.tx.us/about_us/the_organization.asp, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.

³ “About Us > Commissioners,” *Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission*, available from http://www.tabc.state.tx.us/about_us/commissioners.asp, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.

2006 ELECTION

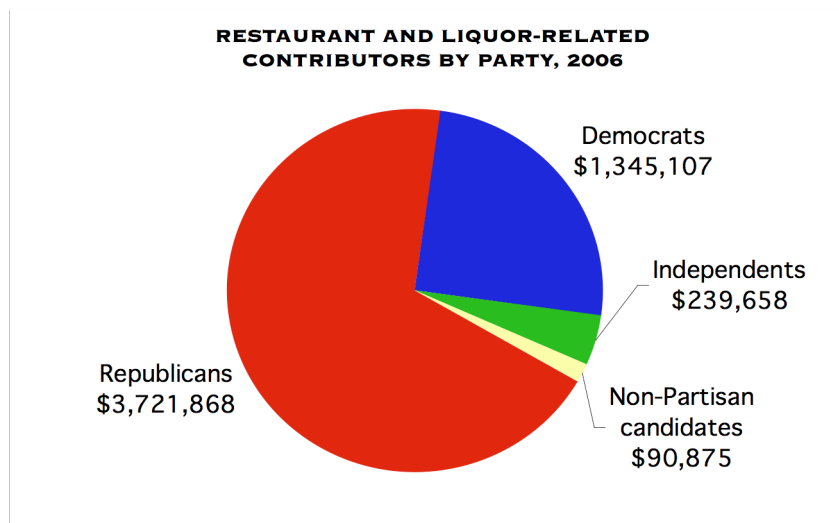
This report examines contributions made in the 2006 and 2008 elections by businesses affected by Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission: restaurants, bars, liquor stores, beer brewers and bottlers, wine and distilled spirits makers, alcohol distributors.

The defined set of donors gave \$5.4 million to all candidates and party committees in 2006. They gave less in 2008, weighing in with close to \$4 million. In 2006, the top restaurant and liquor-related contributors gave 74 percent of all contributions in the industry, or \$4 million of the total \$5.4 million.

TOP 10 RESTAURANT AND LIQUOR-RELATED CONTRIBUTORS IN 2006

CONTRIBUTOR	TOTAL ⁴
BG Distribution Partners	\$945,750
Glazer's Family of Companies	\$692,140
Silver Eagle Distributors	\$404,490
L&F Distributors	\$368,582
Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas	\$318,092
Licensed Beverage Distributors	\$307,709
Landry's Restaurants	\$301,164
Texas Restaurant Association	\$246,353
Andrews Distributing	\$210,430
Desert Eagle Distributing	\$200,586
TOTAL	\$3,995,296

Restaurant and liquor-related businesses gave significantly more money to Republicans than to Democrats in 2006.



⁴ Totals include contributions made by individuals associated with these companies

The industry gave \$539,733 to Gov. Perry's successful bid in 2006.

**TOP RESTAURANT AND
LIQUOR-RELATED CONTRIBUTORS TO PERRY, 2006**

CONTRIBUTOR	TOTAL
BG Distribution Partners*	\$100,000
J. Robert & Sherry Brown (Desert Eagle Distributing)†	\$85,727
John L. & Barbara Elizabeth Nau (Silver Eagle Distributing)‡	\$60,784
Tilman J. & Paige Fertitta (Landry's Restaurants)** and Landry's Restaurants	\$56,924
Bennett Joe Glazer (Glazer's Family of Companies)	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$353,435

* BG Distribution Partners was a "partnership of the owners and management of San Antonio's Block Distributing Co. and the Goldring family of New Orleans."⁵ Republic Beverage Company came about through a merger of the Block, Dreeben, and Goldring families in 1996⁶.

†J. Robert Brown is President and Chair of Desert Eagle Distributing

‡ John L. Nau III is President and CEO of Silver Eagle Distributing

**Tilman Fertitta is CEO of Landry's Restaurants

Cuevas himself contributed \$5,750 in 2006 to winning Republican candidates, but none to Perry. Cuevas devoted most of his money to Supreme Court candidates: \$2,000 to Don Willett, \$750 to David Medina, and \$500 to Phil Johnson.

⁵ Chris Carroll, "Another Round: San Antonio Adds Second Big Liquor Distributor to Tarrant," *Houston Business Journal*, June 6, 1997, available from <http://houston.bizjournals.com/houston/stories/1997/06/09/story7.html>, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.

⁶ "Company Overview," *Republic National Distributing Company*, available from http://www.rndc-usa.com/about/company_overview.asp, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.

2008 ELECTION

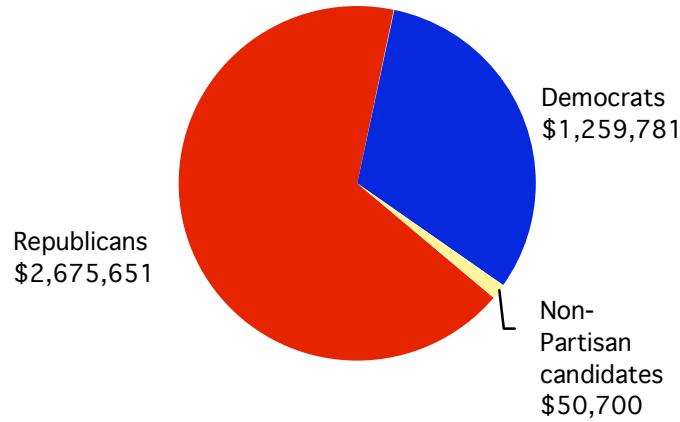
The top contributors in 2008 gave 78 percent of the industry's contributions.

TOP 11 RESTAURANT AND LIQUOR-RELATED CONTRIBUTORS IN 2008

CONTRIBUTOR	TOTAL ⁷
L&F Distributors	\$508,778
Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas	\$469,928
Silver Eagle Distributors	\$408,492
Texas Restaurant Association	\$316,372
BG Distribution Partners	\$310,750
Landry's Restaurants	\$268,810
Licensed Beverage Distributors	\$224,926
Andrews Distributing	\$189,773
Beer Alliance of Texas	\$159,639
Desert Eagle Distributing	\$139,082
Texas Package Stores Association	\$134,898
TOTAL	\$3,131,448

Restaurant and liquor-related businesses favored Republicans in 2008 as well, but not quite as heavily.

RESTAURANT AND LIQUOR-RELATED CONTRIBUTORS BY PARTY, 2008



⁷ Totals include contributions made by individuals associated with these companies.

The industry gave \$457,003 to Gov. Perry during the 2008 cycle in which he didn't run.

**TOP RESTAURANT AND
LIQUOR-RELATED CONTRIBUTORS TO PERRY, 2008**

CONTRIBUTOR	TOTAL
Tilman J. & Paige Fertitta (Landry's Restaurants)*, and Landry's Restaurants	\$145,410
J. Robert & Sherry Brown (Desert Eagle Distributing)†	\$100,000
BG Distribution Partners‡	\$55,000
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Dreeben (Republic Beverage Company)‡	\$25,000
Bennett Joe Glazer (Glazer's Family of Companies)**	\$25,000
Mrs. & Mr. Anthony Lamantia (L&F Distributors)	\$25,000
John L. & Barbara Elizabeth Nau (Silver Eagle Distributing)††	\$25,000
Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas	\$25,000
TOTAL	\$425,410

*Tilman Fertitta is CEO of Landry's Restaurants

†J Robert Brown is President and Chair of Desert Eagle Distributing

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**Bennett Joe Glazer is CEO of the Glazer Family of Companies.

†† John L. Nau III is President and CEO of Silver Eagle Distributing

Cuevas gave \$8,200 to in 2008 to winning Republican candidates and officeholders who did not run, and \$1,000 to two unsuccessful Republican House candidates. Again, Cuevas gave nothing to Perry but continued to support Supreme Court candidates, giving Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson \$1,000 for his race, \$500 to Don Willett, and \$750 to Phil Johnson.

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⁸ Chris Carroll, "Another Round: San Antonio Adds Second Big Liquor Distributor to Tarrant," *Houston Business Journal*, June 6, 1997, available from <http://houston.bizjournals.com/houston/stories/1997/06/09/story7.html>, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.

⁹ "Company Overview," *Republic National Distributing Company*, available from http://www.rndc-usa.com/about/company_overview.asp, accessed Oct. 28, 2009.