



SUPER BOWL LII | NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS VS. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES | 6:30 P.M., NBC

THE BRADY SHOW

In Sports
The long-running drama returns tonight. What plot twists await our superhero?

Tampa Bay Times

FLORIDA'S BEST NEWSPAPER

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*** SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2018 | \$2

'Stand your ground' in chaos

Questions surround the revised law, which puts the burden on the state.

BY LAURA C. MOREL
Times Staff Writer

Seven months after lawmakers revised the state's controversial "stand your ground" law, the criminal justice system has been left in disarray as judges hand down conflicting rulings trying to answer one question:

Can the new statute be applied to cases that had not yet gone to trial before it became law in June?

That legal quandary has stalled cases across Florida as prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges wait for clarity from the appellate courts. Meanwhile, lawyers keep filing appeals, including for at least four defendants in Tampa Bay.

"Now we're in a position where we have to figure out how to wade through this confusion and gridlock," said Hillsborough State Attorney Andrew Warren. "It's a waste of taxpayer money and it disrupts our system when we don't have consistency."

The fate of those defendants — many of whom are accused of taking a life — could ultimately be decided by the state's highest court.

"Some judges are saying yes and some judges are saying no," said Pinellas-Pasco Public Defender Bob Dillingner. "It's obviously something that really needs to be resolved by the Florida Supreme Court."

Under the state's "stand your ground" law, citizens are justified in using deadly force without the need to retreat if they believe they or others face "imminent death or great bodily harm."

Floridians have always had the right to defend themselves. See STATUTE, 10A

IN LOCAL

Term-limit time?

Proposals under consideration by state legislators would set term limits for members of local school boards. 1B

IN LATITUDES

Hamilton in Tampa

It's official. The hugely popular musical lands next February as part of the 2018-19 Straß Broadway season. 2L

TODAY'S WEATHER

Warm pattern

8 a.m. 59° Noon 72° 4 p.m. 70° 8 p.m. 65°
60% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports

INDEX

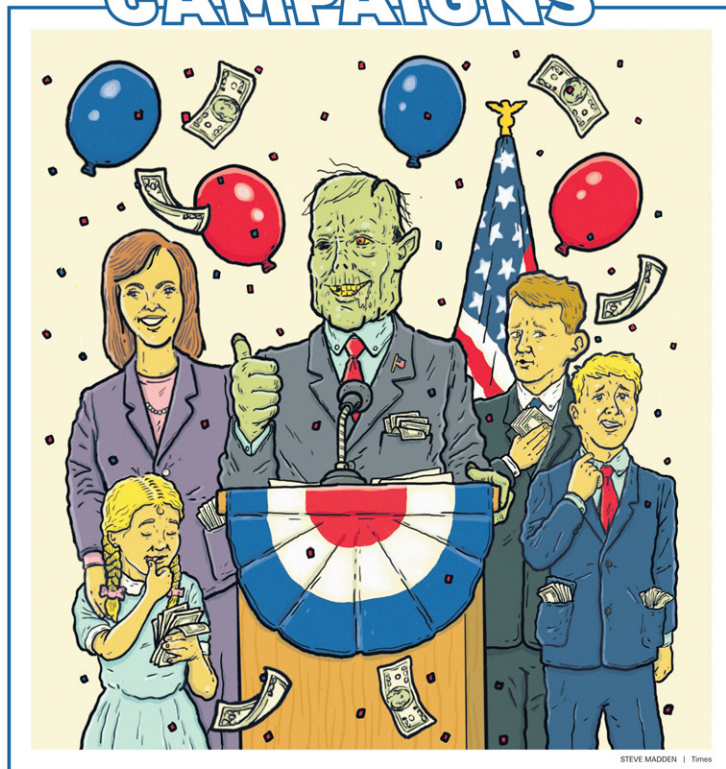
Arts 2-3L Crossword 5P, F
Astrology 4F Editorials 2P
Books 5-6L Letters 2P
Business 1D Lottery 2A
Classified F Travel 4L



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A TAMPA BAY TIMES/10NEWS WTSP INVESTIGATION

ZOMBIE CAMPAIGNS



STEVE MADDEN | Times

THE CANDIDATES ARE NO LONGER RUNNING — SOME ARE DEAD — BUT THEIR CAMPAIGNS KEEP GOING. AND KEEP SPENDING.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL, ELI MURRAY, CONNIE HUMBURG AND NOAH PRANSKY | Times/10News WTSP Staff Writers

WASHINGTON D.C. It's been more than a decade since South Florida Rep. Mark Foley was forced out of Congress for sending sexually explicit text messages to teenage boys.

But Foley tapped his congressional campaign fund to line on the Palm Beach social circuit four times in early 2017, ending with a \$450 luncheon at the Forum Club of the Palm Beaches.

Then there's baseball-star-turned-senator Jim Bunning of Kentucky. He paid his daughter \$94,800 from campaign money in the four years after he left office, stopping only when he'd bled his fund dry.

And over the past 17 months, political adviser Dylan Beesley paid his firm more than \$100,000 from the campaign account of Hawaii Congressman Mark Takai for "consulting services."

It's hard to imagine what Beesley advised. Takai was dead that whole time.

In their political afterlife, former politicians and their staffers are hoarding unspent campaign donations for years and using them to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members, an investigation by

the Tampa Bay Times, 10News WTSP and TEGNA-owned TV stations found. Their spending makes a mockery of one of the fundamental principles of America's campaign finance laws: Donations must be spent only on politics, not politicians' personal lives.

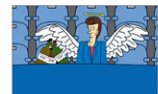
Times/10News reporters analyzed more than 1 million records detailing the spending of former U.S. lawmakers and federal candidates. They found roughly 100 of these zombie campaigns, still spending even after their candidate's political career had been laid to rest.

To be sure, history is full of politicians stretching the definition of legitimate campaign expenses. But most of those cases at least involved a campaign of some sort. By contrast, former Rep. Steven LaTorette, R-Ohio, had been out of office for more than three years when he spent \$4,555 on Ohio State football tickets. Former Rep. Jim Turner, D-Texas, rented office space from his father's hardware company for \$9,600 and paid his wife more than \$30,000 to handle paperwork in the six years after he left office.

Other ex-candidates spent leftover See ZOMBIE, 4A

SEE HOW 102 ZOMBIES SPENT THEIR MONEY

Browse the full database of zombie campaigns identified by the Times/10News WTSP at tampabay.com/zombiedatabase



'ZOMBIE ACCOUNTS OF CAPITOL HILL'

Watch 10News WTSP's zombie campaign music video at tampabay.com/zombiecampaigns

Read the pdf or click here to read online

Zombie Campaigns

The campaign is over. The candidate might be dead.
But the spending never stops.

By **CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL, ELI MURRAY,
CONNIE HUMBURG AND NOAH PRANSKY**
Times/WTSP Staff Writers

*Published online Jan. 31,
in print Feb. 4.*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — It's been more than a decade since South Florida Rep. Mark Foley was forced out of Congress for sending sexual text messages to teenage boys.

But Foley tapped his congressional campaign fund to dine on the Palm Beach social circuit four times in early 2017, ending with a \$450 luncheon at the Forum Club of the Palm Beaches.

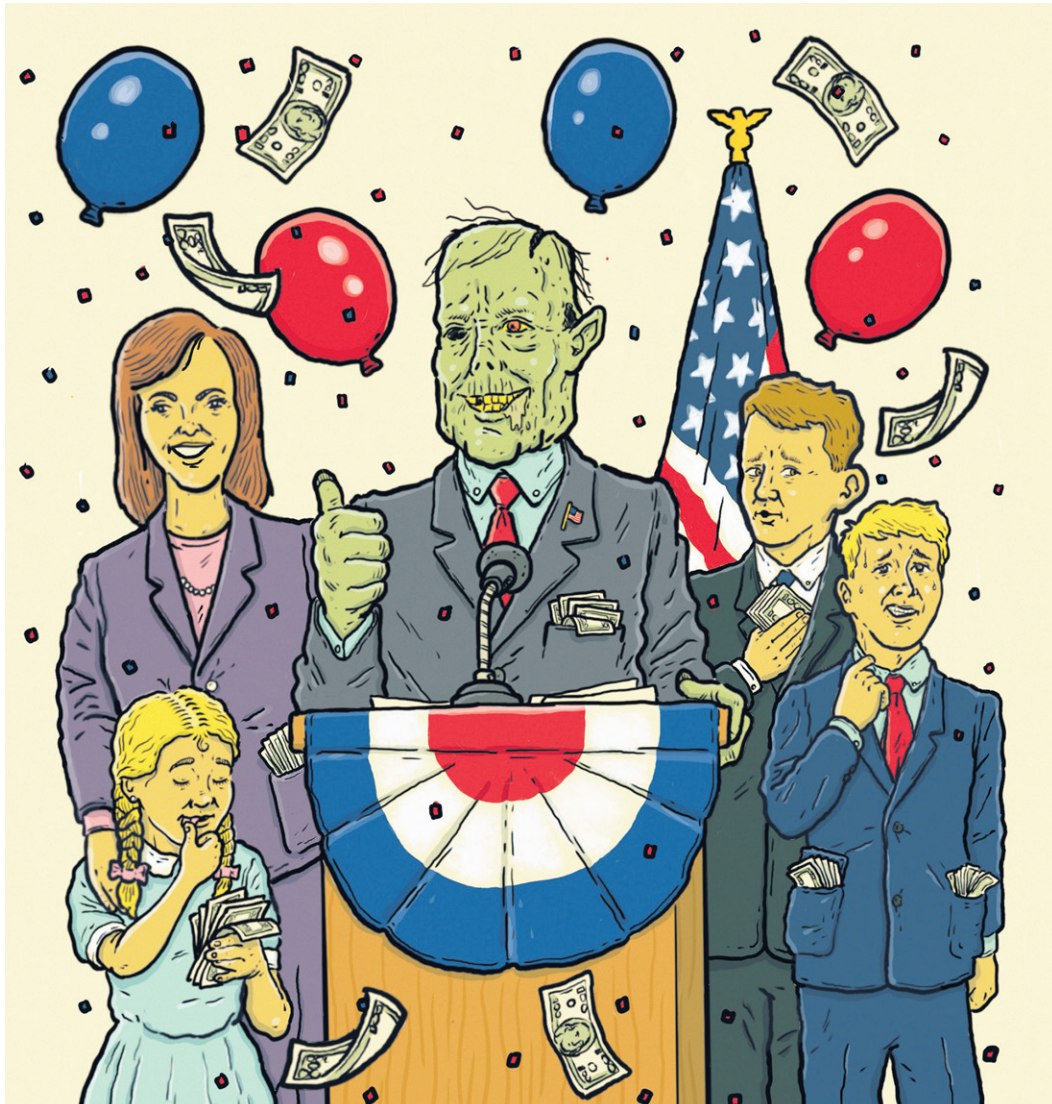
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turned-senator Jim Bunning of Kentucky. He paid his daughter \$94,800 from campaign money in the four years after he left office, only stopping when he'd bled his fund dry.

And over the past 17 months, political advisor Dylan Beesley paid his firm more than \$100,000 from the campaign account of Hawaii Congressman Mark Takai for "consulting services."

It's hard to imagine what Beesley advised. Takai was dead that whole time.

In their political afterlife, former





“GET OUT OF HERE”: Robin Tallon Jr., a former representative from South Carolina, left Congress in 1993, but is still spending campaign money today. In this screenshot from video, a reporter from Charlotte TV station WCNC tries to interview Tallon. Tallon turned the reporter away and kicked him off his property. Tallon reimbursed himself \$31,000 without ever explaining why.

politicians and their staffers are hoarding unspent campaign donations for years and using them to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members, an investigation by the *Tampa Bay Times*, *10News WTSP* and TEG-NA-owned TV stations found.

Their spending makes a mockery of one of the fundamental principles of America’s campaign finance laws: Donations must be spent only on politics, not politicians’ personal lives.

Times/WTSP reporters analyzed more than 1 million records detailing the spending of former U.S. lawmakers and federal candidates. They found roughly 100 of these zombie campaigns, still spending even though their candidate’s political career had been laid to rest.

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By contrast, former Rep. Steven LaTourette, R-Ohio, had been out of office for more than three years when he spent \$4,555 on Ohio State football tickets. Former Rep. Jim Turner, D-Texas, rented office space from his father’s hardware company for \$9,600 and paid his wife almost \$22,000 to handle paperwork in the six years after he left office.

Other ex-candidates spent leftover donations on airline tickets,

club memberships, a limo trip, cell phones, parking and new computers, the investigation found. Some former lawmakers paid themselves thousands of dollars without providing any explanation for where the money went. One spent \$940 at Total Wine.

They weren’t all low-profile political figures. Former Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, still has an active presidential campaign account that he used to pay almost \$16,170 to his daughter through 2017, five years after he last sought office.

None of the spending was formally investigated by the Federal Election Commission, which is responsible for stopping federal candidates from treating their campaigns like personal slush funds.

By law, donations should be spent on campaigning and the cost of being in office. They can also be refunded to donors or given away to other candidates, political committees or charities.

But the law doesn’t stop ex-lawmakers and losing candidates from keeping their campaigns running forever, even if they never re-enter politics.

Twenty of the campaigns identified by the *Times/WTSP* stayed active for more than a decade. Eight kept on spending even after the candidate they were supposedly working to elect had died — buying lavish dinners, paying cell phone bills and writing rent checks.



FORMER U.S. REP. SAXBY CHAMBLISS, R-GA.

LEFT OFFICE: January 2015

\$1,979 paid for five nights at the 5-star Williamsburg Inn, July 2015

WTSP drove to Athens, Ga., to confront Chambliss.



10News WTSP

Reporter: After you retired, you spent thousands of dollars on things like hotels and food. How is that campaigning?

Chambliss: We don't have anything to discuss. You go do your homework with the FEC.

He didn't answer questions, telling WTSP to call the FEC six more times.

Six campaign finance experts told *Times/WTSP* reporters that some of the zombie campaign spending was a potential election-law violation that should have been investigated by the FEC.

"There's just no legitimate explanation for that, and it's just outrageous," said Noah Bookbinder, executive director of nonpartisan watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington. "It's the kind of abuse that people only perpetrate when they're sure nobody is watching and they can get away with anything."

Times/WTSP reporters requested interviews with all five FEC commissioners. Only two responded. They both declined.

FEC spokesman Christian Hilland said the agency cannot comment on

individual cases that may end up under investigation in the future.

"There are personal use prohibitions," Hilland said. "Outside of that, if there are still costs associated with a campaign, utilities or a lease on a building – that can still be paid."

Confronted about their spending, most candidates said they kept their accounts open in case they ran again one day, and they disputed that the money benefitted them personally.

Several said they would consider shutting their campaigns down. Many didn't return requests for comment. Two fled when questioned about their spending by reporters from the *Times/WTSP* and TEGNA-owned partner TV stations around the country.

Foley, the former Palm Beach congressman, said ethical lines are "in the eye of the beholder," but added that the FEC doesn't draw lines or provide guidance.

Campaign experts said that while FEC rules are vague, it's clear that someone out of politics should not have expenses that come with campaigning.

"It's hard to imagine how some of this is not illegal," said Larry Noble, a former FEC attorney and senior director of ethics for the Washington-based Campaign Legal Center. "If you're not in office and you aren't running, there aren't a lot of expenditures you should be having."

The iPad and the country club

If anyone demonstrates how much former lawmakers can get away with, it's Robin Tallon Jr.

The South Carolina Democrat left the House of Representatives in January 1993, just as Bill Clinton was entering the White House, to set himself up as a D.C. lobbyist.

Tallon was hardly an influential





FORMER U.S. SEN. GEORGE LEMIEUX, R-FLA.

LEFT OFFICE: 2011

\$40,000 paid to campaign consultant
 A. Milano Strategies, Nov. 2014 - July 2017

WTSP tracked him down in West Palm Beach to ask him why.



10News WTSP

Reporter: You paid quite a bit to consultants still over the years, how come?

LeMieux: Uh, no. That's not true.

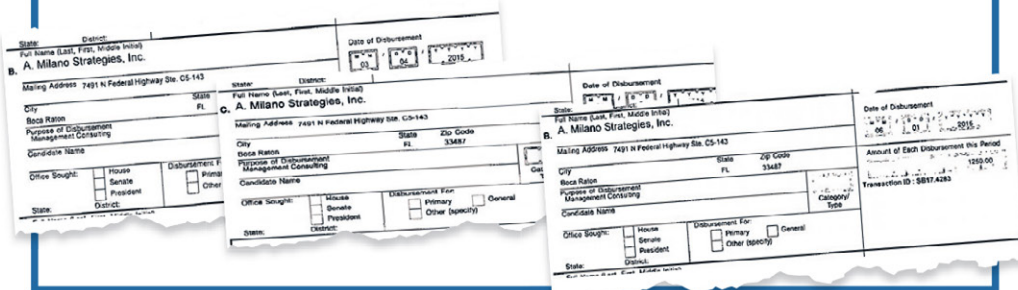
Reporter: A. Milano group, consulting?

LeMieux: That was fundraising for Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Reporter: They get money every month from your campaign. Every single month.

LeMieux: No, that's not true.

He actually paid the firm **29 times** over **33 months**.



lawmaker. He was primary sponsor of only two bills that became law, according to govtrack.us. One was to designate National Tourism Week.

But his decade in Congress left him with more than \$400,000 in his campaign account. He kept it open, then invested the money, turning it into \$1 million.

In 2005, Tallon embarked on a spending spree that is still ongoing.

It included more than \$31,000 in “reimbursements” paid to himself without any explanation, federal records show. Another \$20,000 was paid to his son, Robert Tallon III, who was listed as campaign treasurer.

Tallon’s campaign bought a \$4,000 computer in 2007, a \$2,300 computer in 2014 and a \$900 iPad in 2017.

Since Tallon was no longer campaigning, some of his spending looks like personal use of campaign funds,

said Adav Noti, a former attorney for the FEC who is now a senior director at the Campaign Legal Center.

“It’s almost inconceivable that spending is legal,” Noti said. “That’s 25 years after he left office.”

Some of Tallon’s other expenditures are even harder to tie to politics. Between 2007 and 2011, he paid roughly \$8,200 in “dues” to an organization he identified only as “CCSC.”

There are no major political groups or charitable organizations in South Carolina with those initials. Despite FEC rules, Tallon’s reports don’t list an address for the recipient. Tallon does, however, live in a 4,400-square-foot home in a development with the same initials: the Country Club of South Carolina.

Those payments from Tallon are in line with the Florence, S.C. club’s \$300 monthly membership dues and

food minimum total.

In a phone interview, Tallon defended keeping his campaign account open, saying he always considered another potential run. The iPad was to do his campaign's paperwork and to keep up with its investments — which would be the only legal use of the device, since it was bought with campaign money, experts said.

Tallon did not return subsequent calls or respond to a letter asking about his "CCSC" spending. He kicked a camera crew from WTSP partner station WCNC off his property last week.

Still, in the earlier interview, the 71-year-old conceded that after being out of office for a quarter of a century, it's probably time to shut the campaign down.

"I don't think the likelihood of (running for office) is very high right now, and I'm retiring from my consulting work in Washington," he said in November. "I need to give that money away at this point."

He filed his latest campaign report on Jan. 16. It shows his campaign is still open.

Bending the rules

The laws on campaign spending are simple if vague.

The money cannot be used for costs unrelated to campaigning or serving in office.

Items like clothing, country club fees and groceries, for example, are prohibited. Campaign workers' salaries, office space, cell phones and internet service are allowed, when used for campaign purposes.

But the rules barely address what is permitted once a politician leaves office.

It would be easy for the FEC to find campaigns exploiting that loophole.



Times/WTSP reporters used the FEC's own data to identify roughly 100 zombie campaigns that have spent more than \$20 million since 1995.

The *Times* included campaigns that kept spending more than six months after the candidate died. For the other campaigns, the analysis didn't consider spending in the first two years to give candidates time to get out of leases, cell phone contracts and other commitments.

That's far longer than candidates should need. A 2013 FEC advisory opinion said outgoing politicians should wind down campaign expenses within six months. Former independent Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Rep. Charlie Norwood, R-Ga., both donated more than 90 percent of their money to charity and closed their campaigns within a year of leaving office.

Combined, eight zombie campaigns spent \$55,000 renting office space. Twenty-one paid more than \$53,000 in cell phone bills.

Four campaigns each spent more than \$1,500 buying new computers, including Foley's, which bought a \$1,600 computer in 2015. Experts said that would be legal only if the computers were used solely for campaign paperwork.

Nearly 40 candidates kept aides or campaign staff on the payroll, including 12 campaigns that paid a candidate's family member.

FEC rules allow payments to family members who do genuine work for a campaign as long as they are paid at "market rate."

But the payments vary wildly. Bunning's campaign paid his daughter more than \$2,100 per month. Rep. Elton Gallegly, R-Calif., paid his spouse just \$300 per month for bookkeeping and filing FEC forms.

Other spending makes even less sense when out of office.

In total, 28 former candidates spent more than \$94,000 on travel.

Thirty-nine spent \$246,000 combined hosting or attending events, including the unveiling of a portrait and tickets for their spouses to attend a First Lady's Luncheon.

Fifty-one of the zombie candidates had an extra incentive to hang onto campaign cash: they went into the lobbying industry.

Campaigns are allowed to give to other candidates and PACs, even if those donations could buy influence that benefits their clients.

Their campaigns donated almost \$4.5 million to political candidates and causes, the *Times/WTSP* analysis found.

Tallon was one of them. His campaign donated \$69,000 to political causes — including tens of thousands of the dollars he raised as a Democrat to Republican politicians — and paid roughly \$750 in dues to the Capitol Hill Club, a private social club for D.C. Republicans. In 2009 he also gave \$5,000 to a political action committee formed by Imperial Tobacco Group, a client of his lobbying firm.

Former Rep. Bud Cramer, D-Ala., donated almost \$340,000 after becoming chairman of a lobbying firm. Former Rep. Henry Bonilla, R-Texas, admitted that some of the \$60,000 he donated was “absolutely” helpful in his lobbying career.

“It’s the way it is, whether you have a political fund or whether you were a private citizen writing checks out of your own account,” he said.

A dead giveaway

If FEC rules are vague about candidates who retire, they say even less about what should happen to campaign funds when the candidate dies.

Asked about dead candidates’ spending, FEC officials admitted their analysts could review a campaign’s report without ever realizing that the candidate is dead.

That might explain why they never questioned the spending of former New York congressman Thomas J. Manton’s campaign, which paid his treasurer a salary for two years after Manton died.

Takai’s campaign stopped doing almost everything after the Hawaii

congressman died in July 2016 — except paying one man.

That was Beesley, 29, who had been the Democrat’s chief strategist since March 2015. A former legislative assistant to Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, Beesley also worked as Hawaii State Director for Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign.

Two months after Takai’s death, paperwork filed with the FEC identified Beesley as the campaign’s treasurer, which meant he had control over its checkbook.

In the 17 months since Takai’s death, Beesley paid roughly \$5,700 a month to Lanakila Strategies, his own consulting firm.

Beesley’s most recent payments, reported in January, brought the total paid to Lanakila to more than \$100,000, or 70 percent of Takai’s posthumous campaign spending.

“Wow,” said Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., one of Takai’s friends in Congress, when told of Beesley’s spending. “I don’t know if Mark would really want to see that happening with the money he raised to run for re-election.”

The *Times/WTSP*, in partnership with Honolulu affiliate KGMB/KHNL, began pressing Beesley for answers in early January.

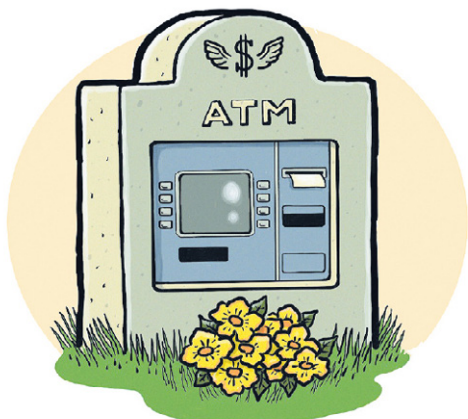
Three days later, the *Honolulu Star Advertiser* reported on Beesley’s payments. The Campaign Legal Center then filed a complaint with the FEC, which is pending.

In a written statement, Beesley said he was paid to be the campaign’s treasurer.

He also released a statement that he said was attributable to a spokesman for Takai’s family. “Dylan Beesley supported Mark’s campaign before Mark’s passing and, at our request, has stayed on as campaign treasurer to help manage the campaigns affairs,” the statement said. “He has worked to help us to focus on the next steps so that we could close the campaign down and create a foundation in Mark’s name and use it for good causes here in Hawaii. Payments to him during this period were authorized.”

Takai’s family did not respond to a letter sent by the *Times/WTSP* seeking comment.

The Mark Takai Foundation wasn’t incorporated until Jan. 11, Hawaii state business records show — two





FORMER U.S. REP. RON PAUL, R-TEXAS

Republican candidate for president in 2012

LEFT OFFICE: 2013

\$16,170 paid to his daughter, Jan. 2015 to Sept. 2017

KHOU Houston found Paul in Clute, Texas.



Reporter: Hey Dr. Paul, let me catch up with you for a sec.



Reporter: Wanted to ask you a question or two about your campaign account spending, sir. Do you just have a moment?



Reporter: We reached out to you by phone and email and we haven't heard back.



Reporter: Is it appropriate to keep your daughter on the payroll years after you've left office?



Reporter: Why wouldn't you give us just a moment?

Paul drove away without answering a single question.

days after KGMB/KHNL contacted Beesley about his spending and 16 months after he became treasurer of the campaign.

Many campaign treasurers are paid to file campaign reports with the FEC. But Takai's campaign was paying \$500 per month to CFO Compliance, a national group that specializes in campaign paperwork.

Beesley declined multiple requests for an interview.

Noble, the former FEC attorney and CLC ethics director, said the FEC should investigate Beesley's spending.

"I've not heard of a situation where, after the death of the office holder or candidate, that the committee keeps on paying people," Noble said. "He can't keep it going indefinitely while he spends money on himself."

'Designed to gridlock'

One easy way to stop former lawmakers from misspending campaign money would be for Congress to set a time limit for how long zombie campaigns can remain open.

But the FEC's Democratic and Republican commissioners, who can recommend new rules to Congress, almost never agree. In 2016, the commission deadlocked on one-third of enforcement votes.

"The FEC was designed to gridlock," said Meredith McGehee, executive director of Issue One, a nonpartisan political reform group.

In Congress, the few attempts to address these campaigns have stalled. Lawmakers are reluctant to put additional restrictions on themselves, said Noti, the former FEC attorney.

Rep. Takano, the California Democrat, filed the "Let It Go" act in both 2015 and 2017 requiring outgoing members to close their campaign ac-

counts within six years or before they go into lobbying.

And Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., filed a bill four times between 2007 and 2015 that would have let lawmakers designate a family member to take over their campaign accounts once they die.

Takano's bill didn't get a hearing. Jones' passed the House three times, then died in the Senate.

Jones said current House Speaker Paul Ryan and other lawmakers have no interest in campaign finance reform.

"Too many people like the system the way it is," Jones said in an interview.

Ryan's spokeswoman did not provide a comment.

The FEC was created to oversee campaign spending in 1975, after Richard Nixon's re-election campaign paid for the burglary of the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate office complex.

But Congress doesn't fund the agency very well, experts say. After adjusting for inflation, its \$76 million annual budget is smaller than it was in 2010. Last year, it had just 34 analysts to review more than 26 million financial transactions.

Former candidates are especially likely to escape scrutiny since they do not have political opponents to challenge their spending. The FEC almost never catches questionable spending itself. All but eight of the FEC's 128 closed investigations last year started with an outside complaint.

FEC analysts are also told to ignore suspicious spending unless the amount of money or number of transactions raises above a secret threshold, which the agency refuses to disclose, documents show.

"There is really not a lot of incentive for this agency to go off and start snooping and investigating current members, much less former members," McGehee said. "It does not have a robust investigatory arm. That's not how the agency was designed."

Nonetheless, zombie campaigns have occasionally come to the agency's attention.

Every time, the agency did nothing, and the campaign carried on.

Eight campaigns identified by the *Times/WTSP* sent the FEC paperwork stating that they were not run-





FORMER U.S. REP. THOMAS MANTON, D-N.Y.

LEFT OFFICE: 1999

\$250 paid to his campaign treasurer almost every month starting in 2003



ADAM PLAYFORD | Times

The payments continued for two years after his death in 2006.

ning for office, then continued spending for years, FEC documents show. Six are still open.

In July 2011, former Virginia Rep. Rick Boucher's treasurer informed the FEC in writing that "the candidate has no intention of seeking office in future election cycles." By then, the Democrat was already working for law firm Sidley Austin.

But Boucher, who did not return calls or emails for comment, kept on spending. Since 2013, he has paid \$33,000 to staffers for "reimbursements" and "contract labor," and spent nearly \$4,900 on cell phone bills, office supplies, internet services and postage. His campaign account is still open.

In 2010, the FEC wrote to former Colorado Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell warning that the \$2,000 per month he was paying his daughter-in-law, Karen Allard Campbell, could "possibly constitute personal use of the committee's campaign funds."

At that point, Campbell had been out of office for five years, and paying her for the past four.

His campaign treasurer responded on a letterhead that still touted

Campbell as "U.S. Senator for Colorado." It said Karen Campbell was providing the campaign "bona fide" services, including preparing its tax forms.

At the time, the Republican was also paying outside firms to do "tax preparation," campaign finance records show.

The FEC let the matter drop, and the checks to his daughter-in-law kept coming for another five years. Campbell declined requests for an interview.

If the law doesn't change, there will likely be more cases like his.

Since 2016, more than 40 House and Senate incumbents have resigned or announced they will not run in the 2018 midterm election.

The soon-to-be ex-politicians are sitting on more than \$55 million in campaign donations.

Methodology

To identify zombie campaigns, *Times/WTSP* reporters used the [Federal Election Commission's API](#) to download more than 1 million disbursement records, ranging from the earliest records in the FEC's database up to the third quarter of 2017.

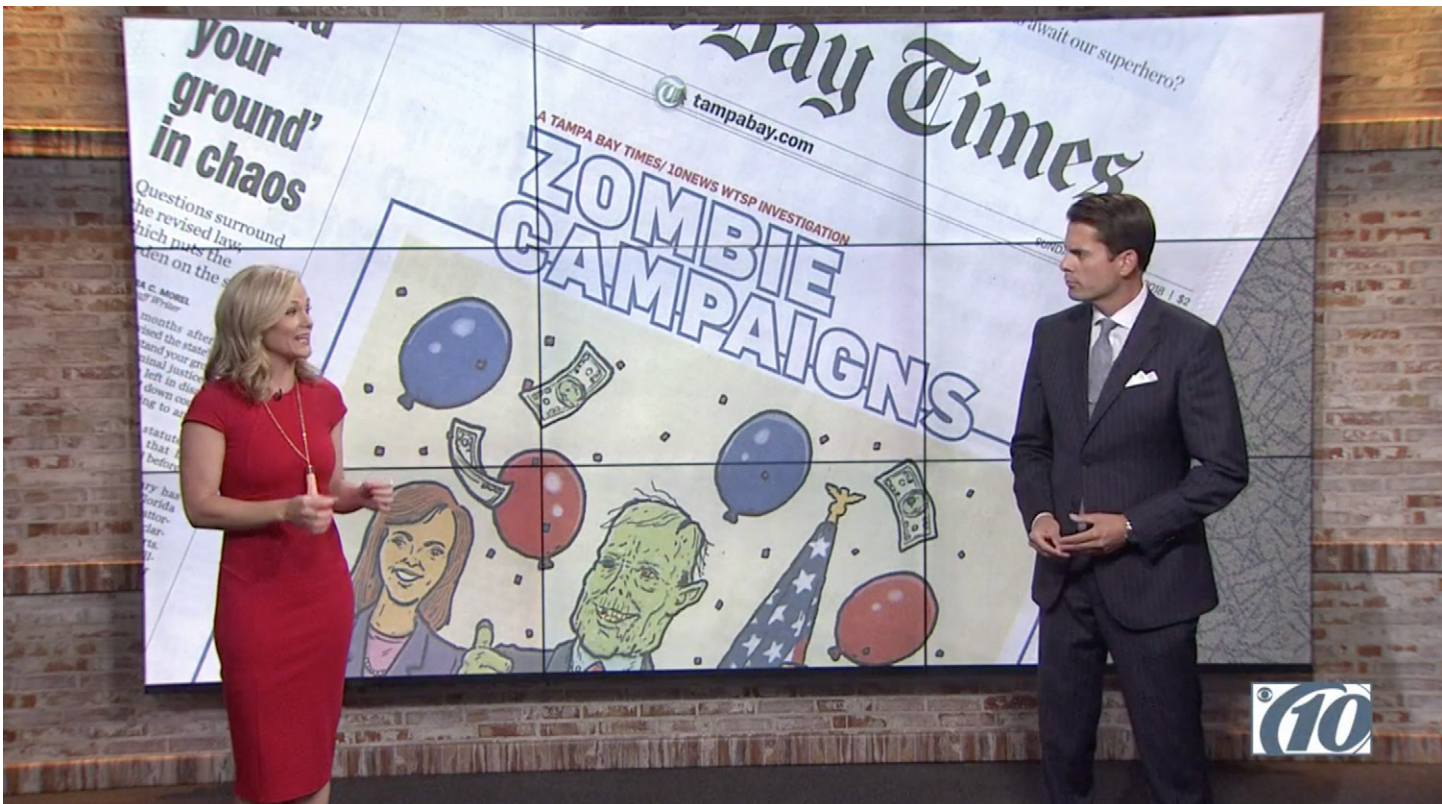
Then reporters ranked each campaign by the number of expenditures it made after the campaign's final election cycle. Then reporters hand-reviewed more than 350 campaigns' spending.

Reporters excluded campaigns that had too few expenditures and campaigns paying back old debt. They then categorized more than 10,000 rows of data by type of spending. The entire database is available online at tampabay.com/zombiedatabase.

The reporters did not include data within two years of a campaign's last election or the last time a politician held office. This was to give campaigns ample time to pay off debts, get out of leases and end other contracts. They also removed records that did not have a date, and did not tag tax payments, refunds, negative amounts or disgorgements. They categorized payments according to the campaign's listed disbursement description.

The database also includes former politicians who moved onto new careers as lobbyists, employees of lobbying firms or employees of private companies working in lobbying roles. The reporters searched the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, Open Secrets' Revolving Door database and news articles to look for signs that a former candidate had taken work representing special interests, whether or not they formally registered as a lobbyist. Donations from their campaigns are included in the database. About 20 of the 102 zombie campaigns were primarily identified based on this criteria.

Some data from the FEC API was incomplete, missing fields like dates, amounts, recipient names or descriptions for the disbursements. Whenever possible, reporters corrected inaccurate data based on the original paper filings.



See the report

Published on WTSP.com on June 29, compiling pieces that aired on WTSP-TV and other TEGNA television station across the country throughout the first six months of the year, starting in February.

Zombie Campaigns: A big DC problem, and a path to get it fixed

00:00 – Zombie Campaigns

Welcome to our 10 Investigates special on Zombie Campaigns; the controversial committees that live on for years, even after a politician's career has died. It is a phrase coined by investigative reporter Noah Pransky, who partnered with The Tampa Bay Times to expose giant loopholes in campaign finance laws. They found some disgraced - and even some dead - Congressmembers still politically active, blowing through money on things like dinner and drinks, iPads, and football tickets. It's only been five months since their investigation launched, but it's already garnered national attention, accolades and action.

Washington has noticed too. Our ZombieCampaigns.com website and social media videos have gone viral, prompting formal investigations on congressional spending. Two members of Congress, from opposite sides of the aisle, got together to file a bill to curb the abuse and the Federal Election Commission changed federal campaign finance rules. Among the 100+ politicians put under the microscope: former presidential candidates, as well as members of President Trump's cabinet.

"Zombie Campaigns" was the result of a year-long investigation into millions of FEC records; this was Noah Pransky's first story in revealing his findings.

01:12 – Drain the Swamp

"Drain the swamp!" they said, focusing the nation's attention on all the money that runs Washington. But with the attention on the swamp

VIDEO ENTRY:

tinyurl.com/ZombieSpecial

00:00 - Welcome

01:12 - Zombie Campaigns (2/1/18)

06:03 - Digital footprint

06:55 - Zombie Campaigns (2/2/18)

11:47 - FEC action

13:19 - Congressional action

14:56 - Bill filed

16:54 - Zombies hit the White House

19:00 - Next steps

TOTAL RUNTIME: 20:35

creatures in the Capital....nobody seems to be paying attention to the *zombies. FORMER lawmakers whose political careers are dead...yet their campaigns have come to life, to support their *new careers and lifestyles, *after they leave office.

{Reporter} "Five nights in a Virginia hotel – that was for a campaign?"

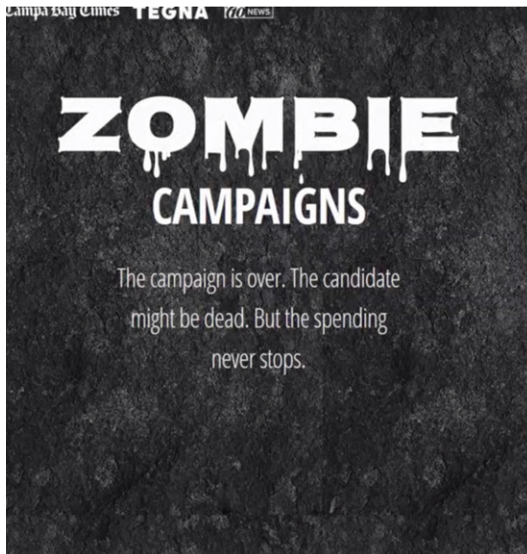
{Sen. Saxby Chambliss} "Yes it was."

{Reporter} "It was? After you retired?"

But its not just that former Georgia Senator keeping his campaign alive long after retirement....we even found former Congressmen still spending... years after they DIED! This campaign spending loophole is *so large... you can drive a hearse through it.

{Noah Bookbinder, CREW Exec Dir} "If you can't sometimes laugh at it, you can't come to work every day."

Noah Bookbinder is a former federal prosecutor who's been trying to "drain the swamp" since before it was a campaign slogan! He hasn't quite succeeded yet....in fact...he says it



keeps getting harder.

{Bookbinder} “I’m more worried than mad; I’m worried it could get to a point we can’t come back from.”

Which is why, in his current job at Executive Director for nonprofit watchdog group CREW: ‘Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington’...Bookbinder has helped file lawsuits against politicians who use campaign money as personal slush funds. But even he was surprised at what we found, including a list of a *hundred former Congressmembers, Senators, and presidential candidates still spending campaign money long after giving up the game.

{Bookbinder} Its really shameful when you see this many people exploiting the system.

The Federal Election Commission says candidates should *never* personally benefit from campaign contributions. And after a 6-month wind-down period, retired lawmakers should close their accounts and donate leftover money to charity, or other established political committees. Except, they aren’t *required* to retire their *campaigns... So these politicians can keep their lucrative accounts open...indefinitely. Our team – in partnership with the Tampa Bay Times – spent a year analyzing more than a *million public campaign finance records we downloaded from the FEC’s webpage. And, we traveled the country to interview reluctant politicians. Like, former Texas Congressman and presidential hopeful Ron Paul:

{Reporter} “Wanted to ask you a

question or two about your campaign account spending, do you have a moment (Paul slams car door shut) Dr. Paul?”

These former lawmakers spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on questionable items like tickets to sporting events...cell phone bills... and what appear to be vacations. Former Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss, is still spending from a campaign account after leaving Washington for a lobbying firm:

{Reporter} “You retired from Senate three years ago. Why do you still have a campaign account open?”

{Sen. Saxby Chambliss} “Because there’s money in it.”

Get this: he’s *far from the worst of fender...

- Florida Congressman Mark Foley resigned in shame when he was caught sexting high schoolers. The Republican has spent the last decade using leftover campaign cash on memberships to posh social clubs in West Palm Beach...as well as travel, meals, and a personal computer!

- Ron Paul hasn’t campaigned for anything in more than five years... but has continued to cut tens of thousands of dollars’ worth of checks to his daughter to manage his “campaign” finances...

- the granddaddy of them all?... is South Carolina Democrat, Robin Tallon...who hasn’t served in Congress in 25 years! He’s spent much of that time *living off his old campaign cash: paying for travel, a new iPad, and dues to his country club...which is actually one of the few things the FEC *does* specifically prohibit under any circumstance!

{Bookbinder} “There’s just no legitimate explanation for that and it’s just outrageous...it’s the kind of abuse that people only perpetrate when they’re sure nobody is watching and they can get away with anything.”

The more we dug, the more outrageous the abuse. Case in point: former Hawaii Congressman Mark Takai. His campaign has paid a political operative 100+ thousand dollars to act as treasurer and consultant.... AFTER Takai left office. What makes it so outrageous? Well, Congressman Takai died from cancer in 2016. Meaning the consultant who took charge of the money...is paying *himself campaign cash...to consult on a *dead man’s campaign. And the Federal Elections Commission, which has ONE JOB – oversee campaign spending - has done nothing to stop these absurdities.

{Noah Bookbinder, CREW Exec Dir} “If the Federal Election Commission isn’t going to act on this, maybe the only way to get action on this is to shame people...and shining a light on what’s happening can do that.”

While we’re at it, let’s shine a light on the other dead candidates we found spending campaign cash post-mortem..... in Nebraska... Ohio...New York, and New Jersey! All told – the 100-plus campaigns we identified as exploiting the system... are sitting on TENS of millions of dollars in cash...with virtually no oversight on how they can spend it. Former Florida Senator George LeMiuex:

{Reporter} Why not just close the account down and roll the money into charity?”

{Sen. LeMiuex} “I may, and that’s what I’ve been advised to do...”

{Bookbinder} “Both Democrats and Republicans are committing the abuses; both Democratic and Republicans should be getting behind doing something about it.”

There have been efforts to curb the abuses in recent years, but you haven’t heard about them...because the bills never got a single hearing. As for the political operative spending a dead man’s campaign cash? He says he’s just doing what the family of the former Congressman wants. The family has yet to return our requests for comment. Noah Pransky, 10Investigates.

06:03 – Viral Video

In addition to the original reporting, 10 Investigates built ZombieCampaigns.com. It’s a one-stop-shop for you to read our story, dig into our online database of former candidates taking advantage of the system, and of course, watching our videos. That includes a few extra segments that caught fire on social media: a throwback to the 1990s-era Pop-Up Video, and a tribute to the 1970s-era Schoolhouse Rock.

06:26 – SchoolHouse Mock

It’s such a giant loophole – you can still spend when you’re dead!

Friends can claim you’re campaign-



ing to pay for their dinner spread.

And when Congress had a chance to fix, it's a bill they chose to kill.

Because one day.....they'll too have zombie accounts.....likely worth a Mil!

06:44 – Zombie Campaigns, Part II

This story starts...with a Disney showtune. In a gay bar...a stone's throw from the U.S. Capital. It was inspiration for a bill introduced in Congress last year:

{U.S. Rep Mark Takano, D-California} “Let it go. At some point, you gotta let it go.”

California Congressman Mark Takano is a Democrat who wants to ‘drain the swamp’ in Washington. And the openly-gay lawmaker says a lightbulb went off one night when he was among the showtunes-loving crowd at JR's.

{Takano} “It's very difficult to change anything if you're not in the majority...I'm hoping to leverage popular culture here...”

{Reporter} “Whatever it takes.”

{Takano} “Whatever it takes.”

Thus, the “Let it Go” Act – a bill designed to close a little-known, but much-abused loophole... that allows former lawmakers to keep spending their campaign cash long after their careers are over; Not on campaigning, but on subsidizing their lifestyles!!!

{Takano} “I think it's a very reasonable thing we're asking former members to do.”

We stumbled upon Takano's crusade as we were investigating “zombie campaigns” – lucrative accounts, belonging to former politicians who have long retired, but are still *spending like they're *not....sometimes, violating federal laws that prohibit personal benefit from campaign funds. Our team, in partnership with the Tampa Bay Times, combed federal election records to identify more than *one *hundred campaigns with questionable spending *years after the lawmaker stopped campaigning – sometimes for *decades after they

retired! You might recognize some of them...Mark Foley; Joe Kennedy II; Ron Paul..... spending funds on things like fancy dinners...travel... and paying family members. And nobody in Washington seems to notice...or care.

{Takano} “It is legal! But I don't think it should be!”

Takano's bill simply said candidates had six years after they stop running to close their accounts down...meaning their leftover campaign cash would go to charity or another political committee. That's 12 times longer than the FEC says should be necessary!?! But that bill...didn't even get a hearing.

{Reporter} You retired from Senate three years ago...why do you still have a campaign account open??

No surprise, former Georgia Senator Saxby Chambliss, and the owners of other zombie campaigns we tracked down all over the country... weren't in the mood to talk.

{Reporter} “You spent thousands of dollars on things like hotel rooms and food. How is that campaigning...after you retired?”

{ Chambliss} “We don't have anything to discuss.”

While other still-spending candidates had no comment at all....**BECAUSE THEY WERE DEAD!**

{Reporter} We found candidates with campaigns open for years after they died, still spending money.

{Takano} Ha! Well, that....is.....incredible.

Somehow...the FEC still didn't notice.

{Meredith McGehee, Executive Director IssueOne} “I often call the FEC the ‘failure to enforce commission.’”

Meredith McGehee is the Executive Director at IssueOne, a nonpartisan DC nonprofit, dedicated to getting the money *out* of politics...so Congress can go back to working for the people. She says the abuses run rampant because of both the lack of enforcement...and efforts by House and Senate leadership to kill efforts to reform campaign finance laws.

{McGehee} “Really, what it’s going to take is some brave people on the Hill to step forward and be willing to offend their leadership and spend their political capital...and say, this system needs to change for the better.”

Meet ‘brave person on the Hill,’ Walter Jones – a longtime Republican Congressman from North Carolina.

{U.S. Rep Walter Jones, R-North Carolina} “If any member of Congress is not willing to let sunshine in, then the Democracy is threatened.”

Jones tells us, he’ll re-file a bill that could curb controversial spending **after** a member dies...by allowing him or her to designate how leftover campaign funds should be disbursed in case of death. He may also propose mandating that all leftover cash be sent to other campaigns or **charities** within **ONE YEAR** of a member’s death. The last time he filed his bill... it was killed by his fellow Republicans in the Senate.

{Jones} “Well Noah, its just that no one seems to care about reform....I’ve made the comment back in my district that the only way we’re going to get reform is to have a scandal.”

A scandal, like....dead candidates

spending campaign cash?

{Takano} “We have enough of a swamp...we should drain as much of the swamp as we can, and I regard this as very modest...effort. Let your money go to a higher purpose for what you built your career on.”

Senator Saxby Chambliss, whom we caught up with after he ignored numerous requests for an interview.... Later sent a short statement that said he complies with all federal laws and discloses all of his campaign expenditures.... Which **may** be true... but critics say, when federal law allows a retired lawmaker to expense five nights in a ritzy resort... it may be time to re-assess our laws. In Washington, Noah Pransky, 10 Investigates.

11:47 – FEC action

This investigation didn’t just involve collaborating with the Tampa Bay Times; 10 Investigates spent nearly a year collaborating with dozens of stations across the country within the TEGA television network. The series also inspired a tremendous amount of additional reporting on Zombie Campaigns, from Hawaii to San Francisco to Maine. National outlets followed as well, including “Zombie” reports from the Huffington Post, Newsday, and Bloomberg. It was the talk of Twitter once our stories went live,



collecting thousands of clicks and retweets from around the country; an “ask me anything” session with our investigative team reached the No. 1 overall spot on Reddit; and a number of watchdog groups sounded alarms, pressing the Federal Election Commission to change its rules. This is former FEC chair Ann Ravel:

“The law absolutely has to change. I mean, the fact that a person has received campaigns funds that are meant for certain things and it pays off individuals is absolutely not what was intended by the law.”

And change was not far away. When our Zombie Campaign special returns, we’ll tell you how both the FEC and members of Congress started to change their ways.

And don’t forget you can see more of our extensive reporting with all the documents we’ve gathered on ZombieCampaigns.com. Keep it here, we’ll be right back.

13:19 – Congressional action

Welcome back. One of the most significant changes in the last five months since 10 Investigates and the Tampa Bay Times broke the Zombie Campaigns story has come from the FEC. In April, the agency responded to our reporting and announced they would start reviewing former lawmakers’ campaign spending for the

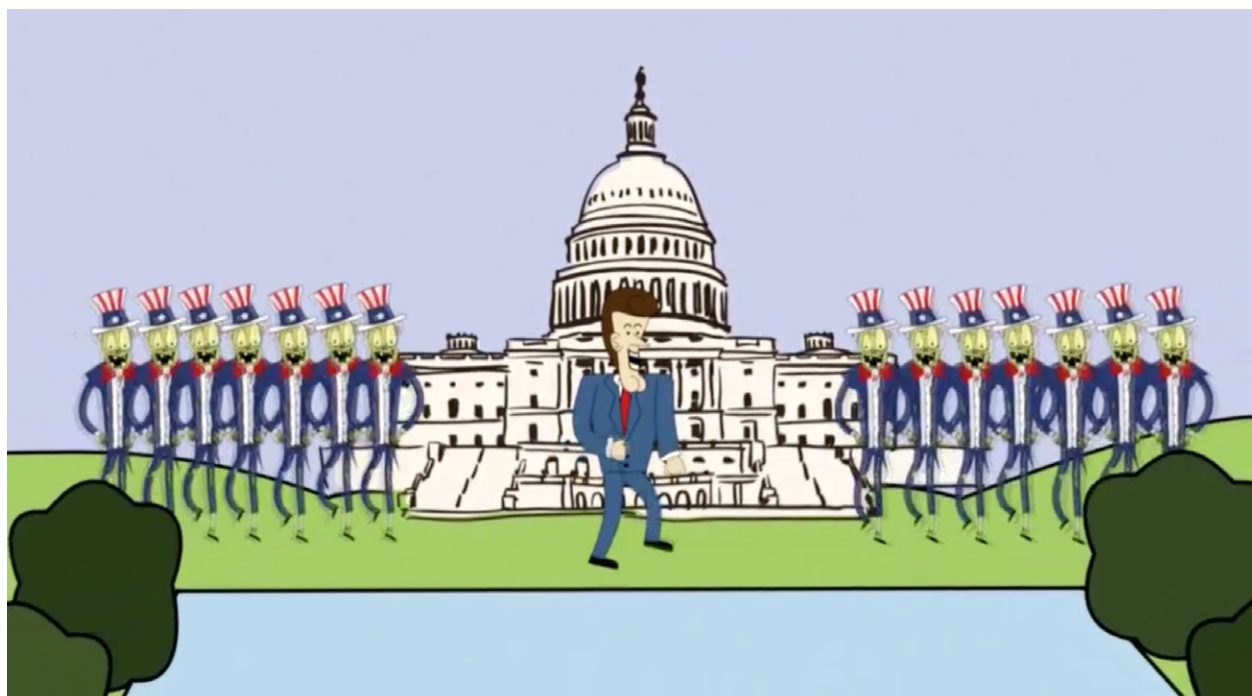
first time. In fact, they credited our stories for the rare administrative action; but the weakened enforcement has been just one part of the problem. The other issue stems from vague laws with giant loopholes. Former Congressmembers reached Noah, calling on their old colleagues in the House and Senate to step up for a fix.

{Fmr US Rep Trey Radel} “I don’t think there’s anyone in their right mind that thinks dead candidates should be spending money for someone to consult on their campaign. They’re dead!”

Former Congressman Trey Radel is now the host of a conservative radio show out of Southwest Florida. And he says his phones lit up after reading the headlines from our story.

{Radel} “These examples may not technically violate the letter of the law; undoubtedly they violate the spirit of the law - not only within the little bubble of Washington D.C., but also what donors across the United States want from their members of Congress.”

Radel is no stranger to controversy himself; he resigned in 2014 after he was caught in D.C. with cocaine. Yet he still managed to comply with the Federal Election Commission’s guidelines that say you should wind campaign spending down after 6 months. That guideline though, is





not a requirement, which has allowed some well-funded lawmakers to continue to personally profit from donations years after leaving D.C.

{Radel} “It’s nothing short of insane.”

14:56 – Bill filed

The message was heard. In April, Republican Gus Bilirakis and Democrat Kathy Castor filed a bipartisan bill based on 10 Investigatives’ reporting. They came to our studio to give us that news first.

{Rep. Kathy Castor, D-Tampa} “People don’t expect you to be able to use your campaign account to pay club fees (or) cell phone bills, especially years and years after you leave office.”

Just maybe, the “Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain” Act can stop that.

{Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor} “This needs to be done. And the public really appreciates this.”

Our investigation revealed some Congressmembers spending leftover campaign funds 25 years after leaving office!

{NATS} “get outta here!”

Others, paying family members:

{NATS} “Dr Paul?”

...instead, of closing down accounts when they’re done campaigning, and rolling the money into other political

or charitable accounts, as the Federal Election Commission suggests.

The new bill proposes to:

- Require former Congressmembers to close down their campaign accounts within two years of leaving office;

- Prohibit payments to family members;

- And ban former Congressmembers from lobbying until they’ve closed down their old accounts; a small step toward restoring public trust, according to Castor and Bilirakis. But also, a tough sell to their counterparts in Congress.

{Reporter} “You’re biting off a lot here.”

{Bilirakis} “It is an ambitious effort. But we’re away from our families... we’ve got to do good things up there; otherwise its not worth it.”

That bill is now making its way through the House Administration Committee. But it’s got an uphill battle, thanks to some Congressmembers like Lakeland’s Dennis Ross. The prominent Republican isn’t on the House Administration Committee, but he’s what we call a “zombie-in-training.” When the four-term Congressman unexpectedly announced his retirement two months ago, Noah asked if he planned on winding down his campaign account after he left office. The response: a straightforward “No.” Ross is one of 64 Congressmembers who won’t run for reelection in the fall, and togeth-

er they have almost \$100,000,000 in banked donations with little restriction on how they can spend it.

16:54 – Zombies in the White House

That doesn't include the five million in campaign dollars still held by current and former members of President Trump's cabinet. Many of them have also chosen to keep their old campaign account open. And recently, Noah took to Facebook to explain what all the president's men are still doing with that money.

Our zombie campaign story has made it all the way to the White House. Kind of. See, while we've been exposing the former Congressmembers spending old campaign funds in their new careers as lobbyists or consultants, we also now learn that there are seven former politicians still spending after taking new jobs in President Trump's Cabinet!

So who are they? Well, you don't have the a brain surgeon to figure this. In fact, one of them is brain surgeon Ben Carson. The secretary of HUD is still spending his old donations, more than two years after quitting his presidential campaign. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's been spending thousands to keep his campaign officially up and running since leaving Congress. That includes a \$1200 meal last year at the swanky Capitol Hill Club. Then there's Tom

Price, the now-former Health and Human Services Secretary, who had to resign in September after he was caught spending hundreds of thousands of tax dollars on charter flights. He was spending his old congressional campaign funds too, and still hasn't stopped. Interior Secretary Rice has blown through more than 40 grand in campaign funds since he left Congress on things like meals and travel. That's on top of the taxpayer-funded travel spending he's been under fire for.

These findings were first reported by nonprofit watchdog MapLight. All told, these seven men spent hundreds of thousands of campaign dollars since they left Congress on items that included cell phone bills, storage units, and airfare. We didn't find any evidence of charitable donations from any of those accounts. And with nearly six million more campaign bucks still sitting in the bank, don't expect their spending to stop anytime soon. By comparison, during President Obama's eight-year tenure in the White House, three members of his cabinet over that time spent campaign money from old congressional funds more than a year after they left the house. This truly is a loophole both parties take advantage of. Noah Pransky, 10 Investigates.

As we move into the summer, 10 Investigates will continue to track progress on reform, including the FEC's



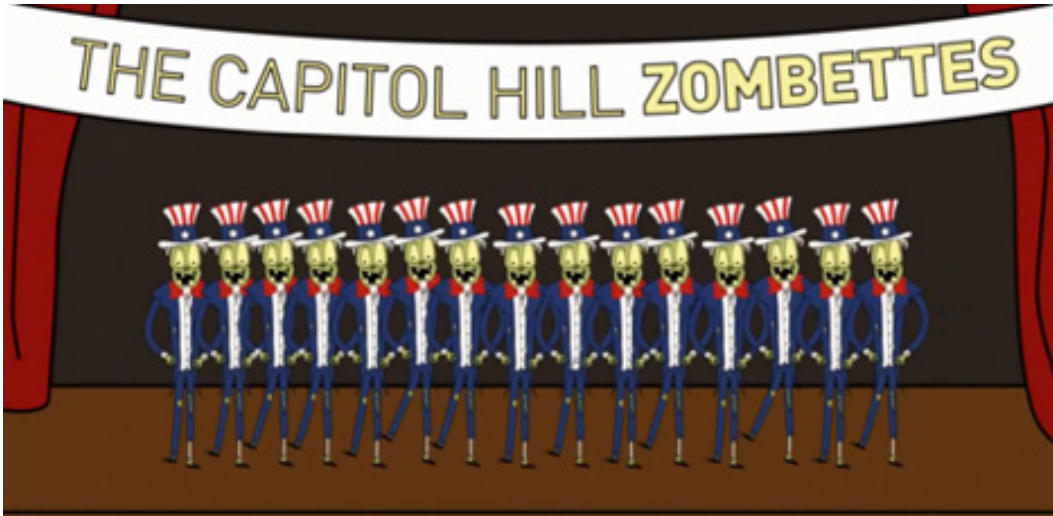
first-ever scrutiny on retired lawmakers' spending, their investigations into possible illegal spending, including the case they opened against the Hawaii consultant exposed in our report, and the possible new restrictions they'll consider on how campaign funds can be spent.

They recently received dozens of comments from the public about the loopholes, including a letter from Congresswoman Castor. It read, in part, "I believe the commission should clarify the permissible and impermissible uses of campaign funds after a person is no longer running for office. Doing so would prevent some of the most problematic spending and provide needed clarity to former office holders."

Congress will need to close loopholes in the law too. The "Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act" will have to get through a pair of committees before it could become law. 10 Investigates has been speaking to members of the first committee about the bill; Congressman Bilirakis and Congresswoman Castor have also been working with a committee chairman to get the bill a hearing. You can read about the developments and see all the reporting on ZombieCampaigns.com. In addition to our original investigation, you can see details on how more than a hundred former lawmakers have taken advantage of the campaign finance system. Thanks for joining us tonight for our 10 Investigates special - you can catch more on Zombie Campaigns and other investigations weekdays on 10 News. Have a good night.

The following two videos were published on wtsp.com and tampabay.com and on the news organizations' social media accounts, where they were viewed hundreds of thousands of times.

Schoolhouse Mock



Popup video with former Senator Saxby Chambliss



In the know

IRMA'S LESSONS PROMPT SHIFTS IN EVACUATION PLAN

Hoping to avoid the snafus that plagued the state in September when Hurricane Irma took aim at Florida, Gov. Rick Scott, among other initiatives, is calling for expanding the use of shoulder lanes along major interstates, identifying critical gas stations along evacuation routes and improving fuel service during emergencies. **Local, 1B**

Equifax response called 'malpractice'

Democratic lawmakers, responding to a Reuters report saying the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is backing off an investigation into a massive data breach at Equifax last year, lashed out Monday. Reuters reported the CFPB has not taken routine steps to move forward with an investigation into the incident—which exposed sensitive data about millions of people—including ordering subpoenas or seeking sworn testimony from Equifax executives. **Business, 4B**

Singing at heart of musical's magic

St. Petersburg Opera Company goes all out to charm and delight with glorious singing in its presentation of an adult fairy tale immortalized by Mozart in *The Magic Flute*. With strong leads, a solid trio of ladies and a stirring brotherhood of chorists, this show hits the right notes. **Andrew Meacham review, 2B**

To Trump, silence resembles treason

While speaking Monday during a visit to a company near Cincinnati, President Donald Trump accused Democrats who did not clap during his State of the Union address of being un-American and even treasonous. "Can we call that treason?" Trump said of the steadfast reaction of Democrats to his speech. "Why not? I mean, they certainly didn't seem to love our country very much." **Nation, 2A**

TODAY'S WEATHER

Nice weather



0% chance of rain
More, [backpage of Sports](#)

[tampabay.com](#)

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To beat Patriots, Eagles didn't feel pressure, they applied it. **Rick Stroud column, 1C**

Tampa Bay Times

FLORIDA'S BEST NEWSPAPER

[tampabay.com](#)

*** TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018 | \$1



DOW	S&P 500	NASDAQ
-1,175.21	-113.19	-273.42
-4.60%	-4.10%	-3.78%

OUCH

Highly volatile stock market trading brings plunging numbers and concerns about actions from the Fed.



Trader Tommy Kalkas works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Monday. Stock markets around the world took another pummeling as investors continued to fret over U.S. bond yields and possible interest rate increases.

BY THE NUMBERS

Some context
1,175.21: Dow Jones drop Monday, the largest one-day point decline in history.

4.6%: Monday's decline by percentage, only the 100th worst by that measure in the market's history. (The Dow's steepest percentage decline was on "Black Monday," Oct. 19, 1987, when it fell 22.6 percent.)

24.7B: The Dow's close on Dec. 31, meaning the index is now negative for the year.

Washington Post

The Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged a heart-stopping 1,500 points in afternoon trading Monday before gaining back some ground — and finishing at 24,945.75, down 1,175.21, or 4.6 percent — as volatility returned to the stock market with a vengeance after a year of rare tranquility.

The Dow has swung more than 2,100 points in the past two sessions, a decline of more than 8 percent, shattering long-term momentum.

One of the big worries is that the Federal Reserve, under new Chairman Jerome Powell, who was officially sworn in Monday, will accelerate interest rate

hikes and slow the economy. A slowing economy would likely turn the bull market toward bearish.

There was also focus on the 10-year Treasury bond, a closely watched harbinger of investor sentiment. The yield's rise toward 5 percent is widely believed to be a marker for investors to eschew equities for the appetizing stability of bonds.

"If the yield on the 10-year hits 5 percent in the next several days, equities are likely to decline dramatically because of fears of the Federal Reserve aggressively slowing down the economy by raising interest rates," said James Norman, president of Q&S Investors. **See MARKET, 5A**

Moffitt pushes to ease cancer's impact

It proposes collaboration with employers to make treatment less costly.

BY JUSTINE GRIFFIN
Times Staff Writer

Cathy Bishop worked as a teacher and assistant principal at Hillsborough County schools for nearly 35 years when she found out she had colon cancer.

Diagnosed after a routine colonoscopy, she had to make a tough decision

about how she was going to let the disease impact her career. She would rely on the health insurance offered to her through the school district to pay for medical bills that stacked up because of chemotherapy and surgery. But ultimately, Bishop chose to work through her diagnosis and treatment plan instead of taking medical leave.

"My retirement is a teacher's pension, which is half a salary. Basically, not much," she said. "I have two sons, and one of them was in law school at the time. I had to make a decision that

was best for my family."

Bishop told her story Monday to a room full of professionals from some of the Tampa Bay region's largest employers. Tech Data, Port Tampa Bay, the YMCA and the city of Orlando government were just a few of the organizations in the audience at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. Moffitt hosted its first ever Employer Forum, where doctors and administrators shed light on the cost of cancer and its huge impact on the workforce. They **See MOFFITT, 5A**



Cathy Bishop continued to work after being diagnosed with cancer.

Jabil to expand Gateway campus

The St. Petersburg electronics maker ends guesswork about a move near the Trop.

BY RICHARD DANIELSON
Times Staff Writer

ST. PETERSBURG — After considering options from moving in next to Tropicana Field to relocating to Singapore, Jabil executives said Monday the company's headquarters aren't going anywhere but will be rebuilt and expanded at its existing site in St. Petersburg's Gateway area.

The project will entail tearing down and rebuilding one two-story office building along Roosevelt Boulevard, west of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Street N. The replacement will be four stories. Two other buildings, including Jabil's current main headquarters, will be thoroughly refurbished.

The cost was not disclosed, but Mondello set a time frame of 24 to 30 months for the build-out. Discussions about Jabil's long-range plans have been unfolding for a decade, but CEO Mark Mondello said the main work has taken place in the last three years.

Jabil looked at a city-owned site near Tropicana Field and also had discussions with state **See JABIL, 3A**



Tapping into cash
Read the investigation at [tampabay.com/zombie_campaign](#).

Efforts target 'Zombie' spending

Stricter rules sought on ex-lawmakers' unused campaign cash.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL AND NOAH FRANKS
Times/WTSP Staff Writers

A Washington, D.C., watchdog group and a Tampa congressman are pushing to close a loophole that has allowed ex-politicians to keep spending campaign donations years after leaving office.

The Campaign Legal Center filed a petition with the Federal Election Commission on Monday calling for stricter rules on how former lawmakers spend leftover campaign money.

The CLC cites an investigation by the *Tampa Bay Times*/10News WTSP and TEGNA-owned TV stations that uncovered former politicians and their staffers hoarding unused campaign donations for years and using them to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members. Some campaigns continued spending after the lawmaker died.

The reporting showed "the appearance or reality of dozens of former officeholders using their campaign accounts as slush **See ZOMBIE, 5A**



The SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket sits on launch pad 39-A at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Monday.

As rocket readies for lift-off, Florida already sees benefits

SpaceX is helping revitalize the state's aerospace industry.

BY HOWARD ALTMAN
Times Staff Writer

Even if his biggest rocket blows up today — something Elon Musk has joked about in tweets — the founder of SpaceX already has helped revitalize a Florida aerospace industry nearly wiped out by the shutdown of the space shuttle program.

It will help if SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket launches successfully from the Kennedy Space Center and pushes its cargo — a red Tesla Roadster made by the other company Musk is known for — toward a destination in orbit around Mars.

But there appears to be no stopping the resurgent aerospace industry as it climbs past \$20 billion a year in state impact with more than 150,000 high-paying jobs, according to Space Florida, an industry organization.

Many of the jobs are in the Tampa Bay area, home to more than 2,400 aerospace-related employees and sales of more than \$2 billion per year in Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas and Polk counties, Space Florida says.

What's more, U.S. Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base is looking to the commercial space industry to help launch small satellites for better command communications. **See ROCKET, 5A**

Read the pdf or click here to read online

Efforts target 'Zombie' spending

Stricter rules sought on ex-lawmakers'
unused campaign cash.

By **CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL** and **NOAH PRANSKY**
Times/WTSP Staff Writers

*Published online Feb. 5
and in print Feb. 6.*

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The CLC cited an investigation by the *Tampa Bay Times/10News WTSP* and TEGNA-owned TV stations that uncovered former politicians and their staffers hoarding unspent campaign donations for years and using them to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members. Some campaigns continued spending after the lawmaker died.

The reporting showed “the appearance or reality of dozens of former officeholders using their campaign accounts as slush funds, or to continue paying for expenses that may have been permissible during their time in office but ceased to be so after they left office,” the petition says.

It asks the FEC to clarify that such spending is not allowed.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor, D-Tampa, told the *Times/WTSP* that she is drafting a bill to “rein this in.”

“If they’re dead, they’re a lobbyist, they’ve been out of the Congress for many years they should not be able to tap their campaign funds for their personal expenses or their lobbying expenses,” Castor said.

She said there should be a time limit on how long campaigns are allowed to remain open, and lawmakers should not be allowed to pay family members after they leave office.

U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, D-St. Petersburg, said he would support a bill placing more restrictions on spending once out of office.

“I think it’s remarkable some would have campaign funds open that long and some even after individuals are deceased,” he said. “It strikes me as wrong and we need to fix it.”

Other members of Florida’s congressional delegation did not return calls and emails seeking comment.

The petition calls on the FEC to specify what costs former lawmakers can expense with campaign donations. It also asks the agency to place a time limit on how long campaign accounts can remain open.

The current law allows ex-lawmakers and losing candidates to keep their campaigns running forever, even if they never re-enter politics.

It states that donations should be spent on campaigning and the cost of being in office. They can also be refunded to donors or given away to other candidates, political committees or charities.

But the *Times/WTSP* investigation, called “Zombie Campaigns,” identified more than 100 campaigns that carried on spending at least two years after their candidate left office. In 20 cases, the campaigns stayed open for more than a decade.

The investigation found retired lawmakers buying airline tickets, club memberships, a limo trip, parking and new computers, among other items. It also found spending on cam-

campaign expenses like cell phones, utilities, office rent and internet services, even though the candidate was no longer campaigning.

“There’s not just one or two former Congress members out there breaking the law,” said Adav Noti, a former attorney for the FEC who is now a senior director at the Campaign Legal Center. “There seems to be widespread sense that the rules do not cover activity once the politicians are out of office.”

FEC officials declined to comment on the petition.

Under agency rules, commissioners will now decide whether to conduct a hearing on the CLC’s petition, which would include allowing the public and other parties time to comment.

It could also make a recommendation to Congress to pass legislation to tackle the issue.

Contact Christopher O’Donnell at codonnell@tampabay.com or (813) 226-3446. Follow [@codonnell](https://twitter.com/codonnell) [Times](https://www.tampabay.com).



SUE CARLTON
scarlton@tampabay.com

Mayors speak up for good sense

In the fight to stop senseless shootings, could mayors make a difference?

Several from South Florida have put their names behind a lawsuit pushing back against some serious bullying out of Tallahassee.

In the face of the most recent gun massacre — 17 senselessly dead at a high school in the town of Parkland — and the ensuing groundswell of citizens demanding change, those mayors want to be able to take “reasonable, constitutional actions” that make sense for where their constituents live.

Such as: restricting guns in city parks or creating gun-free zones.

State law says no. Florida Statute 790.33 says regulation of guns and ammunition gets decided out of Tallahassee, a place where state lawmakers elbow each other out of the way to try to please the powerful National Rifle Association.

There’s more. The sanctions for violating this signed into law in 2011 by Gov. Rick Scott — could get a local elected official removed from office.

And fined up to \$5,000.

Also, that official’s city or county would be open to lawsuits and damages from anyone that felt harmed by, arguably, not being allowed to attend a concert at an arena there while packing a pistol.

The law does not explicitly say: Don’t even think about it, local governments, or we’ll take you down. But it’s implied.

Does this seem extreme? An attempt to chill dissent, maybe?

That’s what the lawsuit by nine mayors, the city of South Miami, and in some cases city council and commission members from Weston to Miami Beach contends, calling those penalties “onerous, unconstitutional and unprecedented.”

For the record, the lawsuit does not dispute that state government has the power to pre-empt certain matters from local regulation, such as the minimum wage or the operation of the Florida lottery.

It also says that normally the penalty is not declaring the offending local law null and void — not kicking people out of office, fining them and threatening their towns with costly lawsuits.

Maybe here it’s instructive to remember some other NRA-supported legislation, including the law that restricted doctors from asking their patients about owning guns — meaning the government got to dictate what a doctor could or could not say.

The courts are there to right bad law, and a federal court ruled this unconstitutional last year. Change is possible even on the subject of guns.

Here at home, a spokesman for St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Kriseman said the mayor has been outspoken about pre-emption in general, that he is inclined to join the suit but wants to review it and talk with his city attorney, Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn’s spokeswoman said he is interested in the details of the suit “as well as other ways local governments can enact commonsense gun violence prevention.” He, too, plans to talk to his attorneys.

The current groundswell of Americans demanding change can’t be ignored — or worse, placated with laws that do too little and the promise of not much more than thoughts and prayers for the most recent dead.

Good to see mayors adding their voices, too.

LOCAL

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Friday, April 6, 2018 | 1B

Political ‘zombies’ targeted

A bipartisan bill seeks to curtail personal use of donations from shuttered campaigns.



Times/WTSP reports inspired the bill by U.S. House members Gus Bilirakis and Kathy Castor.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL AND NOAH PRANSKY
Times Staff Writers

ST. PETERSBURG — Two local members are calling on Congress to close a loophole that allows ex-lawmakers to hoard unused campaign donations for years after they leave office.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, a Palm Harbor Republican, and Rep. Kathy Castor, a Tampa Democrat, are co-sponsoring the “Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act.” The bipartisan bill requires outgoing lawmakers to close their campaign accounts within two years and also bans payments to family members once they leave office.

The veteran lawmakers said the bill is in direct response to a Tampa Bay Times/10News WTSP investigation that turned up about 100 so-called “zombie campaigns,” kept open by former politicians to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members.

“Thanks to your reporting, we understand the extent of some of the abuses,” Castor said. “A member shouldn’t be able to have these accounts live on for decades and use those funds for personal use — that’s wrong.”

The Times/WTSP investigation found former lawmakers and former candidates spending leftover donations on airline tickets, club memberships, a limo trip, cellphones, parking and new computers. Twenty-five

See ZOMBIE, 5B

BUYING VINTAGE OMEGAS
Any age or condition

DIAMONDS - GOLD - SILVER

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Everyday Tampa Bay | Friends of Crescent Lake



Volunteers Erica and Ryan Ritter navigate Crescent Lake in a kayak picking up trash and debris on a recent Saturday.

Finding beauty under the muck

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAMES BORCHUCK | Times

ON the last Saturday of every month, Jim Bays slips into a pair of chest-high, brown waders and leads a small group of volunteers into Crescent Lake.

They remove garbage and floating debris and pluck out invasive species like pistia, or water lettuce. Pistia can form a large, dense mat on the surface of the lake, choking off the elements that fish and birds need to survive. Since 2007, the Friends of Crescent Lake has removed over 200,000 pounds of the floating weed, according to Lucy Trimarco, the director of the group’s steering committee.

The Friends partner with Keep Pinellas Beautiful to maintain the ecosystems at the north and south

ends of the lake.

Bays, a wetlands ecologist, said they are trying to “recover and restore some measure of biological diversity.”

The city once maintained the area around the lake by spraying to keep the weeds down.

Now, residents regularly see nesting birds like the limpkin, which wades through shallow waters looking for snails to eat. And they ask questions of the volunteers, trying to understand about marshes and habitats.

“If we can even make it better-looking, then the better it is for everybody,” Bays said.

Keeping Crescent Lake clean has a positive effect downstream, Bays said.

Runoff from the lake flows into Coffeepot Bayou, and that feeds into Tampa Bay.



Volunteers use laundry baskets to remove trash collected from the lake.

Watch them at work

To see more of the volunteer cleanup of Crescent Lake, visit video.tampabay.com.

Tampa fire chief ready to retire

Saying the city is a destination for firefighters, he champions the department’s diversity.

BY CHARLIE FRAGO
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — The city’s fire chief, who has served in the department for 35 years and held the top job for nearly a decade, announced his retirement Thursday.

Tom Forward, 58, said he has served at the helm of state’s

third-largest fire department for much longer than most of his peers at similarly sized departments.

“The typical tenure at a medium-to-large department is three to five years,” said Forward, who joined Tampa Fire Rescue in October 1983. “Eight years. That’s



a good benchmark.”

In a letter to Mayor Bob Buckhorn about his plan to retire May 20, Forward listed nearly two

dozen accomplishments since former Mayor Pam Iorio named him chief in 2010.

Among the highlights: three new fire stations, including a long-awaited station in New Tampa; a contract to provide medical response and transport services for MacDill Air Force Base; and a host of facility upgrades and operational improvements.

See CHIEF, 4B



The \$750,000 loan represents about three-fourths of the amount raised by the end of February for Rep. Jay Fant, R-Jacksonville.

Campaign loan unexplained

A GOP attorney general candidate loaned his campaign \$750,000 without giving the source.

BY WILLIAM MARCH
Times Correspondent

State Rep. Jay Fant, a candidate for Florida attorney general, won’t say where he got \$750,000 he loaned his campaign last fall.

Financial disclosures the Jacksonville Republican has been required to file through 2016 don’t appear to show where that much cash could have come

from.

Nonetheless, Fant has declined through a campaign spokeswoman to say where he obtained the money, saying only that it was “a personal loan.” The campaign referred instead to the financial disclosure he’ll be required to file in June, suggesting it will answer the question.

Fant’s assets, particularly his home, could have grown in value

since his last financial disclosure, which covered 2016, possibly providing more equity he could have borrowed against to obtain the money he loaned his campaign.

However, there is no record on the Duval County Clerk of Court’s website of Fant having borrowed recently against any real estate he owns, and the campaign said he hasn’t done so.

Fant’s financial disclosures don’t show many large, liquid assets other than an IRA.

See FANT, 4B

Read the pdf or click here to read online

Political 'zombies' targeted

A bipartisan bill seeks to curtail personal use of donations from shuttered campaigns.

By **CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL** and **NOAH PRANSKY**
Times Staff Writers

*Published online April 5
and in print April 6.*

ST. PETERSBURG — Two local members are calling on Congress to close a loophole that allows ex-lawmakers to hoard unspent campaign donations for years after they leave office.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, the Palm Harbor Republican, and Rep. Kathy Castor, the Tampa Democrat, are co-sponsoring the “Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act.” The bipartisan bill requires outgoing lawmakers to close their campaign accounts within two years and also bans payments to family members once they leave office.

The veteran lawmakers said the bill is in direct response to a [Tampa Bay Times / 10News WTSP](#) investigation that turned up about 100 so-called zombie campaigns, kept open by former politicians to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members.

“Thanks to your reporting we understand the extent of some of the abuses,” Castor said. “A member shouldn’t be able to have these accounts live on for decades and use those funds for personal use – that’s wrong.”

The *Times*/*WTSP* investigation found former lawmakers and former candidates spending leftover donations on airline tickets, club memberships, a limo trip, cell phones, parking and new computers. Twenty former lawmakers were still spending leftover donations more than a decade after they left office.

Roughly half of the zombie campaigns were kept open by ex-lawmak-

ers who went into lobbying. Under the new bill, they would be required to close their campaign accounts before starting in that industry.

But the bill does not address campaigns that continue spending even after the lawmaker dies. The investigation identified eight such campaigns where staffers authorized spending on lavish dinners, cell phone bills and rent checks.

Bilirakis said Castor and he will advocate support for the bill with their respective parties. But he expects some opposition.

“You’re going to get some resistance,” Bilirakis said. “Probably some former members of Congress will lobby against this bill.”

Under the proposed law, the two-year period to wind down a campaign would begin on the day after the deadline to qualify for the next election.

As with current law, unspent campaign donations could be given to charity, donated to local, state or national political parties or refunded to the original donor.

But it would prohibit candidates from transferring the money into their own political action committees, which is allowed under current regulations.

The bill would only apply to members of the U.S. House and Senate and not to presidential candidates.

The *Times*/*WTSP* investigation also led a Washington, D.C., watchdog group to [petition](#) the Federal Election Commission to specify which costs former lawmakers can pay with campaign donations. It also asks the agency to place a time limit on how long campaign accounts can

remain open.

On March 21, the FEC began a 60-day [public comment](#) period. Commissioners are expected to review the proposal after that.

Contact Christopher O'Donnell at codonnell@tampabay.com or (813) 226-3446. Follow @codonnell_Times.

2018 NFL DRAFT

Bucs take Washington defensive tackle Vita Vea

Sports, 1C



Tampa Bay Times

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In the know



RESTAURANT BRAWL ENDS IN 2ND DEGREE BURN

A fight over slow service at a Tampa Wingstop restaurant spills outside and winds up with an employee throwing hot oil on the angry customer. The customer was hospitalized and the worker could face charges. **Local, 1B**

Scott gets a break on voting rights

A federal appeals court has approved Gov. Rick Scott's request to block a lower court's order to replace the system for restoring voting rights for felons, a day before he and the Cabinet faced a deadline to enact new rules. **Local, 1B**

Review: 'Infinity War' is big, bold

Dark but entertaining, *Avengers: Infinity War* goes places audiences might not expect. **Etc, 2B**

Bloomin' Brands beats expectations

Outback's growth has helped Bloomin' Brands exceed first-quarter earnings forecasts, but its other chains aren't keeping up. **Business, 4B**

Experience could pay off for Bolts

Chris Kunitz is the only active player to have won four Stanley Cups, a stat not lost on Lightning general manager Steve Yzerman when he signed Kunitz to a one-year deal in the offseason. **Sports, 1C**

Movement on Trump nominees

Dr. Ronny Jackson withdraws from consideration to be the secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Senate confirms Mike Pompeo as secretary of state. **Nation, 2A**

TODAY'S WEATHER

Showers
8 a.m. 65° Noon 78° 4 p.m. 78° 8 p.m. 72°
40% chance of rain
More, back page of Sports

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Jury says guilty this time

Bill Cosby's first assault trial ended with a deadlocked jury. He now faces up to 10 years on each of three counts.

New York Times

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — A jury found Bill Cosby guilty Thursday of drugging and sexually assaulting a woman 14 years ago, capping the downfall of one of the world's best-known entertainers, and offering a measure of satisfaction to the dozens of women who for years have accused him of similar assaults against them.

On the second day of its deliberations at the Montgomery County Courthouse, the jury returned to convict Cosby of three counts of aggravated indecent assault against Andrea Constand, at the time a Temple University employee he had mentored.

The three counts — penetration with lack of consent, penetration while unconscious, and penetration after administering an intoxicant — are felonies, each punishable by up to 10 years

in state prison, though the sentences could be served concurrently.

Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin Steele asked that Cosby's \$1 million bail be revoked, suggesting he had been convicted of a serious crime, owned a plane and could flee, prompting an angry outburst from Cosby, who shouted, "He doesn't have a plane, you



Bill Cosby did not have an audible reaction to his conviction, but erupted shortly afterward.

See COSBY, 2A



Fans decked out in Lightning gear pass ex-captain Dave Andreychuk's statue on their way to an Amalie Arena playoff game.

BY CHARLIE FRAGO
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — As the Tampa Bay Lightning waits for the Boston Bruins to come to town for the next round of playoffs, the city's business community — members large and small — say it has already won the NHL postseason.

At WestShore Plaza this week, with blue and white banners surrounding walkways emblazoned with the stern visage of Steven Stamkos, it was a case of Lightning plenty — and envy.

The apparel manager at Dick's Sporting Goods, Steve Lowry, looked upon a wall solid with blue and white Lightning gear and said the hats, jerseys, T-shirts and other merchandise are selling out.

"Every time they win a game, a rash of people come in," Lowry said. "It's a frenzy right now."

Nearly Champs Sports has no Lightning swag.

"I wish we did. We'd be killing it right now," said manager Yel-lynn Ilera.

It's not just retailers who are feeling Lightning fever. The team's success acts like an international postcard for Tampa and the region, said Bob Rohrback,

MONEY THUNDERS INTO TOWN

The Lightning's playoff run is a boon to Tampa and its businesses.



Jason Horvath, 47, of Gibsonton shops for souvenirs at the Lightning's Amalie Arena store, where sales are up 67 percent, the team says.

president and CEO of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce.

People start to pay attention during the playoffs, he said, and attention is what every city is after.

Corporations looking to relocate take into account which cities have professional sports teams, he said. And reminding people that Tampa Bay has an NHL team is always good for business.

"You can't buy that kind of media exposure," Rohrback said. "It's important to keep that high profile."

How many of those international viewers (okay, mostly Canadians) translate into hockey tourists?

That's hard to quantify, said Santiago Corrada, president and CEO of Visit Tampa Bay, who looked at countywide hotel occupancy numbers during other recent Lightning playoff runs.

Though it's not a perfect apples-to-apples comparison between mid-April and mid-June, but the year-over-year revenue num-

See LIGHTNING, 4A

Who books 4,600 hotel nights?

Companies filming TV commercials in a growing Hillsborough market.

BY PAUL GUZZO
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — Hillsborough County interim film commissioner Tyler Martiniolich has a unique approach to channel surfing.

He searches for two kinds of commercials: those made in his county and those he thinks should have been.

"Television commercials mean money," Martiniolich said.

With five months to go in the fiscal year, Hillsborough has already bagged more money off

television commercial productions than all last fiscal year.

Yuengling beer, Home Depot and NAPA Auto Parts, for instance, have each had commercials produced in Hillsborough.

Since October, production companies have shot 108 commercials in Hillsborough, spending \$4.64 million on payroll, purchases, rentals and about 4,600 hotel nights, according to Martiniolich's Film Tampa Bay office. The office operates under the umbrella of Visit Tampa Bay, the county's tourism bureau.

In the previous 12 months, 39 television commercials spent \$3.15 million and booked about 3,800 room nights.

These are productions that needed Film Tampa Bay permits to work on public property, Martiniolich noted. Those made on private property or in studios are not part of the accounting.

"So we know more money was spent here, but not how much," he said.

Pinellas County hasn't seen as much activity.

See COMMERCIALS, 4A



Professional wrestling star John Cena, right, prepares to film a national public service announcement in Ybor City.

ZOMBIE CAMPAIGNS



Spending will get closer scrutiny

The targets, starting in July, are dormant campaigns that have hoarded money.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL
Times Staff Writer

The federal agency that oversees elections has announced a crackdown on former lawmakers who continue to spend leftover campaign donations long after leaving office.

The Federal Election Commission announced Wednesday that it will start scrutinizing the spending of what it called "dormant" campaigns, those maintained by former lawmakers who took advantage of a loophole that allowed them to hoard unspent campaign donations for years.

It comes after a *Tampa Bay Times*/10News WSP investigation found that the agency ignored campaign finance reports showing that more than 100 former politicians carried on spending donations though they were no longer campaigning. In some cases, these zombie campaigns remained open for more than a decade.

"I think this is great, a really positive step the FEC is taking," said Adav Noti, a former FEC attorney who is a senior director for the Campaign Legal Center, a Washington watchdog group. "For them to do this in the middle of an election cycle is highly unusual."

The extra scrutiny will begin in July. It will apply to the campaigns of former U.S. House candidates who did not campaign or hold office during the previous two years and to former U.S. Senate and presidential candidates who have been out of office and not campaigning for four years.

The move was approved in a closed-door meeting Tuesday by FEC commissioners, who had previously refused to comment on the *Times*/10News investigation, called "Zombie Campaigns." The report detailed former lawmakers and candidates spend-

See ZOMBIE, 3A

Read the pdf or click here to read online

Spending will get closer scrutiny

The targets, starting in July, are dormant campaigns that have hoarded money

By **CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL**
Times Staff Writer

*Published online April 26
and in print April 27.*

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The extra scrutiny of former lawmakers’ spending will begin in July. It will apply to the campaigns of former U.S. House candidates who did not campaign or hold office during the previous two years and to former U.S. Senate and presidential candidates who have been out of office and not campaigning for four years.

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missioners, who had previously refused to comment on the *Times/WTSP* investigation, called “Zombie Campaigns.” The report detailed that former lawmakers and former candidates spent leftover donations on airline tickets, club memberships, a limo trip, cell phones, parking and new computers. Six campaign finance experts said that and other spending identified by the *Times/WTSP* were potential election law violations. In a few cases, spending continued after the lawmaker had died.

FEC vice chairwoman Ellen Weintraub, a Democratic appointee, said the *Times/WTSP* report highlighted a problem that was not on the FEC’s radar. The need for action was supported by all four of the agency’s commissioners, she said.

“It was encouraging that the entire Commission saw this as a problem that needs to be addressed and agreed on a course of action that would be a good first step,” she said. “I’ve always been concerned about the potential for personal use and advo-

cated for strengthening those prohibitions.”

It’s unclear how effective the new FEC policy will be, however.

The agency, which has 33 analysts, is not planning to add more staff to help with the additional work, a spokeswoman said. Last year, the agency was responsible for reviewing some 26 million financial transactions. That number will rise this year with U.S. House and Senate races across the county.

In the past, when spending by former politicians has been questioned, little if any action resulted. In eight cases identified by the *Times/WTSP*, campaigns were asked for more information, sent the FEC paperwork stating they were not running for office, then continued spending.

The new oversight also stops short of the legal changes watchdog groups and two veteran Tampa Bay federal lawmakers say are needed to deter ex-politicians from hoarding and spending campaign funds.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, the Palm Harbor Republican, and Rep. Kathy Castor, the Tampa Democrat, are [co-sponsoring the “Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act.”](#) The bipartisan bill requires outgoing lawmakers to close their campaign accounts within two years and also bans payments to family members once they leave office.

“I think it’s positive the FEC is going to shine a light on this and review these campaigns but it’s no substitute for our bipartisan bill,” Castor said. “The FEC is just requesting a review – our bill would terminate those zombie campaigns after an election cycle. They need that.”

In addition, the Campaign Legal Center petitioned the FEC in February to introduce stricter rules for how former lawmakers spend leftover campaign money. A 60-day [public comment](#) period on the petition ends May 21.

“Some commissioners may now say we’ve already stepped up enforcement in this area so we don’t need to strengthen the rules,” Noti said. “That would be disappointing and concerning.”

Based on the most recent campaign filings, there will be no shortage of spending for FEC analysts to question.

Congressman Bud Cramer, R-Ala.,

reported spending more than \$1,800 on Feb. 7 on a “fundraising expense” at [The Source](#), a pricey Wolfgang Puck restaurant in Washington DC.

But Cramer, who left office in 2009 and went into lobbying, did not report any fundraising receipts in the first quarter and has not filed paperwork to run for office. Candidates are prohibited from most fundraising activities when they have not declared for an office. He could not be reached for comment.

Former Congressman Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., has continued paying his wife \$1,000 per month to file [his quarterly FEC report](#), his latest filing shows. More than five years after he left office, campaign funds covered nearly \$200 in “internet/wifi” expenses in January and February.

And former South Carolina Democratic congressman Robin Tallon, who has kept his campaign account open for 25 years, paid \$1,000 to his son for filing a 15-page handwritten report to the FEC.

Other ex-lawmakers’ campaigns have changed their spending habits in the wake of the *Times/WTSP* report.

Dylan Beesley, a former campaign adviser who took over as treasurer of the campaign of deceased Congressman Mark Takai, paid himself more than \$100,000 over a 17-month period for “consulting” after Takai’s 2016 death. That led to a watchdog group filing a complaint against him with the FEC.

In the first quarter of 2018, however, he paid himself just \$1,500, roughly \$5,000 less than in the first quarter of 2017.

WTSP reporter Noah Pransky and Times data reporter Connie Humburg contributed to this report. Contact Christopher O’Donnell at codonnell@tampabay.com or (813) 226-3446. Follow @codonnell_Times.

Hillsborough commission candidates won't share thoughts on penny. 1B

In the know



BARBER MAKES STRONG CASE TO BE BUCS' STARTING RB

All signs point to Peyton Barber being named the Bucs' starting running back going into this season. "He's doing everything he should be doing right now," coach Dirk Koetter says. Sports, 1C

Rays' Beeks shines in Boston return

Jalen Beeks, acquired by the Rays in a trade with the Red Sox last month, pitches four innings of one-hit ball against his former team en route to a 2-0 victory. Sports, 1C

Spanish coin clue in violent death

Christie New, who was found March 11 in a St. Petersburg park and died days later, is seen wearing it as a medallion in an ATM video. The coin was recovered in Colorado. Local, 1B

Honoring Tampa's wrestling history

A new mural at the Bryan Glazer Family JCC memorializes the 1950s to 1990s period when the building, then known as the Fort Homer Hesterly Armory, was a hub for wrestling. Local, 1B

When is the truth not the truth?

Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump's lawyer, goes on TV to speak of "somebody's version of the truth." He adds that he's worried special counsel Robert Mueller may try to trap the president into perjury. Nation, 4A

TODAY'S WEATHER

Chance of storms. 8 a.m. 78°, Noon 86°, 4 p.m. 90°, 8 p.m. 83°. 30% chance of rain. More, back page of Sports

tampabay.com

Get up and go. Itching for something fun to do but don't know what's going on? Worry not. We give you the rundown on local events at tampabay.com/things-to-do.

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Tampa Bay Times

FLORIDA'S BEST NEWSPAPER | tampabay.com | MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2018 | \$1

Zombie cash still flows

Federal scrutiny of ex-office holders' campaign funds won't begin till 2019.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL AND DONNIE HUMBERG Times Staff Writers

TAMPA — Four months ago, the federal agency that oversees elections announced that it would finally begin cracking down on former lawmakers who hoard and spend leftover campaign donations long after they leave office.

It didn't seem to make a difference to some former congressmen. Former Florida Rep. Cliff Stearns, a Republican who lost his seat in 2012, dipped into campaign donations to pay for internet service and continued paying a \$1,000 monthly salary to his wife in the weeks following the announcement.

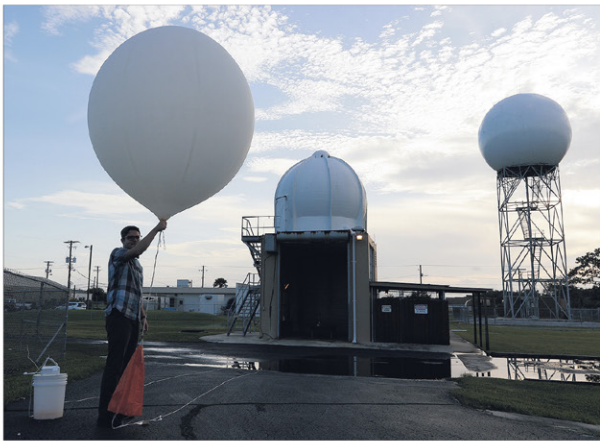
congressman Gary Miller added another \$2,400 in salary to the almost \$82,000 he had already paid his wife since leaving office in 2015. He also paid rent on office space and the tab for several meals at a Claremont eatery, Kick Back Jack's.

acknowledged last week that it actually won't begin scrutinizing the spending of former office holders until 2019.



Cliff Stearns lost in 2012 but still uses campaign money.

See ZOMBIE, 7A



Meteorologist Stephen Shiveley of the National Weather Service Tampa Bay prepares to launch a weather balloon from its Ruskin office last month. Balloons, an essential monitoring tool, are released every morning and night.

Rain or shine ...

The Ruskin weather center provides key data that affects 6 million people.

BY JIMENA TAVEL Times Staff Writer

RUSKIN — The metal garage door shrieks as it opens, then meteorologist Stephen Shiveley walks into the shed.

He quickly ties a string to a deflated balloon, then both to a nozzle and turns on the hydrogen. It takes about ten minutes for the white balloon to stretch 6 feet across.



Shiveley holds a radiosonde device that measures temperature, humidity and wind. The device will be attached to a weather balloon and sent about 100,000 feet into the atmosphere.

Soon, Shiveley will step outside and release it, and the balloon will soar until it reaches about 100,000 feet into the stratosphere.

See WEATHER, 8A

Amid scandals, Catholics consider cutting donations

Parishioners are agonizing over financial support for their churches and causes.

BY IVAN MORENO AND JEFF KAROUB Associated Press

For decades, Michael Dweiga has opened his wallet whenever the donation basket comes around at church, but the latest revelations of priests sexually abusing children brought him to the conclusion that he can no longer justify giving.



Associated Press (2015)

And Georgene Sorensen has felt enough anger and "just total sadness" over the past few weeks that she's reconsidering her weekly offering at her parish.

The report came two months after Pope Francis ordered disgraced former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick removed from public ministry amid allegations of Roman Catholic priests in Pennsylvania molested more than 1,000 children in six dioceses since the 1940s — crimes that church leaders are accused of covering up.

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as cardinal and ordered him to a "life of prayer and penance."

The most recent "whopper of a report" from Pennsylvania, Dweiga said, was enough to make him wonder where his money was going and whether it was being used to cover up abuses.

"In an organization that spans the whole world like the Catholic Church, you don't know where your money is going. And when you read about these priest-abuse scandals, it just raises that question to the highest power. What is this money going for?" said Dweiga, 63, who lives in Wilmette, Ill.

Sokolowski, an Austin, Texas, resident who founded catholicfundraiser.net to provide advice to Catholic nonprofits and churches, said he has heard from many who are "really sick and tired" of hearing about priests abusing children.

Surfing in a sea of online sharks

As websites get new extensions, scammers are finding more ways to rip off people.

BY TIM JOHNSON McClatchy Washington Bureau

It's easier than ever to get waylaid on the internet, diverted to dangerous territory where scam artists await with traps baited for the unsuspecting user.

It's all about devious misdirection, fumble-fingered typing and how our brains can confuse what our eyes see. Big money can await the clever scammer, and costs are rising for corporations and politicians who do not take heed.

The problems lie in the inner workings of the internet, and touches on issues such as the vast expansion of the combination of words, dots and symbols that comprise internet addresses.

It's no longer just .com, .net, .org and a handful of others. Now, there are 1,900 new extensions, known as top-level domains, things such as .beer, .camera, .city, .dating, .party and .shop.

"We see a ton of them being used maliciously," said Mikko Hippo, chief research officer at Finnish security company F-Secure, who called the new endings "a big headache."

The problems revolve around what computer scientists refer to as "spoofing" of the Domain Name System, or DNS, which has been called the phone book of the internet. It has been going on for a while, and it touches on what users type into the address bar of a browser window or click on at a website. There are new ways to make phony addresses look real.

"Creating a spoofed domain name, or even hijacking a domain name, has become a lot easier today," said Israel Barak, chief information security officer at Cyberason, a cyber security firm based in Boston.

Just a few years ago, spoofing an internet address, say, microsoft.com, was primitive.

"You would have to maybe change that 'i' to a 'l'. I'm going to be Microsoft with a 'l' today, or even change the 'o' to a zero, or change the 't' to a seven. For senior citizens with fuzzy vision like I'm starting to get, you might squint at that and say, 'Looks like Microsoft to me,'" said Paul Vickie, chief executive of Farsight Security, a San Mateo, Calif., company.

An internet pioneer, Vickie has been involved in its governance for three decades. He is an architect of some of the protocols used in the DNS system and advises the nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the Los Angeles nonprofit that serves as the guardians for

See SPOOFING, 9A

Read the pdf or click here to read online

Zombie cash still flows

Federal scrutiny of ex-office holders' campaign funds won't begin until 2019

By Christopher O'Donnell and Connie Humburg
Times Staff Writers

Four months ago, the federal agency that oversees elections announced that it would finally begin cracking down on former lawmakers who hoard and spend leftover campaign donations long after they leave office.

That didn't seem to make a difference to some former congressmen.

Former Florida Rep. Cliff Stearns, a Republican who lost his seat in 2012, dipped into campaign donations to pay for internet service and continued paying a \$1,000 monthly salary to his wife in the weeks following the announcement.

And former California congressman Gary Miller added another \$2,400 in salary to the almost \$82,000 he had already paid his wife since leaving office in 2015. He also paid rent on office space and the tab for several meals at a Claremont eatery, Kick Back Jack's.

It turns out Stearns and Miller had little reason to worry.

The Federal Election Commission acknowledged last week that it actually won't begin scrutinizing the spending of former office holders until 2019.

FEC spokeswoman Judith Ingram said that was always the timetable agreed by commissioners in a closed-room session in April, but that the agency had accidentally announced the wrong start date.

That is an unnecessary delay, said Adav Noti, a former FEC attorney who is now a senior director for the Campaign Legal Center, a Washington D.C. watchdog group. Ex-lawmakers have been given plenty of notice, he said.

"I don't see any reason why the FEC needs to wait another six months to

begin doing what it should have been doing all along," Noti said.

The FEC's crackdown was announced after a [Tampa Bay Times/10News WTSP investigation](#), called *Zombie Campaigns*, found that the agency ignored campaign finance reports showing more than 100 former politicians carried on spending donations even though they were no longer campaigning. In some cases, these campaigns remained open for more than a decade.

Retired lawmakers and former candidates spent leftover donations on airline tickets, club memberships, a limo trip, cell phones, parking and new computers, reporters found.

It's unclear if the new guidelines unveiled by the FEC would curb such spending. They apply to the campaigns of former U.S. House candidates who did not campaign or hold office during the previous two years and to former U.S. Senate and presidential candidates who have been out of office and not campaigning for four years.

FEC analysts have been instructed to look for spending on rent, utility payments, telephones, spending on meals, club memberships and concert and sporting event tickets, among other items.

But Noti and two veteran Tampa Bay federal lawmakers say the new oversight stops short of the legal changes that are needed to curtail the misuse of campaign funds highlighted by the *Times*/WTSP report.

The Campaign Legal Center is still waiting for the FEC to act on a petition it filed in February calling for the FEC to specify what costs former lawmakers can expense with campaign

donations and to place a time limit on how long campaign accounts can remain open. A 60-day public comment period on the petition ended May 21.

And in April, Rep. Gus Bilirakis, the Palm Harbor Republican, and Rep. Kathy Castor, the Tampa Democrat, cosponsored a bill that requires outgoing lawmakers to close their campaign accounts within two years and also bans payments to family members once they leave office.

But the bill, which was co-sponsored by Colorado Republican Congressman Mike Coffman, seems to have stalled.

“Unfortunately, it’s going to be an uphill battle,” said Castor, who plans to push the bill again if the Democrats win control of the House of Representatives in the upcoming midterm elections. “People are very fed up with this climate of corruption.”

Stearns, who has spent \$143,000 so far this year, still has \$1.5 million in unspent political donations. He did not respond to a voicemail on his cell-phone seeking comment.

Miller still has \$293,00 in unused donations. A call to his business office was not returned.

Still, with the threat of extra scrutiny, some ex-lawmakers have begun changing their behavior.

Former Florida senator George LeMieux was a focus of the *Times/WTSP* investigation for spending on events and paying more than \$40,000 to a political campaign consultant even though he wasn’t campaigning. In February, he converted his campaign account into a political action committee called the Florida Freedom Committee, a move that allows him to make unlimited donations to political parties and other political committees.

And former South Carolina Democrat Robin Tallon seems to have curbed some of his post-retirement campaign spending, which previously included thousands of dollars on computers and tens of thousands of dollars on unexplained “reimbursements.”

After paying more than \$22,000 to his son, Robert Tallon III, to file campaign reports over more than a decade, Tallon appointed a new treasurer in July.

Still, a quarter century after leaving office in 1993, he has more than


\$1 million remaining in his still-open campaign account.

Contact Christopher O’Donnell at codonnell@tampabay.com Follow @codonnell_Times.

Interactive database

See how the 102 **'ZOMBIE'** politicians spent their money

Search by state, name, or spending category
computer equipment/tablets



Last election: 11/04/2014

GORELL, JEFF

GORELL FOR CONGRESS California


Republican Jeff Gorell unsuccessfully ran for the House of Representatives in California in 2014. He is currently serving as deputy mayor of the City of Los Angeles.

His campaign was spending as recently as 09/11/2017.

Type of spending	Total spent
storage	\$4,924
political contribution	\$2,400
accounting/compliance/tax prep	\$2,400

[Expand to see all spending](#) ▾

[Download all disbursements](#) ⬇



Left office: 09/29/2006

FOLEY, MARK A

FRIENDS OF MARK FOLEY FOR CONGRESS Florida

Mark Foley, R-Fla., became a representative in 1995. He resigned in 2006 during a scandal over sexual text messages he sent to teenage congressional pages.

His campaign was spending as recently as 09/26/2017.

In response to findings:

During an October interview, Foley said, "There's a slim likelihood I could run for office again, which is why I keep it open. The world's changed, so I may one day want to run for a seat." He added: "Sometime, Congress should probably decide if you

Online only:
tampabay.com/zombiedatabase

Published online January 31, 2018

Supplemental material

Digital Highlights

ZombieCampaigns.com



Interactive database

See how the 102 'ZOMBIE' politicians spent their money

By ELI MURRAY AND CONNIE HUMBURG
Design by NEIL BEDI
Times Staff

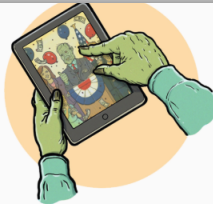
Jan. 31, 2018

Reporters for the *Tampa Bay Times* and WTSP NewsChannel 10 used [data from the Federal Election Commission](#) to build a database of 102 zombie campaigns — federal campaigns that were still spending money years after their candidate left office, stopped campaigning, or in some cases, died.

You can [download all of the data](#) or use this app to browse the zombie campaigns we identified.

Our database does not include spending within two years of a politician's last election or retirement from elected office, assuming the politician is alive. It also does not include spending after Sept. 30, 2017. As a result, the totals listed here may be lower than the sums described in other parts of our coverage.

[Click here](#) to read the story, and [here for more notes on our methodology](#).



The iPad and the country club

IF ANYONE DEMONSTRATES HOW MUCH former lawmakers can get away with, it's [Robin Tallon Jr.](#)

The South Carolina Democrat left the House of Representatives in January 1993, just as Bill Clinton was entering the White House, to set himself up as a D.C. lobbyist.

Tallon was hardly an influential lawmaker. He was primary sponsor of only two bills that became law, according to govtrack.us. One was to designate National Tourism Week.

But his decade in Congress left him with more than \$400,000 in his campaign account. He kept it open, then invested the money, turning it into \$1 million.

In 2005, Tallon embarked on a spending spree that is still ongoing.

It included more than \$31,000 in "reimbursements" paid to himself without any explanation, federal records show. Another \$20,000 was paid to his son, Robert Tallon III, who was listed as campaign



University of South Carolina
Robin Tallon Jr. left the House of Representatives in 1993.

Bending the rules

THE LAWS ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING are simple if vague.

The money cannot be used for costs unrelated to campaigning or serving in office.

Items like clothing, country club fees and groceries, for example, are prohibited. Campaign workers' salaries, office space, cell phones and internet service are allowed, when used for campaign purposes.

But the rules barely address what is permitted once a politician leaves office.

It would be easy for the FEC to find campaigns exploiting that loophole.

Times/WTSP reporters used the FEC's own data to identify roughly 100 zombie campaigns that have spent more than \$20 million since 1995.

The *Times* included campaigns that kept spending more than six months after the candidate died. For the other campaigns, the analysis didn't consider spending in the first two years to give candidates time to get out of leases, cell phone contracts and other commitments.

That's far longer than candidates should need. A 2013 FEC advisory opinion said outgoing politicians should wind down campaign expenses within six months. Former independent Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Rep. Charlie Norwood, R-Ga., both donated more than 90 percent of their money to charity and closed their campaign within a year of leaving office.

George LeMieux

Former U.S. Senator, R-Florida

- Left office in 2011
- Paid \$40,000 to campaign consultant A. Milano Strategies (November 2014 to July 2017)



Times file

WTSP tracked him down in West Palm Beach to ask him why.



He actually paid the firm 29 times over 33 months.

Item	Amount	Date
...

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Journalist [We're the reporters who found 100+ former politicians' campaign accounts spending campaign donations years after the campaign was over — sometimes, even when the politician was dead. AUA](#)

↕ 53,045 points • **1,681 comments** submitted 4 months ago by [elimurray](#) **ELI MURRAY** to r/IAmA

Our short bio: We're Chris O'Donnell, Eli Murray, Connie Humburg and Noah Pransky, reporters for the Tampa Bay Times and 10News/WTSP. We've spent just short of a year investigating 'zombie campaigns': political [more](#)

Journalist [I am Julian Assange founder of WikiLeaks -- Ask Me Anything](#)

↕ 48,297 points • **14,701 comments** submitted 1 year ago by [_JulianAssange](#) **WIKILEAKS** to r/IAmA

I am Julian Assange, founder, publisher and editor of [WikiLeaks](#). WikiLeaks has been publishing now for [ten years](#). We have had many battles. In February the UN ruled that I had been unlawfully detained, without [more](#)

Journalist [We are the investigative journalists who worked on the Panama Papers AMA!](#)

↕ 41,157 points • **2,970 comments** submitted 2 years ago by [SZ_investigativ](#) to r/IAmA

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10News WTSP ✓

Published by Noah Pransky [?] · January 31 · 



Want to drain the swamp? We found a good place to start – dead and retired candidates still “campaigning.”
10 Investigates and the Tampa Bay Times teamed up to identify dozens of former Congressional campaigns now financing the lifestyles of politicians, their families, and their former associates...and nobody in Washington seemed to notice...until we did:

www.zombiecampaigns.com

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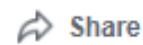
Published by Andrew Krietz [?] · February 1 ·



With a tip of the cap to the 1970s cult icon, "Schoolhouse Rock!," 10Investigates and the Tampa Bay Times bring you a new lesson from the Capitol: how to abuse campaign finance loophole.

Catch our groundbreaking investigative project: zombiecampaigns.com

63K Views



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8

A TAMPA BAY TIMES/ 10NEWS WTSP INVESTIGATION

ZOMBIE CAMPAIGNS



**THE CANDIDATES ARE NO LONGER
RUNNING — SOME ARE DEAD —
BUT THEIR CAMPAIGNS KEEP GOING.
AND KEEP SPENDING.**

**BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL, ELI MURRAY, CONNIE
HUMBURG AND NOAH PRANSKY | Times/10News WTSP Staff Writers**

WASHINGTON D.C. It's been more than a decade since South Florida Rep. Mark Foley was forced out of Congress for sending sexually explicit text messages to teenage boys. But Foley tapped his congressional campaign fund to dine on the Palm Beach social circuit four times in early 2017, ending with a \$450 luncheon at the Forum Club of the Palm

the Tampa Bay Times, 10News WTSP and TEGNA-owned TV stations found. Their spending makes a mockery of one of the fundamental principles of America's campaign finance laws: Donations must be spent only on politics, not politicians' personal lives. Times/10News reporters analyzed more than 1 million records detailing the spending of former U.S. lawmakers and federal candidates. They found roughly 100 of these zombie cam-

**SEE HOW 102 ZOMBIES
SPENT THEIR MONEY**
Browse the full database of zombie campaigns identified by the Times/10News WTSP at tampabay.com/zombiedatabase



**'ZOMBIE ACCOUNTS
OF CAPITOL HILL'**
Watch 10News WTSP's zombie campaign music video at tampabay.com/zombiecampaings

ZOMBIE CAMPAIGNS



Spending will get closer scrutiny

The targets, starting in July, are dormant campaigns that have hoarded money.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL
Times Staff Writer

The federal agency that oversees elections has announced a crackdown on former lawmakers who continue to spend leftover campaign donations long after leaving office.

The Federal Election Commission announced Wednesday that it will start scrutinizing the spending of what it called "dormant" campaigns, those maintained by former lawmakers who took advantage of a loophole that allowed them to hoard unspent campaign donations for years.

It comes after a *Tampa Bay Times*/10News WTSP investigation found that the agency ignored campaign finance reports showing that more than 100 former politicians carried on spending donations though they were no longer campaigning. In some cases, these zombie campaigns remained open for more than a decade.

2P | Sunday, February 4, 2018 | Tampa Bay Times

Tampa Bay Times
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Former leaders
W.L. Straub 1901-1912
Paul Poynter 1912-1938
Nelson Poynter 1938-1978
Eugene Patterson 1978-1988
Andrew Barnes 1988-2004

Standard of accuracy
Our standard at the *Tampa Bay Times* is simple: to get things right the first time. This being a human endeavor, we sometimes

Find other viewpoints and a daily collection of cartoons at [tampabay.com/opinion](#)

OPINION

Times editorials

'Zombie' spending is indefensible

It costs a lot of money to run a congressional campaign, and it takes a lot of gall to keep spending campaign cash years after leaving office. That's exactly what many former lawmakers and candidates have done, shamelessly using leftover campaign contributions to pay expenses that have nothing to do with campaigning. The practice, which has been ignored by federal elections officials, is indefensible and should be halted.

"Zombie Campaigns," an investigation by the *Tampa Bay Times*, 10News WTSP and TEGNA-owned TV stations, found roughly 100 cases where campaign spending continued long after an official left office. The "zombie campaigns" ran through more than \$20 million since 1995, reporters found.

What did the money pay for? High-priced repaid some money in January after a complaint to the Federal Election Commission.)

Not even death stops the spending. The reporters found eight campaigns that kept writing checks after the candidate died. Other ex-lawmakers who forged new careers as lobbyists used their leftover money to benefit their lobbying clients. Said one watchdog: "It's the kind of

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Friday, April 6, 2018 | 1B

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Political 'zombies' targeted

A bipartisan bill seeks to curtail personal use of donations from shuttered campaigns.

BY CHRISTOPHER O'DONNELL AND NOAH PRANSKY
Times Staff Writers

ST. PETERSBURG — Two local members are calling on Congress to close a loophole that allows ex-lawmakers to hoard unspent campaign donations for years after they leave office.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, a Palm Harbor Republican, and Rep. Kathy Castor, a Tampa Democrat, are co-sponsoring the "Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act." The bipartisan bill requires outgoing lawmakers to close their campaign accounts within two years and also bans payments to family members once they leave office.

The veteran lawmakers said the bill is in direct response to a *Tampa Bay Times*/10News WTSP investigation that turned up about 100 so-called "zombie campaigns," kept open by former politicians to finance their lifestyles, advance new careers and pay family members.

"Thanks to your reporting, we understand the extent of some of the abuses," Castor said. "A member shouldn't be able to have these accounts live on for decades and use those funds for personal use — that's wrong."

The *Times*/WTSP investigation found former lawmakers and former candidates spending leftover donations on airline tickets, club memberships, a limo trip, cellphones, parking and new computers. Twenty for

» See ZOMBIE, 5B

Other reporting inspired by our findings

Newsday

Zombie campaign accounts live on

So what's the status of the committees of other former members?

HUFFPOST

MapLight Contributor
Revealing the influence of money in politics

7 Candidates-Turned-Trump Cabinet Members Continue Spending Campaign Funds

02/03/2018 08:45 pm ET

Bloomberg
Government

Bloomberg Exclusives, Budget, Finance & Taxes

Kill the Zombies? FEC Mulls What to Do About Undead Campaigns

Orlando Sentinel

Commentary: 'Zombie' attack: Campaigns are dead, but still spending money

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arts & life

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How Lax Regulations Make It Easy For Politicians To Run 'Zombie' Campaigns

February 5, 2018 · 4:21 PM ET

Heard on [All Things Considered](#)

Congressional Letters

KATHY CASTOR
14TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
VICE RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND POWER
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(813) 871-2817
www.castor.house.gov

May 21, 2018

The Honorable Caroline C. Hunter
Commissioner
U.S. Federal Election Commission
1050 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20463

RE: Support for FEC Rulemaking over use of remaining campaign funds

Dear Commissioner Hunter,

I respectfully write to comment on REG 2018-01, the Federal Election Commission's notice of availability regarding former candidates' personal use of campaign funds. I support the Commission proceeding with a rulemaking on this important topic.

Reporting by Florida's Tampa Bay Times and WTSP-TV (see attached) indicate that many former officeholders have continued using their campaign funds to pay a variety of expenses for years after leaving office.

In response to this abuse of power, I introduced the Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act. This bill requires outgoing lawmakers to close their campaign accounts within two years and also bans payments to family members once they leave office.

I believe the Commission should clarify the permissible and impermissible uses of campaign funds after a person is no longer running for office. Doing so would help prevent some of the most problematic spending and provide needed clarity to former officeholders.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. I look forward to continuing to support you in your all-important mission. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Assistant, Didier Barjon at 202-225-3376.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Castor".

Kathy Castor
U.S. Representative
Florida – District 14

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 25, 2018

The Honorable Gregg Harper
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Brady
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on Judiciary
2138 Rayburn
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Nadler
Ranking Member
Committee on Judiciary
2138 Rayburn
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Hold a hearing on H.R. 5409, Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act

Dear Chairman Harper, Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Brady and Ranking Member Nadler:

We write to you to follow-up on our requests for a hearing on our bill H.R. 5409, Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act. H.R. 5409. It requires former lawmakers to close campaign accounts in a reasonable time and bars unauthorized payments to family members. Our bill also requires that former lawmakers disperse all campaign funds prior to becoming a registered lobbyist. A member should not be able to have these accounts live on for decades or use them for personal gain.

Currently, there is no limit on how long an ex-lawmaker can hold onto a campaign account. This bill has bipartisan support with additional support from advocacy groups who witness the abuse of campaign funds first hand. Tampa Bay Times/WTSP reporters analyzed more than one million records detailing the spending of former U.S. lawmakers and federal candidates. They found roughly 100 of these “zombie campaigns,” still spending even though their candidate’s political career had ended. Former members should not be able to have these accounts live on for decades and use those funds for personal use – that is wrong – and we must work together to end this pervasive practice.

Former members should not be able to have these accounts live on for decades and use those funds for personal use – that is wrong – and we must work together to end this pervasive practice.

Thank you in advance for your help to advance the Honest Elections and Campaign, No Gain Act this summer.

Sincerely,


Kathy Casto
Member of Congress


Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress

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Shortlisted projects

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[Monitor da Violencia](#), G1, Brazil

[Paradise Papers](#), International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, United States

[Reporting Deaths in Malaysian Police Custody: Behind the Numbers](#), Malaysiakini, Malaysia

[Zombie Campaigns](#), Tampa Bay Times and WTSP, United States

[Easy Money](#), The Globe and Mail, Canada

[Bussed Out: How America moves its homeless](#), The Guardian US, United States

2018 Suncoast Emmy Awards

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