



Written by [Kurt Hyde](#) on May 24, 2013

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## Texas Conservatives Mobilize — Ask Governor to Veto Bill Expanding the Definition of Political Activity

Republicans in the Texas Legislature have succeeded where Obama Democrats have failed. Both houses of the Texas Legislature have passed SB 346 and it awaits the governor's signature to become law. SB 346, authored by Senator Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo) and sponsored in the House by Representative Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth), would greatly expand the definition of what is political activity and force groups to come under political reporting requirements.



The first sentence of SB 346 reads: "AN ACT relating to reporting requirements of certain persons who do not meet the definition of political committee." The bill would apply to:

A person or group of persons [that] accepts political contributions if its members or donors make a payment, including dues, to the person or group of persons and, at the time of making the payments, the members or donors have reason to know that their payments may be used to make political contributions or political expenditures or may be commingled with other funds used to make political contributions or political expenditures.

The reporting requirements would apply to organizations that meet the \$25,000 per year threshold. Amazingly for a bill passed by a legislature dominated by supposedly conservative Republicans, it exempts labor unions using the type of wording one might expect from a labor union of Wisconsin government employees:

This subchapter does not apply to a labor organization or any subordinate entity or associated account of a labor organization.

The *Wall Street Journal*, in an editorial entitled "Texas Targets Conservatives" in its May 22 issue commented:

The groups, which file under sections 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6) of the tax code, would also have to disclose their donors, providing a new opportunity for advocacy groups to intimidate businesses and others from participating in elections.



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The editorial went on to say the bill appears to be “targeting frequent critic Michael Quinn Sullivan (shown) from Texans for Fiscal Responsibility. Mr. Sullivan is on the black list because his group spreads the word about the voting records of lawmakers.”

Conservatives have mobilized against the bill’s passage, inundating the governor’s office with phone calls. Much of the mobilization of phone calls has been accomplished via social networking groups and the number appears to be substantial. Some social group members have posted that the operators who answer the phone were immediately able to prompt them with the bill number when they called asking the governor to veto it. The decision is now in the hands of Governor Rick Perry, a man who talks like a conservative but whose actions don’t always in agree with his words. Considering the large call volume all week asking for him to veto this bill, his lack of a decision by this time is a cause for concern by the groups who have organized this campaign.



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