

Crites to file action against Cordray with Ohio Elections Commission for alleged illegal campaign contributions

Donor on record saying Cordray donation was funneled through second party

Columbus – Revelations of potential illegal campaign contributions to Richard Cordray’s campaign committee have prompted legal action before the Ohio Elections Commission (OEC). The OEC complaint was announced today by Republican candidate for Attorney General Mike Crites.

“These developments are enormously troubling in any political race, but particularly in a race for Attorney General, the state’s top law officer,” Crites said. “Voters expect their Attorney General to obey both the letter and the spirit of the law.”

Crites said the action would be filed within the next few days and that he will ask for an expedited hearing and we will seek to take the sworn depositions of everyone involved, including Mr. Cordray himself.

The Dayton Daily News uncovered alleged violations of law involving campaign contributions to Richard Cordray’s campaign. According to the paper, Cordray received a \$10,000 contribution from Lindsey Kutty, the 25-year-old daughter of Montford Will (a bond trader doing business with the State Treasurer’s office), less than two weeks after taking office as State Treasurer.

Will is a long time political activist in Ohio. According to the Dayton Daily News, Will and his wife Min Cha Lee have contributed more than \$650,000 to political candidates, the majority Democrats.

Not long after that donation, Will’s firm – Wachovia Securities – went from doing less than one percent of the Treasurer’s bond trading business to 37.5 percent – a more than 3,700 percent increase.

When asked if the money actually came from his stepdaughter or from him, Will stated on the record that the money “came from her mother.”

The revelation uncovered two potential violations of Ohio campaign finance law.

First, the law prohibits giving campaign contributions in someone else’s name. Tom Noe, former fund manager with the state Bureau of Workers Compensation and political contributor, was sentenced to more than two years in prison for doing just that.

Second, state contractors and their spouses can contribute a combined total of no more than \$2,000 in any 24-month period.

The potential penalty for violating election law in this way is forfeiture of the ability to take office, should the candidate win the election.

Cordray is uniquely familiar with the penalty for this kind of violation. Ten years ago this month, in his first race for Attorney General, he falsely suggested that Betty Montgomery’s campaign improperly funneled money to the campaign of another state candidate.

Although nothing came of his accusations, Cordray pointed out in news reports that penalty for being involved with funneled campaign contributions is forfeiture of the elected office.

Crites campaign says that Cordray’s response raises further suspicion about the contributions.

He claims there is no connection between the maximum contributions and the 3,700 percent increase in that firm's business with the state, that he didn't know Ms. Kutty and that he didn't know anything about the contribution. Yet he immediately said he would give the money back.

Cordray went on to say that whenever he encounters a questionable donation "we step up and address it and return a contribution where we think there is any appearance question."

Yet in August, Mr. Cordray refused to return \$20,000 in campaign contributions from Jimmy Dimora and Frank Russo, two Cuyahoga County officials at the center of a massive federal investigation into public corruption.

Crites' also expressed doubt that Cordray didn't know who Ms. Kutty is prior to this weekend, noting how uncommon it is to have a 25-year-old give at the maximum level of \$10,000. In addition, Cordray received nearly \$20,000 between 2002 and 2004 from Mr. Will, his wife, his son, and his business partner in his race for Franklin County Treasurer.

"Richard Cordray's actions simply don't live up to his words," Crites said. "After eight races in 18 years, his actions have become those of a professional politician: Tell the voters what they want to hear, then do whatever you want once you're elected. If the evidence uncovered by the news media proves to be true, then Richard Cordray is guilty of the same 'pay to play' and 'culture of corruption' that Marc Dann campaigned against and then practiced while in office.

Crites has a 21-year record of public service as a federal, state, and local prosecutor. He was appointed in 1986 to serve as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio by then-President Ronald Reagan, a position he held until 1993. In this role he was responsible for all federal law enforcement in 48 of 88 Ohio counties. A decorated U.S. Navy Captain, Crites was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame and is a veteran of the Vietnam War. At the peak of his Navy career he helped manage 7,300 personnel. For more information visit [www.CritesForOhio.com](http://www.critesforohio.com) <<http://www.critesforohio.com/>> .