

Money Trail Shows Sole Contributor Has Heavy Influence on MoCo PAC's

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Left: Eric Yollick conversing with Candidate Michelle Slaughter for Criminal Court of Appeals; Right: Eric Yollick, Woodlands Attorney

By: Jessica Shorten•

CONROE, TX – On February 28, 2018, the 8-day reports for Political Action Committees (PACs) were available to view through the Texas Ethics Commission Campaign Finance Reports.

Through the reports, there is one common thread, The Woodlands attorney Eric Yollick. Yollick is involved at every level in politics from local party races to state and national seats.

Yollick selects the candidates, funds the PAC's to support the candidates, and provides information for the candidate vetting processes.

John Wertz from the Montgomery County Tea Party PAC's vetting committee regularly coordinates vetting information with Yollick. One of Wertz's slogans is "follow the money," and Wertz explains on the USVoteSmart.com website that the "Circle of Influence" is negatively affected when the people

with money and special interests align themselves with politicians. Wertz goes on to correlate how campaign contributions are used to expect favor at some point in the future, therefore, to find corruption in government, one must "follow the money."

So, upon research of the 8-day campaign finance report filings, the Montgomery County Gazette found an interesting trail once one "follows the money."

Freedom and Liberty Conservatives PAC

Starting with the newest PAC making a voice in Montgomery County politics, the Freedom and Liberty Conservatives PAC was established just this year on January 25, 2018, and sent out a mailer detailing their "Eight Great Reformers of Montgomery County." On this list are candidates Mark Keough, Melanie Bush, Melisa Miller, Kristin Bays, Mark Turnbull, Ronald Willingham, Matt Beasley, and Steve Toth.

The FLC-PAC lists Jon Bouche and Christian Ehmling as the Co-Chairmen, and Maureen Ball as the Treasurer. However, the main financier of the FLC-PAC is none other than The Woodlands attorney Eric Yollick, who has donated \$38,219.08 in in-kind contributions for videography services and printing and mailing the FLC's mailers in Montgomery County. Additionally, another \$10 was given by his wife, Tamara Yollick. The PAC has only received \$44,772.08 in contributions, making the Yollick household's donations over 85% of their funding.

Texas Patriots PAC

From January 1, 2017 through February 14, 2018, the Texas Patriots PAC received \$33,045.00 in contributions. The largest contributor is none other than The Woodlands attorney Eric Yollick, who donated a total of \$11,906 in this same time period, representing 36% of the Texas Patriots PAC's collections.

The Texas Patriots PAC has recommended Mark Keough, Melanie Bush, Melisa Miller, Kristin Bays, Mark Turnbull, Jason Dunn, Matt Beasley, and Steve Toth for office.

During this same election cycle, candidate Mark Keough also donated \$500 to the Texas Patriots PAC.

MontgomeryCounty Tea Party PAC

The Montgomery County Tea Party PAC has been publicizing their voter guide on social media and at polling locations to encourage voters to choose the candidates on their list.

The Chairman of the PAC's Vetting Committee, John Wertz, bolsters the scoring system the MCTP PAC uses to insure their candidates are selected without bias. Each candidate is asked to complete a questionnaire and participate in video interviews, both of which are scored and posted on the USVoteSmart.com website. Then, the members of the MCTP PAC and the USVoteSmart.com website state their scoring system insures candidates are selected in a manner that avoids pay-to-play slates.

However, many on social media have questioned the validity of the scoring system as information about the "vetted" candidates comes to light. It appears the vetting process relied heavily on each candidate's answers to the questionnaire and in-person interview. Incumbents were also judged on their previous performance in office, while background checks were not conducted on new candidates.

According to their 8-day report, the Montgomery County Tea Party PAC, has collected \$21,082 in donations during this March 6, 2018 election cycle, and their voter guide recommends or endorses the following local government candidates: Steve Toth, Mark Keough, Kristin Bays, Melisa Miller, Mark Turnbull, Melanie Bush, Matt Beasley, Gregory Parker, Bob Bagley, and Ronald Willingham.

A review of the MCTP PAC's 8-day Campaign Finance Report shows the recommended or endorsed candidates contributed the following amounts to the MCTP PAC during the March 6, 2018 primary election cycle:

- Steve Toth: \$2,400
- Mark Keough: \$2,400
- Kristin Bays: \$2,150
- Melisa Miller: \$150
- Mark Turnbull: \$100
- Melanie Bush: \$150
- Matt Beasley: \$1,150
- Gregory Parker: \$750
- Bob Bagely: \$100
- Ronald Willingham: \$0

In every local electoral contest listed above, the opposing candidates did not contribute anything to the MCTP PAC. The total amount of contributions received by the PAC from the candidates endorsed or recommended by the PAC is \$9,350 or 44% of the PAC's total contributions.

Then, attorney Eric Yollick also made a total of \$2,825 in contributions to the MCTP PAC in the March 6, 2018 primary election cycle, which represents 13% of the contributions received by the PAC.

Individual Candidate Donations

The Woodlands attorney, Eric Yollick, both personally and through his law firm, has also been a major contributor to many of the same candidates being recommended by the PAC's. For example, Yollick and his law firm have donated the following amounts directly to each of these individual candidates:

- Mark Keough - \$15,520.18
- Steve Toth - \$10,000
- Matt Beasley - \$3,500
- Melanie Bush - \$2,500
- Kristin Bays - \$2,500

- Melisa Miller - \$1,025
- Gregory Parker - \$600
- Jim Clark - \$1,700

Therefore, Yollick has contributed a total of \$37,345.18 to these individual candidates.

Summary

The following chart represents the total dollars contributed to the local PAC's who are creating voter guides for distribution at the polls by the Yollick household, Yollick Law Firm, and PAC endorsed candidates also receiving contributions from the Yollick household/law firm.

PAC	Contributions from Yollick Household/Yollick Law Firm	PAC Contributions from Candidates Endorsed by the PAC and Receiving Contributions From Yollick Household/Law Firm
Freedom & Liberty	\$38,229.08	\$0
Texas Patriots	\$11,906.00	\$500
MCTP	\$ 2,825.00	\$9,350
Totals	\$52,960.08	\$9,850

The following chart compares the total contributions received by each PAC versus the percentage of total PAC receipts from the Yollick household/law firm and candidates also supported by Yollick.

PAC	Contributions from Yollick Household/Law Firm/Candidates	Total Contributions Received by PAC	% of PAC Receipts From and Related to Yollick
Freedom & Liberty	\$38,229.08	\$44,772.08	85.4%

Texas Patriots	\$12,406.00	\$33,045.00	37.5%
MCTP	\$12,175.00	\$21,082.00	57.8%
Totals	\$62,810.08	\$98,899.08	63.5%

The Freedom and Liberty Conservatives PAC, the Texas Patriots PAC, and the Montgomery County Tea Party PAC have all issued voter guides for Montgomery County voters to use. Yet, all three voter guides are very similar. The same individual candidates to whom Yollick has made direct political contributions are the same candidates the PAC receives a large percentage of funding from and with the exception of the Pct. 4 JP race, has decided to vet as recommended or endorsed candidates.

Eric Yollick, Tamara Yollick, and the Yollick Law Firm has spent \$90,305.26 in the March 6, 2018 primary election on Montgomery County candidates and these three PAC's.

Yollick Household/Law Firm Contributions To:	Dollar Amount
Freedom & Liberty Conservatives PAC	\$38,229.08
Texas Patriots PAC	\$11,906.00
Montgomery County Tea Party PAC	\$ 2,825.00
Mark Keough	\$15,520.18
Steve Toth	\$10,000.00
Matt Beasley	\$ 3,500.00
Melanie Bush	\$ 2,500.00
Kristin Bays	\$ 2,500.00

Melisa Miller	\$ 1,025.00
Gregory Parker	\$ 600.00
Jim Clark	\$ 1,700.00
Total Spent for March 6, 2018 Primary	\$90,305.26