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Texas billionaire Stanford accused of \$8B banking fraud supplied Cornyn trip, political donations

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By **TODD J. GILLMAN** / The Dallas Morning News
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WASHINGTON – R. Allen Stanford has given generously to Texas lawmakers in both parties. And his company bankrolled a four-day visit to a Caribbean resort island for U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in 2004.

"It was strictly a fact-finding trip. They have offices in Houston, and they were doing a lot of business out of Antigua," said Cornyn spokesman Kevin McLaughlin. "There was nothing untoward or unseemly about the company five years ago."

Cornyn made the trip with his wife, Sandy, in early November 2004, and he disclosed it within days as required: \$7,441, paid for by Stanford Financial Group.

Stanford and his employees gave federal candidates \$2.4 million nationwide in the last two decades.

Cornyn received \$19,700, making him the fifth-largest recipient, according to an analysis by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics.

U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions, R-Dallas, was the second-biggest recipient, collecting \$41,375 – nearly all of it in the final weeks of the 2004 race against then-Rep. Martin Frost.

A Sessions aide declined to comment.

Cornyn and Sessions chair the GOP's Senate and House campaign arms, respectively.

Stanford donated heavily to both sides. His biggest recipient was Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla. (\$45,900).

Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Chris Dodd, D-Conn., were also in the top five.

A McCain aide said this morning that the senator would donate an equivalent sum to charity.