

EXHIBIT F



Stanford was looking for Washington's embrace

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By Randall Mikkelsen

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Texas billionaire Allen Stanford was a newcomer to Washington politics, but he looked to make a splash at last year's Democratic convention and spread money on both sides of the aisle, records show.

Stanford, charged by federal regulators on Tuesday with running a "massive" fraud through his Stanford Financial Group, opened a Washington lobbying office about two years ago, after buying the Washington Research Group, a policy study unit of Charles Schwab & Co in 2005.

The company's lobbying spending rose sharply in 2008 to \$2.8 million, on its own and through the lobbying firm Ben Barnes Group, according to records accessed through the Center for Responsive Politics, which tracks campaign contributions and lobbying.

Stanford donated \$4,600 to Barack Obama's presidential campaign that year. One of Stanford's aides, James Davis, who was also charged in the case, donated \$2,300 to Republican John McCain a year earlier.

Stanford's political action committee and employees have given more than \$2.4 million to parties and candidates for federal office since 1989, nearly two thirds of which went to Democrats, the Center for Responsive Politics said.

The company also paid \$7,441 in 2004 for Republican Senator John Cornyn of Texas to visit Antigua, home of Stanford International Bank, according to watchdog Legistorm.

The company's website features a video of Stanford delivering welcoming comments at a glittery event his company helped sponsor in conjunction with the Democratic national convention in Denver last year.

The video showed former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and then-Democratic Party Chairman Howard Dean appearing at the event, a bipartisan seminar conducted every four years by the nonprofit National Democratic Institute.

"I would not say they (the Stanford Financial Group) were a big player at all," lobbyist Ben Barnes said. "Washington was not their main interest."

Nevertheless, Barnes said he was stunned by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission charges. "I'm very shocked. And I'm saddened."

In a civil complaint filed in federal court in Dallas, Texas, the SEC accused Stanford, 58, and two aides at Stanford Financial Group of fraudulently selling some \$8 billion in high-yield certificates of deposit in a scheme that stretched around the world.

The SEC complaint named Stanford International Bank, based in Antigua with 30,000 clients in 131 countries and \$8.5 billion in assets, as well as broker-dealer and investment adviser units based in Houston, with 30 U.S. offices. In all, the company claims to oversee \$50 billion in assets.

Barnes described Stanford as a "very energetic, tall Texan. A lot of people would say he's right out of central casting as a Texas banker".

He said his work for Stanford was mostly related to Caribbean economic development and tax issues, and he helped set up Stanford's Washington lobbying office a few blocks from the White House. He said he had not spoken to investigators.

Stanford gave the most campaign money in 2002, when it gave \$800,000 for Democratic Senate campaigns and lobbied on a bill that would have created a state and local computer network to crack down on financial fraud, the Center for Responsive Politics said. The bill failed in the Senate.

Stanford was also one of several donors to the National Democratic Institute's bipartisan seminar last year in Denver, which brings together international leaders and policy makers, institute President Ken Wollock said.

"Stanford found out about our program and offered to be a sponsor," Wollock said. "We had no reason to believe that a very public company that was supporting international humanitarian charities and public policy events was somehow suspect."

The high-profile Stanford Washington Research Group sought to give Washington expertise on issues such as defense and healthcare to Stanford's clients, beginning with a kickoff conference in 2005 billed as featuring a keynote speech by former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Current lawmakers who were top recipients of Stanford donations since 1989 included Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida (\$45,000), Republican Representative Pete Sessions of Texas (\$41,365), McCain (\$28,150) and the Senate Banking Committee Chairman Chris Dodd, a Democrat (\$27,500), the politics center said.

(Reporting by Randall Mikkelsen; Editing by Toni Reinhold)

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