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Labor head on tobacco payroll

Former Minnesota union president
lobbied for industry, data shows

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David Roe, former president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, has worked as a paid lobbyist for a tobacco industry group since 1995, but didn't fully disclose the relationship in state lobbying reports, newly released documents show.

Roe, one of the state's best-known labor leaders and a former University of Minnesota regent, used his influence in the labor movement to campaign against U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulation of cigarettes. More recently he says he has lobbied for an industry-backed national tobacco settlement.

Roe was one of a number of labor leaders, lobbyists and organizations long allied with the Democratic Party paid under a \$3 million-a-year program known as the Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee, which is funded solely by the Tobacco Institute, the industry's lobbying and public relations arm.

According to a 1996 Tobacco Institute budget recently made public, the list of groups that received money from the committee reads like a who's-who of liberal and progressive organizations: Citizens for Tax Justice, the Economic Policy Institute, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Strategy Group.

The role played by Roe and other former union officials in tobacco industry lobbying is described in documents disclosed by cigarette makers under terms of the May 8 settlement of the Minnesota tobacco lawsuit by state Attorney General Hubert Humphrey III.

The budget for the Tobacco Institute indicates that Roe was paid \$24,000 in 1995 and \$30,000 in 1996. Roe, 73, of



Roe

LOBBY CONTINUED ON 6A

LOBBY/Records show former Minnesota union president on tobacco payroll

Union locals from across the country did the same thing, according to the files. When reached by the Pioneer Press, several of the union officials who sent the letters said they did so at the request of labor officials. They had long known and whose names appeared on the committee's payroll.

Gary Foley, Michigan state legislative director of the Transnational Union, said he wrote the letter at the request of Doug Weiland, a long-time Michigan union official. "This was merely a reciprocal favor to a local guy who was involved in a lot of things."

But Foley said he didn't know that Weiland — who is also the Michigan Senate Democratic political director — was being paid \$30,000 a year by the Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee. "I wouldn't have been aware of any of that," said Foley.

Weiland did not return calls to his office. Marilyn Leonard, president of the Florida AFL-CIO, also with- drew from the item. She did not appear. She said she did not discuss the issue with Frank Orta, president of the Florida State Council of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers. Leonard said she was unaware that Orta, of Pembroke Pines Fla., was receiving \$30,000 from the committee. "I wasn't aware of his full situation," said Leonard. "I never asked him about it."

Orta could not be reached for comment. One of the consultants the committee hired to lobby in Texas was Sam Dawson, former political director of the United Steel Workers of America. He said he has worked with some tobacco interests in the past.

"I do a little bit from time to time," he said. "I do things for them." Asked if he got paid by the committee, he replied, "The Tobacco Institute budget does not show he earned \$30,000 from them in 1996, he replied. "I may have, yeah."

Among the unlikely groups for

Bernard Brommer, Minnesota

James Savarese, a former

the tobacco industry in

Minnesota anti-smoking activist

David K. Roe

the tobacco industry budgeted \$3 million

groups, union lobbyists and other firms or entities.

long associated with Democratic Party politics. Among

the more than 30 organizations or individuals, and

documents. The committee budgeted for them in 1996.

Illinois

Michigan

Washington, D.C.

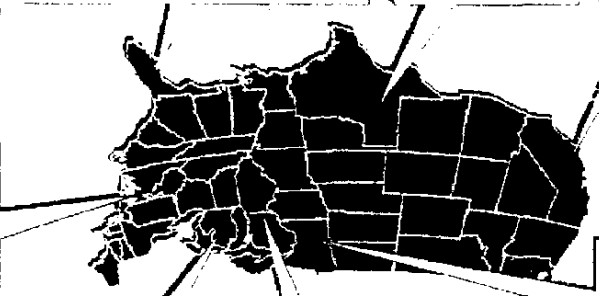
Florida

Texas

California

Follow the money

in 1996, the tobacco industry budgeted \$3 million for the tobacco industry Labor Management Committee, a group created, according to records released documents. The committee budgeted for them in 1996.



Minnesota
David Roe (\$30,000)
Former president of the Minnesota Tobacco Inst.
"Tobacco Inst."
Anti-smoking activists, legislators and union officials, including the current president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, said they didn't know of Roe's lobbying work on tobacco.

Illinois
The Strategy Group (\$60,000)
The Chicago-based firm was the leading direct-mail vendor for the Clinton-Gore campaign in 1996 and is one of the top Democratic direct-mail outfits in the country. Its client list includes Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, the Democratic National Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Michigan
Doug Weiland (\$30,000) and Robert McGlothen (\$128,000) and John Jarvis (\$150,000)
Partners in Wunder, McGlothen & Jarvis.
Weiland is the state's Senate Democratic list includes Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, the Democratic National Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Florida
Frank Orta (\$30,000)
Orta is president of the Florida State Council of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers and is executive vice president of the Broward County Steel Workers of the United States. Orta has his own political consulting firm in Texas.

Texas
Sam Dawson (\$30,000)
Dawson is former political director, affiliate of the National Council on Senior Citizens, an advocacy group for older citizens founded in 1961.

Washington, D.C.
Michael Forsey (\$192,000) and John Jarvis (\$150,000)
Partners in Wunder, McGlothen & Jarvis.
Weiland is the state's Senate Democratic list includes Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin of Iowa, the Democratic National Brotherhood of Teamsters.

California
Congress of California Seniors (\$21,396)
The unions have been more than silent — they've been bought off," said Kathleen Schleg, legislative counsel for Action on Smoking and Health or ASH, an anti-smoking lobby in Washington. "I think the union leaders that have thrown their lot in with Big Tobacco have done a major disservice to their members."

Medicine Lake, said he still is paid by the industry-funded committee but insisted he is working solely for union workers to pre-

serve jobs.

Roe's seven filings with the Minnesota Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board since 1993 also portray his work as a labor effort. Roe disclosed that he had bid for the "Labor Management Committee," but left off the title's first two words — "Tobacco industry." The only mention of tobacco in any of his disclosure reports is a scribbled notation on one form that appears to read "Tobacco Inst."

"Public health activists said the newly released information helps explain why organized labor has long stayed silent on — or opposed — attempts to regulate tobacco and smoking in the work place.

"The unions have been more than silent — they've been bought off," said Kathleen Schleg, legislative counsel for Action on Smoking and Health or ASH, an anti-smoking lobby in Washington. "I think the union leaders that have thrown their lot in with Big Tobacco have done a major disservice to their members."

There is nothing nefarious here," said Ray Scannell, research director of the Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers Union International, and a repre-

Labor officials associated with the committee defended their lobbying activities, saying union jobs in the tobacco industry are at stake — and it is proper to press the fight using the industry's money.

"There is nothing nefarious here," said Ray Scannell, research director of the Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers Union International, and a representative on the labor management committee. "This is not the industry manipulating unions."

The tobacco industry has long spent heavily on lobbying and has been a major donor to the Republican Party. President Clinton and other Democrats cited those factors last week when Republicans in the U.S. Senate killed a bill that would have strictly regulated the tobacco industry and raised taxes on cigarettes.

But the new documents show that organizations with close ties to Democrats got money from the Tobacco Institute through the Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee. For example, the documents show the committee paid \$60,000 to the Chicago-based Strategy Group in 1996, the same year the firm was serving as top direct-mail vendor for the Clinton-Gore re-election campaign.

The committee also paid \$30,000 to the Economic Policy Institute in Washington. Among the co-founders of the progressive think tank are Robert Reich, who served as Clinton's secretary of labor, and Ray Marshall, who served as labor secretary under President Carter.

Some of the groups who received committee money maintained last week that they had been unaware the committee was funded by the Tobacco Institute.

David K. Roe

- Age: 73
- Home: Medicine Lake
- Job: Consultant to Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee 1995-present
- Salary: \$30,000
- Has lobbied against U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations aimed at reducing youth access to tobacco products.

Career

- Minnesota AFL-CIO President, 1966-1985
- Minnesota Labor Interpretive Center, chairman of the board, 1985-present
- University of Minnesota Regent, 1981-1993
- Metropolitan Airports Commission, 1968-1972
- Minneapolis Building Trades Council, business agent, 1953-1966
- Democratic candidate for Minneapolis Mayor, 1961
- Served on the boards of the Salvation Army, Red Cross and Twin Cities Opportunities Industrialization Center. Also served on Governor's Commission on Worker Compensation and Unemployment Compensation.

Some said they were told the drive was a union-led effort.

Roe is not the first labor figure to work for the industry. Last month, the Pioneer Press reported that former Minnesota Teamster union lobbyist Wes Lane secretly was paid to lobby and gather political intelligence for the Tobacco Institute, the industry's lobbying and public relations arm, from at least 1988 to 1994. Lane didn't report the payments

from the tobacco industry in required lobbying disclosure statements.

Minnesota anti-smoking activist Jeanne Weigum said she routinely monitors tobacco industry lobbying reports and never suspected that Roe had tobacco ties.

"It seems outright deceptive," said Weigum, president of the Association for Non-Smokers Minnesota. "It looks to me like he managed to do it in a way that neatly avoids being caught despite the fact that all kinds of us were looking at it."

Todd Paulson, executive director of Common Cause of Minnesota, said lobbyists' disclosure reports should say who pays them. He said the revelations about Lane and Roe illustrate the weakness of current laws.

Indeed, Roe's incomplete reporting may not be illegal. Gary Goldsmith, assistant director of the state board that monitors lobbying, said Minnesota law implies — but doesn't explicitly state — the association name must be disclosed.

Thus the question of whether the full name must be listed is "a situation only the board could resolve," said Goldsmith.

Despite registering as a lobbyist, Roe said he never tried to influence tobacco bills in the state Legislature — as Lane, the former Teamster official, did. But Roe offered only vague descriptions of his tobacco work, including the effort against FDA regulations.

Unions that represent tobacco industry manufacturing workers and truck drivers have been natural allies of the tobacco industry. They defend their efforts to protect jobs with the industry paying for labor lobbyists hired by the

Tobacco Industry Labor Management Committee.

The industry has underwritten the union lobbying effort since 1984. Scannell said. It is led by a Washington public affairs firm, Savarese & Associates, which was paid \$300,000 in 1995 and 1996 by the Tobacco Institute, the budget shows.

James Savarese, a former union official who is listed as executive director of the committee, was unavailable for comment, said a receptionist who answered the phone at his firm.

Tobacco Institute officials did not return telephone calls.

The labor lobbying effort is part of the \$28 million the Tobacco Institute spent in 1996, according to its budget. In addition to the payments to Roe, the Institute's lobbying budget for Minnesota also included \$109,000 for two staff members in a regional office, plus \$160,000 to hire local lobbyists, according to the 1996 budget document.

Yet the industry's role in underwriting labor's tobacco lobbying has been nearly invisible.

For example, Roe used Minnesota AFL-CIO stationery to write a letter to President Clinton in 1995 expressing union opposition to FDA regulations aimed at further restricting minors' access to tobacco products. Roe signed the letter as "president emeritus" of the labor organization. The letter, which prompted a response letter from Clinton, doesn't mention the Tobacco Institute — or even the committee.

In the letter, Roe invoked the name of former Vice President Hubert Humphrey while urging Clinton "not to harm the Labor Movement." At the time, Humphrey's son was suing the

tobacco industry in a landmark consumer fraud case that netted the state a \$6.1 billion settlement last month. Roe said in an interview that he didn't know that Humphrey's family now believes that the elder Humphrey's death from complications of bladder cancer in 1978 was smoking-related.

Bernard Brommer, Minnesota AFL-CIO president, said his organization hasn't taken a position on FDA regulation of tobacco and declined Roe's 1995 request to send a similar letter under another AFL-CIO officer's signature. He said he didn't know Roe had used AFL-CIO stationery to send his own letter.

Roe also enlisted other unions and labor organizations in the campaign against FDA regulations, which are under court challenge by the industry. Eleven Minnesota labor leaders wrote letters to the FDA, often using their union's stationery.

The wording of the letters is almost identical because they are based on a form letter supplied by the committee, documents show. But Roe didn't disclose his industry-financed consulting work to those who wrote the letters.

"I didn't know . . . I'm very disappointed to hear that," said Bernie Casey, business manager of the International Elevator Constructors Union Local 9 of Minneapolis. "He has been quite a standard bearer for us."

Copies of letters by Casey and others later landed in the files of one of the tobacco companies, which disclosed them as part of the Minnesota settlement. Roe said he didn't know how a tobacco company got the letters but speculated that the committee may have supplied them.

interests in the past.

"I do a little bit from time to time," he said. "I do things for them."

Asked if he got paid by the committee, he replied, "That might be correct." Told if Tobacco Institute budget documents showed he earned \$30,000 from them in 1996, he replied, "I may have, yeah."

Among the unlikely groups getting money through the labor management committee were three state affiliates of the National Council of Senior Citizens, a Washington-based advocacy group representing senior interests. Affiliates in New York and Florida got \$14,302 each, the largest single chunk, \$21,399 was given to the group's Congress of California Seniors, whose former political director said he didn't know until later that it was tobacco money.

"I never dealt with anyone from the tobacco industry," said Howard Owens, the former political director. "We are always in fund-raising mode. They offer us some money to help us run our operation. It wasn't really clear to me from the beginning that it was tobacco money. Late on, I knew that it came from the Tobacco Institute."

The newly released industry documents include a 1995 letter to the FDA signed by the president of the Wisconsin State Council of Senior Citizens expressing opposition to the proposed tobacco regulations.

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