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White House

linked to

parole in

fraud case

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WASHINGTON — House impeachment investigators have been interrogating members of the U.S. Parole Board about a 1972 parole granted to a wealthy Miami contractor who contributed \$30,000 to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Informed sources said several board members have been called in for questioning and the agency's records — including a tape recording of one of its secret meetings—have been turned over to the House Judiciary Committee.

The case involves Calvin Kovens, the president of the Kovens Construction Co. of Miami who was convicted for wire fraud along with Teamsters boss Jimmy Hoffa in 1964. Kovens hired former Sen. George Smathers of Florida as his lawyer and Smathers — five days after a phone call to the White House — won Kovens' release from prison on Jan. 5, 1972, for medical reasons.

Sources close to the Senate Watergate Committee said that panel's investigators steered clear of the Kovens case for fear of being "cut off at the knees" by Smathers' old cronies in the Senate.

Sources said available evidence has not established a link between the \$30,000 con-

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tribution and Kovens' parole.

But they said it was clear Kovens had received special attention and "a lot of red tape was cut" to get him out of prison.

Smathers, in a Dec. 30, 1971, phone call to Charles Colson, then a top aide to President Nixon, appealed for Kovens' parole on political grounds and invoked the name of Charles (Bebe) Rebozo, the President's close friend.

In the conversation, which Colson recorded and turned over to the Senate Watergate Committee last year, Smathers said Nixon would "do nothing but gain supporters" if Kovens were released.

Colson said he would "check right into it this morning" and said he was delighted that Smathers, a Democrat, was planning to endorse Nixon, a Republican, for re-election.