

# WITNESS REBUTS EX-GURNEY AIDE

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## Rep. Bafalis Denies Report of Secret Campaign Gift

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TAMPA, Fla., June 23—Representative L. A. Bafalis, Republican of Florida, testified today at the trial of former Senator Edward J. Gurney and three co-defendants that had never received secret campaign funds from Mr. Gurney or his aides.

At his own request, Mr. Bafalis appeared voluntarily as a defense witness in United States District Court on Mr. Gurney's behalf. He contradicted testimony given earlier at the trial by James L. Groot, Mr. Gurney's former administrative assistant, who testified for the prosecution after pleading guilty to conspiracy in a campaign fund-raising operation.

Mr. Gurney, a Florida Republican who was a member of the Senate Watergate committee, did not seek re-election after being indicted last year on charges of conspiracy, bribery, unlawful compensation and making false statements in connection with the fund-raising.

Mr. Groot had testified that he met Mr. Bafalis briefly at a political function in Vero Beach, Fla., on Saturday, Nov. 4, 1972, just before the general election and gave Mr. Bafalis a secret \$10,000 campaign contribution in cash in a men's room.

### Another Meeting Time

Mr. Bafalis testified that on that date he was in Naples, Fla., all day. However, he conceded that on a Saturday evening shortly before the 1972 election—either Sept. 23 or Oct. 21—he met briefly with Mr. Groot at a political function in Vero Beach.

Mr. Bafalis said that Mr. Groot had told him he was under pressure from aides to Mr. Bafalis, including his chief fund-raiser, Robert D. Hoffman, a Palm Beach investment banker, to come up with funds promised earlier by others in the Gurney camp.

Mr. Bafalis testified that Mr. Groot had asked him to stop Mr. Hoffman from bothering him for funds, explaining: "I'm going to raise you money, I am committed to raise you money, I promised I'm going to raise it."

Mr. Bafalis said it was "conceivable" that the meeting with Mr. Groot had taken place in a men's room but that he could not remember for sure. Mr.

Bafalis said that Mr. Groot never gave him any money.

Mr. Bafalis also contradicted Mr. Groot's testimony that Mr. Bafalis had met with Mr. Gurney in Washington before being sworn in on Jan. 3, 1973, to his first term in Congress, to thank Mr. Gurney for "help" provided by Mr. Groot.

Mr. Bafalis said that Mr. Gurney, in fact, was in Mexico City on Nov. 15 and 16, 1972, which Mr. Bafalis said was the only time he was in Washington before his swearing-in.

Mr. Bafalis told reporters he would give full cooperation to the Justice Department if its special unit on prosecution of election law violations decided to investigate the matter.

Mr. Bafalis, 45 years old, is an investment banker with residences in Palm Beach and Fort Meyers Beach. He has been in Congress since 1973. Until early this year he was a partner in an investment firm with Claude R. Kirk Jr., the former Republican Governor of Florida.