

# Political Payoffs



## Jack Anderson

**A**T LEAST \$8 million in illegal corporate payoffs have disappeared into the pockets of Washington politicians during the past decade.

While the spotlight has focused on corporate bribery overseas, we have investigated payoffs to politicians here at home. We have determined that political bigwigs collected the \$8 million from four corporations alone: Ashland Oil, Gulf Oil, Nofthrop Aircraft and Phillips Petroleum.

The dimensions of the scandal indicate it may develop into a corporate Watergate.

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**O**UR REPORTERS, Terry Repak and Marc Smolonsky, dug through Securities and Exchange Commission documents in an attempt to trace the money. They contacted 45 congressmen who were identified in the documents as recipients of illegal payments.

Our investigation even led to the White House itself. President Ford allegedly received an illegal \$1000 contribution from Phillips when he was the House Republican leader. A White House spokesman told us there was no way to verify the payment now.

When Richard Nixon occupied the White House, his campaign aides were caught accepting an illegal \$100,000 contribution from Ashland in 1972. The money was returned with a big show of piety. We have now discovered that the Nixon campaign accepted an earlier \$100,000 from the same oil company in

1968. But this money wasn't given back.

Of the 45 members of Congress who are identified in SEC documents as receiving illegal money from corporate lobbyists, only six have returned the loot. They are Senators Howard Baker, (Rep-Tenn.), Carl Curtis, (Rep-Neb.), Henry Jackson, (Dem.-Wash.), James McClure, (Rep-Ida.), J. B. Johnston, (Dem-La.), and Representative Wilbur Mills, (Dem-Ark.).

They paid back a total of \$45,600 in illegal gifts. But Mills did not return another \$50,000 Ashland contribution, strictly illegal, which was given to him to distribute to Democratic colleagues.

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**S**ENATOR James Eastland, (Dem-Miss.), admitted receiving a \$5000 payment from Ashland but said he had no intention of returning it. House Democratic leader Tip O'Neill, (Dem-Mass.), acknowledged he got \$200 from Phillips. He also felt no obligation to return it.

Among others on the SEC list are: Senators Hubert Humphrey (Dem-Minn.), Mark Hatfield (Rep-Ore.), Strom Thurmond (Rep-S.C.), Birch Bayh (Dem-Ind.) and House speaker Carl Albert (Dem-Okla.).

Only four corporations accounted for these staggering political payoffs. The SEC is investigating many other companies that were also slipping money to politicians. But no one is investigating the politicians who accepted the payments.