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# Obama Fundraisers Tied to Green Firms That Got Federal Cash



Solyndra Execs Stonewall Congress

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By MATTHEW MOSK and RONNIE GREENE  
ABC NEWS and iWATCH NEWS

Sept. 29, 2011

Several of Barack Obama's top campaign supporters went from soliciting political contributions to working from within the Energy Department as it showered billions in taxpayer-backed stimulus money on **alternative energy firms**, ABC News and iWatch News have learned.

One of them was Steven J. Spinner, a high-tech consultant and energy investor who raised at least \$500,000 for the candidate. He became one of Energy Secretary Steven Chu's key loan program advisors while his wife's law firm represented a number of companies that had applied for loans.

Recovery Act records show Allison Spinner's law firm, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, received \$2.4 million in federal funds for legal fees related to the \$535 million Energy Department loan guarantee to Solyndra, a solar company whose financial meltdown has prompted multiple investigations. She pledged to take no portion of the money and did not work on the loan applications.

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supporters had any hand in influencing which companies received the taxpayer support.

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"There is great concern over political influence contaminating the DOE loan guarantee program," said Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Fla), who chairs the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee. "The prevalence of fundraisers and bundlers scattered throughout DOE is cause for alarm and is a subject our investigation does not take lightly -- we are looking into this and will see where it leads us."



ABC News

Steve Spinner, loan programs advisor at the... [View Full Size](#)

The administration has repeatedly said that politics has played no role in deciding which companies received federal loans.

Spinner declined requests to be interviewed. But representatives for Spinner, his wife, and for the Energy Department all told ABC News and iWatch News that Spinner and his wife took elaborate steps to avoid conflicts between his government work and her legal work. Spinner obtained a waiver that promised he would not work on cases involving clients of his wife's firm. And she pledged not to take proceeds from her firm's work with companies that had applied for loans.



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Damien LaVera, an Energy Department spokesman, described Spinner as someone who had "no role" in evaluating loan applications or selecting recipients.



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Spinner described his job differently. He wrote in an online bio for the Center for American Progress, the left-leaning think tank he joined after leaving the administration, that he "helped oversee the more than \$100 billion of loan guarantee and direct lending authority" for the department's green-energy loan program. And in a speech at a "Green Tech" conference in June 2010, Spinner described how he "worked very, very closely with all the various organizations, the various offices, in trying to streamline operations and ... move the funding opportunity announcements out, get the solicitations out on the street."



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"What the Secretary really cared about was he wanted us to get the money out fast, he wanted us to pick and select fantastic projects," Spinner said.



Spinner was not the only Obama political supporter to play a role at the Energy Department. California venture capitalist Steve Westly, who raised more than \$500,000 for Obama, had Secretary Chu's ear on green energy issues as a member of a high-level volunteer advisory panel. Mackey Dykes, who was a finance manager for the Obama campaign, was

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Obama's political supporters were also investors in companies that had applied for loans. Westly has held stakes in at least five companies that have won DOE support. Oklahoma billionaire George Kaiser, another Obama bundler, was the biggest private backer of Solyndra. Westly, Spinner and the CEO of Allison Spinner's law firm, John V. Roos, (now Obama's ambassador to Japan), each raised more than \$500,000 for Obama's 2008 campaign.

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Justaguywholovesthis  
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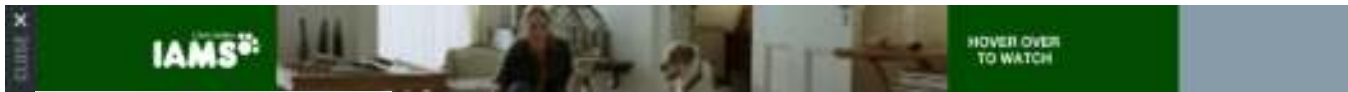
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## Federal Cash

By *MATTHEW MOSK and RONNIE*

*GREENE ABC NEWS and iWATCH NEWS*

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