

From: Eric Jotkoff [ejotkoff@fladems.com]

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Subject: Are Republicans Prepared To Continue Defending Thrasher's Ethics Issues and Republican Corruption Through 2010 Elections?



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NEWS FROM THE FLORIDA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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Contact: [Eric Jotkoff](#), (850) 222-3411

Are Republicans Prepared To Continue Defending Thrasher's Ethics Issues and Republican Corruption Through 2010 Elections?

Tallahassee, FL - Attempts by the members of the Republican smoky back room club in Tallahassee to install former lobbyist and sitting state Senator John Thrasher as Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida proves that the Republican culture of corruption reigns in Tallahassee, once again illustrating why Floridians are going to throw the metaphorical "Republican Bums" out of office across the Sunshine State in 2010.

"While it unfortunately isn't shocking that someone like John Thrasher, who has been convicted twice for breaking Florida's ethics laws, would think he is above the law, Floridians today are disappointed that Republicans like Charlie Crist, Bill McCollum, and Jeff Atwater would make a backroom deal to anoint Thrasher as the new leader of the Republican Party given his extremely questionable ethics and the conflicts-of-interest with his position in state government," said Eric Jotkoff, Florida Democratic Party spokesman. "With AmEx-gate, hangar-gate and so many other Republican ethics scandals characterizing the RPOF over the last several years, are Florida Republicans prepared to continue defending their party's corrupt ways?"

As the [Orlando Sentinel](#) reported Wednesday:

A key sticking point for state Sen. **John Thrasher's** bid for chairman of the state Republican Party is that he would be barred from asking for cash during the 60-day lawmaking session.

Senators are prevented by rule from "directly or indirectly" raising campaign cash for themselves, political committees, or parties during the spring legislative session.

Thrasher and his GOP supporters are taking the position that there are no legal issues with a sitting member of the Legislature also serving as state party chief.

But as word spread this week that **Jim Greer** was resigning the Republican Party of Florida chairmanship and Thrasher was being positioned to replace him, Democrats screamed that not only would Thrasher be unable to raise cash for the party - but that the party itself might be precluded from raising cash during session, since the chairman is the official head of its fundraising arm.

"Who do you think accepts contributions on behalf of a political party? At the end of the day, it's the chair," said **Mark Herron**, a Democratic elections lawyer in Tallahassee.

And the [Miami Herald/St. Petersburg Times](#) noted:

Democratic lawmakers argue that Thrasher's potential dual roles create a host of conflicts of interest. How can he serve as both party chairman and as chairman of the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee? Would he use his power as party chairman as leverage in legislative talks?

"It certainly creates an opportunity for everything he does to be questioned," said Democratic Sen. Charlie Justice of St. Petersburg, vice chairman of the ethics and elections panel. "Mixing politics with policy does not allow us to put our best foot forward. He's going to come under a lot more scrutiny."

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