

Longtime Perry benefactor hosting meeting at home

By CHRIS TOMLINSON, Associated Press – 2 days ago 0

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Gov. Rick Perry planned to meet with conservative spiritual leaders Friday evening at the home of a longtime political supporter whose transactions with Perry have drawn previous scrutiny.

San Antonio physician, businessman and conservative activist Jim Leininger is hosting a private meeting for the GOP presidential candidate Friday at his Fredericksburg-area home, according to Perry spokesman Mark Miner. Miner said the gathering is not a fundraiser but a chance for Perry to meet with leading Christian conservatives.

Miner refused to provide the names of those who would attend. A message seeking comment was left with Leininger's office. The group is expected to stay overnight into Saturday, when Perry will fly to Iowa for two campaign appearances.

Leininger was one of Perry's earliest supporters, helping his 1990 campaign purchase a share in an airplane, and then buying it back at a higher price. Perry reported a \$2,000 profit on his 1991 tax return.

In 1998, a Texas congressman asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate whether Leininger and Perry violated insider trading laws when Perry profited from an investment in a Leininger medical products company. Perry was speaking at a foundation luncheon with Leininger on Jan. 24, 1996, the same day Perry bought \$35,167 worth of Kinetic Concepts stock in two transactions.

A California investment firm also bought 2.2 million shares of Kinetic Concepts stock that day, significantly driving up its price. Perry later sold that stock, and some previously-held Kinetic Concepts stock, for a \$38,382 profit. Both Leininger and Perry denied discussing the stock that day, and the SEC never found any evidence of wrongdoing.

"Everything was reported in full accordance of the law," Miner said of the 1996 stock trade.

Since Perry became governor in 2000, Leininger has donated \$200,000 to his campaign.

Leininger also is a founding member of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, one of the most influential conservative think tanks in the state. The foundation's positions can frequently be found in Republican-introduced legislation, and Perry has advocated the group's proposed reforms to Texas higher education.

Perry donated his proceeds from his latest book, "Fed Up!," to the foundation.

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