



# TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION



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## ETHICS ADVISORY OPINION NO. 267

*June 16, 1995*

*Whether an officeholder may use political contributions to pay expenses in connection with the officeholder's attendance at a legal seminar. (AOR-297)*

The Texas Ethics Commission has been asked whether an officeholder may use political contributions remaining from his previous re-election campaign for expenses incurred in attending a legal seminar.

The Texas Election Code forbids the conversion of political funds to the personal use of a candidate or officeholder. Elec. Code § 253.035. A "personal use" is a use that "primarily furthers individual or family purposes not connected with the performance of duties or activities as a candidate for or holder of a public office." *Id.* § 253.035(d). The officeholder in question is a judge. If the legal seminar is connected to the judge's performance of his duties, political funds may be used to cover expenditures for attending the seminar. *See Ethics Advisory Opinions Nos. 247* (judge may use political contributions to pay expenses incurred in connection with a course of study related to the judge's duties or activities of office), *245* (1995) (judges may use political contributions to pay state bar dues if their judicial office requires them to be licensed to practice law in Texas).

### SUMMARY

A judge may use political contributions to pay expenses incurred in connection with a course of study related to the judge's duties or activities of office.