



TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION



ETHICS ADVISORY OPINION NO. 314

March 22, 1996

Whether a judicial candidate may spend political contributions to hold a victory party in conjunction with a charity golf tournament. (AOR-349)

The Texas Ethics Commission has been asked whether a judicial candidate may spend political contributions to hold a victory party in conjunction with a charity golf tournament. The golf tournament is being held to raise money for various charities. Purchase of a tournament package entitles the purchaser to various amenities. The requestor proposes to purchase an amenities package that would allow him to invite supporters to a reserved table in a skybox for a victory party. He asks whether he may use political contributions to do so.

The primary restriction on expenditure of an individual's political contributions is the personal use prohibition set out in Election Code section 253.035(a). "Personal use" means "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." Elec. Code § 253.035(d). Expenditures on a victory party are connected to candidate activities. The candidate should report the expenditure as a political expenditure on the appropriate campaign finance report. We note that the expenditures would count against the expenditure limits for a judicial candidate subject to the Judicial Campaign Fairness Act. *See id.* § 253.168.

SUMMARY

A judicial candidate may spend political contributions to hold a victory party in conjunction with a charity golf tournament.