

Reed admits taking casino lobbyist fees: Former head of Christian Coalition

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Ralph Reed, the former head of the Christian Coalition and now a Republican strategist, admitted that he accepted \$1.23 million in consulting fees tied to Indian-run gambling casinos, the *Washington Post* has reported.

Reed, who also serves as Southeast regional chairman for the Bush- Cheney campaign, received the fees from two lobbyists whose ties to the Indian tribes are now the subject of a federal investigation.

Sources told the *Post* that Reed's Atlanta-based Century Strategies was paid \$1.23 million by public relations executive Michael Scanlon, whose clients included a Louisiana Indian tribe that was trying to prevent other tribes from opening competing casinos. Part of Reed's job was to mobilize Christian ministers and activists against the new casinos.

Century Strategies also received an unspecified payment from another gaming lobbyist, Jack Abramoff. Abramoff's former firm, Greenberg Traurig LLP, said in March that Abramoff was no longer part of the firm because his "personal transactions" were "unacceptable" to it.

In a statement to the *Post*, Reed said he never worked in favor of gambling, a vice that many Christian leaders consider immoral. "I have worked for decades to oppose the expansion of casino gambling, and as a result of that, Century Strategies has worked with broad coalitions to oppose casino expansion. We are proud of the work we have done. It is consistent not only with my beliefs but with the beliefs of the grass-roots citizens we mobilized. At no time was Century Strategies ever retained by, or [has it] worked on behalf of, any casino or casino company."

Acknowledging he knew that Greenberg Traurig had "certain tribal clients," Reed said "we were not aware of every specific client or interest." The *Post* said Scanlon

and Abramoff are part of a federal probe involving “\$45 million in lobbying and public relations fees, alleged misuse of Indian tribal funds, possible illegal campaign contributions and possible tax code violations.” *-Religion News Service*