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## Florida politicians rush to unload tainted Broward lawyer's contributions - \$400,000 so far

By [GEORGE BENNETT](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

Fort Lauderdale attorney and money-raising bigfoot Scott Rothstein has achieved Enron status in Florida political circles this week.

Just as politicians scrambled to shed their ties to the fraud-inflated energy company after its 2001 bankruptcy, Florida elected officials this week are rushing to unload Rothstein-related campaign contributions after his law partners accused him of perpetrating a multimillion-dollar scheme to bilk investors.

### Rothstein case

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A variety of candidates and the state GOP and Democratic Party pledged today to return about \$400,000 worth of Rothstein-linked campaign cash. The money will go to charities, the remains of Rothstein's law firm and a victim-compensation fund, the former recipients of Rothstein largesse said.

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Chief Financial Officer and Democratic governor candidate Alex Sink led the divestment parade Monday, announcing she was returning \$2,000 she had received from Rothstein, his wife, the Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler firm and a Rothstein business.

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Sink's campaign also pledged to investigate other contributions for Rothstein links. It appears she has received about \$4,500 from a string of business entities tied to Rothstein.

Rothstein's support for Sink was considered a major coup for Florida Democrats because he has been primarily a money-raiser for Republicans, including Gov. Charlie Crist and the presidential campaigns of George W. Bush and John McCain.

"He was a major get for the Democrats," said Republican operative Roger Stone, who was a partner with Rothstein in a political consulting business based out of the Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler law offices in Fort Lauderdale.

Stone said the consulting partnership was dissolved a few months ago, though he still rents office space from the law firm and said he visits about once a month.

Stone said he was "as surprised as anyone else" about the allegations against Rothstein.

The Florida Democratic Party said today it is returning a \$200,000 check it received in September from Rothstein's law firm.

The Republican Party of Florida announced that it will give about \$150,000 in Rothstein-related contributions received this year to a victim-compensation fund if one is set up.

The state GOP does not plan to return the \$400,000-plus that it received from Rothstein and his law firm between 2002 and 2008.

"The contributions from previous cycles were spent to elect Republican candidates during those cycles," party spokeswoman Katie Betta said. "To my knowledge there has not been an instance where we have returned funding that was spent in a previous cycle."

U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney, R-Tequesta, is returning \$4,600 he received in the last election cycle from Rothstein. Rooney is splitting the money between two charities: Mustard Seed Ministries, a nonprofit that helps the homeless in St. Lucie County, and the pro-adoption Care-Net of the Treasure Coast.

Rooney also received \$4,600 from Rothstein's wife in 2008, but his campaign does not plan to return that money, a campaign spokesman said.

Crist's U.S. Senate campaign announced that it is returning \$9,600 it received from Rothstein and his wife this year. The money will go to "a proper entity as soon as possible," Crist finance chairman Dane Eagle said.

Also promising to return Rothstein-related contributions is Senate President Jeff Atwater, R-North Palm Beach, whose campaign for CFO has received at least \$11,500 in Rothstein-related money.

State Rep. Ellyn Bogdanoff, R-Fort Lauderdale, who is running for Atwater's Senate seat, says she will unload \$10,500 given to her campaign this year by Rothstein, his wife and his businesses. A Bogdanoff political committee also plans to give back a Rothstein-linked contribution of \$5,000, Bogdanoff's consultant said.

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