**SBVT - Connections with Republicans**

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SBVT characterized itself as a non-partisan group both in the legal sense and in spirit, yet several prominent individuals who assisted SBVT also have had close ties to the [Republican Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republican_Party_(United_States)). According to information released by the [IRS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IRS) on February 22, 2005, more than half of the group's reported contributions came from just three sources, all prominent [Texas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas) Republican donors: [Houston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houston) builder [Bob J. Perry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_J._Perry), a longtime supporter of [George W. Bush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush), donated $4.45 million, [Harold Simmons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Simmons)' Contrans donated $3 million, and [T. Boone Pickens, Jr.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._Boone_Pickens,_Jr.) donated $2 million. Other major contributors included Bush fundraiser [Carl Lindner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Lindner,_Jr.) ($300,000), Robert Lindner ($260,000), GOP contributor [Aubrey McClendon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aubrey_McClendon) ($250,000), George Matthews Jr. ($250,000), and Crow Holdings ($100,000).

The initial communications consultant for SBVT was [Merrie Spaeth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merrie_Spaeth), a [Reagan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) administration press officer and a volunteer consultant to [Ken Starr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Starr) in the [Clinton impeachment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clinton_impeachment); she was also a spokesperson for "Republicans for Clean Air", a 527 group opposing [John McCain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_McCain)'s [2000](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._presidential_election,_2000) presidential campaign and funded by Bush supporters who also helped fund SBVT. John E. O'Neill — the primary author of *Unfit for Command* and a key player in the formation of SBVT — donated over $14,000 to Republican candidates. He co-operated with the [Nixon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Nixon) White House in opposing Kerry in 1971, and seconded Nixon's nomination at the 1972 Republican national convention.

Retired Admiral William Schachte, a principal source for the SBVT allegations about Kerry's first Purple Heart, has donated to both of Bush's presidential campaigns. Schachte was also a [lobbyist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobbying) for FastShip, a firm that recently announced it was receiving $40 million in federal funding for one of its projects. In addition, Schachte's lobbying firm associate, David Norcross, was chairman of the 2004 Republican convention. Chris LaCivita, Political Director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee in 2002, works as a private contractor providing media advice for SBVT.

The SBVT postal address was registered to Susan Arceneaux, treasurer of the Majority Leader's Fund, a [PAC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_action_committee) closely tied to the former Congressional leader, Republican [Dick Armey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dick_Armey).

Republican activist [Sam Fox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sam_Fox)'s donation of $50,000 to SBVT during the 2004 campaign caused a controversy when Bush nominated him to the position of ambassador to Belgium. Because the Democratic members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee indicated that they would not support his nomination, Bush withdrew the nomination; he appointed Fox to the position on April 4, 2007, while Congress was in recess.

These ties, along with others led to suggestions in the popular press that SBVT was a front group for Republicans, as well as a key detraction from Bush’s lack of military experience when faced with an opposing candidate for the presidency with Purple Heart!