

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **Georgia Chamber, Largest Companies Fund Smear Campaign to Oust Populist Legislators**

ATLANTA GA – In the 2014 primaries, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and **Georgia’s largest companies funded vicious smear campaigns to remove populist legislators** who were elected by the grass roots efforts of Georgia citizens. The campaigns were led by \$95,000 from the chamber and its political action committee (PAC) and fueled by \$50,000 contributions from companies such as Coca Cola, Delta Airlines, Georgia Power and AT&T.

In many of those cases, funds were collected from unsuspecting employees who believed that they were contributing to support company friendly legislation or “good government” advocacy. Instead, the money was used to run deceptively untruthful campaigns that resulted in the removal of two of the most independent representatives in the Georgia General Assembly.

The funds were donated to the Georgia Coalition for Job Creation, headed by its CEO Shawn Sill. But instead of using the money for job creation, the coalition targeted certain legislators with comprehensive, slanderous campaigns. The top two targets were Reps. Charles Gregory and Sam Moore. Campaigns against them included viciously false postal mailers, social media and web sites to “fire” the legislators and supporting mailers for their political opponents.

Gregory, former state coordinator for the Ron Paul presidential campaign, won his Marietta, Ga. seat with a low budget, grass roots, door to door campaign. He was accused of supporting Obamacare, opposing drug tests for food stamp recipients and a variety of other things having nothing to do with job creation.

But the most vicious attacks were reserved for Rep Sam Moore who was elected with a similar low budget, grass roots door to door campaign. He never took any campaign contributions from corporations, PACs, lobbyists or legislators and could not be controlled by them. Moore introduced a bill that attempted to remove loitering laws which have been consistently ruled unconstitutional and caused localities to pay millions of dollars in damages.

The coalition seized that opportunity to send flyers to his constituents claiming that the bill would allow sexual predators in schools. However, there was a problem: **It is a lie:**

- Loitering laws only apply to unusual times when children would not normally be present  
O.C.G.A. 16-11-36;
- Non parental access to children at school is prevented by the Children Protection Act  
O.C.G.A. 21-2-1180;
- Children are further protected by State Sex Offender Registry Laws  
O.C.G.A. 42-1-15;
- Known predators are also required to wear an electronic monitoring device O.C.G.A. 42-1-14.

The lie was created and propagated on February 21, 2014 with the approval of House Speaker David Ralston. A half dozen legislators took to the well of the floor in a highly unusual maneuver to criticize Moore’s just introduced bill HB1033. That, in itself, was remarkable

considering that many legislators don't even read and understand their own bills during passage, much less the bill of another legislator that has not even had a second reading yet.

The Georgia legislators most of whom were on the House leadership team, had a motive. They had already flooded Moore's opponent, Megan Biello with \$17,000 in contributions. Biello raised \$30,000 in total with 97% of the money coming from out of district sources but still lost her race.

Ralston had to know that allegations regarding Moore's bill were false since he is a criminal defense lawyer. Outraged civic leaders, including some from the speaker's own party called for his resignation at an April 29 press conference in the Georgia Capitol. However, Ralston survived the negative publicity and retained his seat against a primary challenger.

Gregory and Moore suffered close election losses directly attributable to the false attacks. Since voters are not familiar with Georgia law, the truth didn't matter and the lie worked. The memory of that primary serves as a precise example of how corporate elitists control the Georgia state government and subvert the will of the people. As voters become wiser is it any wonder why independents like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders did so well in national primaries this year?