

The [Mid South TEA Party](#) For immediate release: 12/14/09

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Is a Congressional Campaign Being Funded With Your Tax Dollars?

Earlier this year Stephen Fincher, a Republican candidate vying for John Tanner's seat in the eighth Congressional District, caused quite a stir by raising over \$300,000 in campaign contributions in just a few weeks. Mr. Fincher's apparent ability to raise funds of this magnitude has caught the eye of GOP leaders across the district and of the RNCC. He has also been endorsed by the popular national blog site known as [RedState](#).

With the money in the bank and an "R" behind his name, Fincher seems to have become the front-runner on the Republican side of this race. More importantly, he is being viewed by some as the top choice for conservatives in the district. He confirms this notion on [his website](#) by making a vague claim to be the candidate that will "stop the runaway spending in Washington that is bankrupting America..."

However, a closer look at the source of his campaign funding reveals that Mr. Fincher, along with his supporters, might be [part of the problem](#) rather than a possible solution. Over 90 percent of Fincher's campaign funding came from farming families that have been recipients to almost \$80,000,000 in federal farm subsidies. These subsidies are a complicated web of taxpayer-funded entitlements that tend to benefit large farming operations, and processing facilities. The Fincher family has been the recipient of nearly \$6,000,000 of these funds.

The Fincher Family raked in more than \$800,000 worth of this corporate welfare during 2007 alone.

In a press release sent out in April 2008, Ken Cook, president of Environmental Working Group (EWG), described the problem with the farm subsidy programs:

"Though net farm income reached a record level of \$88.7 billion in 2007, propelled by high market prices for major crops, Washington still sent out over \$5 billion of taxpayers' money in 'direct payment' farm subsidies to over 1.4 million recipients... Over 60 percent of the subsidy was pocketed by just 10 percent of the recipients-the largest and generally wealthiest subsidized farming operations in the country."

In West Tennessee, the concentration of subsidy wealth is even more alarming. The EWG reports a stunning 85 percent of all subsidies distributed to the eighth Congressional District were collected by just 10 percent of subsidy recipients. Moreover, while just 18 percent of farmers and/or ranchers statewide collect millions in these entitlements each year, 59 percent of [those farmers reside in West Tennessee](#). This concentration may in part be due to the vast amount of farmland in West Tennessee. However, based on Fincher's [campaign contribution list](#), with many supporting families making maximum donations of \$9,600, it appears that these particular farmers and their families are hardly suffering.

According to the EWG, farm income exceeded \$84,000 per household on average in 2007, compared to an average income for all U.S. households of \$50,233. Yet, in 2008, the current Representative, John Tanner (D), voted not once, but twice, in favor of a farm bill that would raise the limit on farm subsidies to 150 percent of the previous limit. This would send even

more taxpayer money to those already significantly more financially well off than the average American. Considering the fact that 90 percent of Mr. Fincher's donors, including his own family, are benefiting from this type legislation, it would be reasonable to assume that Mr. Fincher would find himself beholding to such subsidy recipients who have donated to his campaign. Following the money makes suspect Mr. Fincher's claim that he would be able to represent the 8th District in a fiscally conservative manner once elected.

Here is the breakdown of the amount donated and the amount of subsidies received:

Farm Families	Amount Contributed	Amount of Federal Subsidies
Anderson	\$10,600.00	\$1,488,122.00
Arnold	\$14,400.00	\$485,262.00
Barnett	\$6,800.00	\$1,068,799.00
Bates	\$9,600.00	\$873,556.00
Beaird	\$5,000.00	\$5,023,188.00
Castleman	\$2,500.00	\$887,632.00
Couch	\$11,350.00	\$6,079,981.00
Crews	\$9,600.00	\$380,146.00
Driver	\$9,600.00	\$80,567.00
Eason	\$4,000.00	\$138,143.00
East	\$2,000.00	\$2,262,204.00
Edwards	\$9,600.00	\$1,044,287.00
Espey	\$14,400.00	\$1,318,197.00
Fincher	\$21,600.00	\$5,845,110.00
Greene	\$4,800.00	\$1,251,036.00
Hargett	\$9,600.00	\$3,346,541.00
Hollingshead	\$1,000.00	\$419,787.00
Hughes	\$26,000.00	\$6,089,687.00
Hurt	\$14,400.00	\$151,751.00
Hutchison	\$4,800.00	\$830,747.00
Johnson	\$1,250.00	\$288,464.00
Jordan	\$24,600.00	\$7,870,212.00
Kelley	\$5,000.00	\$14,062,146.00
Luckey	\$3,000.00	\$3,987,860.00
Murphy	\$2,500.00	\$666,104.00
Nunn	\$13,600.00	\$639,793.00
Pearson	\$8,000.00	\$3,216,379.00
Riley	\$9,600.00	\$1,515,037.00
Simmons	\$13,200.00	\$370,030.00
Taylor	\$2,000.00	\$3,930,878.00
Turnage	\$1,500.00	\$926,338.00
Totals:	\$275,900.00	\$76,537,984.00