

Posted on Thu, Apr. 27, 2006

## Black's legal bills exceed money raised

New '06 funds about \$17,000, but \$29,000 went to Raleigh lawyer

JIM MORRILL

[jmorrill@charlotteobserver.com](mailto:jmorrill@charlotteobserver.com)

House Speaker Jim Black paid more in legal bills than he raised for his campaign so far this year.

And Black, a Matthews Democrat embroiled in controversy in recent months, appears to have raised less than he did in a comparable period two years ago, though his campaign account remains considerably higher.

A report posted Wednesday shows Black raised just over \$17,000 from January through April 15. At the same time, he paid more than \$29,000 in campaign funds to Raleigh attorney John Wallace, who advised him at a series of hearings over alleged campaign finance violations.

The State Board of Elections has accused Black of breaking state campaign law, and a federal grand jury has subpoenaed documents from his office and testimony from some of his staff. State prosecutors also are considering charges against his former political director for possible lobbying law violations.

The report shows no campaign money to Black's other lawyer, Charlotte attorney Ken Bell. Black spokeswoman Julie Robinson said Bell was paid through Black's legal defense fund.

The report shows Black raised \$17,250 in the first quarter. In 2004, when a later primary meant different reporting deadlines, Black raised nearly \$195,000 in the first six months of the year.

Though his fundraising appears to have fallen off, the speaker still has more than \$980,000 in his campaign account. At roughly the same point in 2004, he had \$642,000.