



Bob Poe

Candidate, Florida CD 10

Vulnerability Assessment

April 3, 2016

CONFIDENTIAL

Introduction

This confidential report summarizes research on Florida Congressional District 10 candidate Bob Poe. It is the product of analysis of news coverage, court records, tax records, election records, real estate records, business records, federal spending data, and other public records.

The purpose of this memo is to provide contextual and thematic information to inform campaign communication pieces and rebuttals. The information in this report should serve as a basis for formulating and refining the campaign's message as well as for determining further research.

Please contact Eric Smith at True Stories Research with any questions or for verification of items prior to use. This report is for internal use only and should not be released.

Eric Smith
True Stories Research
1997 Sadler Rd #16912
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034
eric@truestoriesresearch.com
904.572.4840

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Executive Summary

A Retired Successful Businessman

Bob Poe grew up in the Orlando area and has been a successful businessperson across a number of fields. He has worked in radio, sports marketing, direct mail marketing, internet marketing, infomercials, political consulting, and other fields. Most notably, he became a partner and president of Emergency Communications Network (ECN) in 2003, a company that sold a reverse-911 type of service called CodeRED primarily to local governments and agencies. He sold out of that company in 2011 and retired wealthy, though he was apparently already doing well enough prior to 1999 to buy a Rolls Royce from John Travolta and to offer to forego his Florida Democratic Party salary when it became a point of contention.

A Good Democrat...

Were Poe not a primary opponent, one would likely characterize him as a good Democrat given his years of support and fundraising for local, state, and national Democratic candidates and interests. He has been a major fundraiser for both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, for Democratic candidates around the state and country, and for Charlie Crist when he ran as a Democrat. He ran unsuccessfully for state Senate in 1980 and served as Seminole County's party chairman and committeeman. From an ideological standpoint he did once label himself as being "right in the middle."

...Except As State Party Chair

However, Poe's time at the helm of the Florida Democratic Party can't be described as anything but a disaster. Rather, his tenure spanned two of the most disastrous elections in Florida history and he received most of the blame for the outcomes and the state of the party, rightly or wrongly.

Blew The 2000 Election

Poe took the reins of the beleaguered state party in March 2000 as the historic 2000 election loomed, a fill-in to complete an unexpired term after six others turned it down. The party was at its lowest point ever, having lost most of its power, and most thought it could not get any worse. But it got much worse on Poe's watch in a year when the decennial redistricting of the state was at stake. Democrats lost state House and Senate seats including most of Poe's top horses, all three open Congressional seats, and state cabinet races. The party ran out of money during the campaign and couldn't afford to compete with Republicans on pushing absentee ballots among other things, an area in which Republicans very much outperformed Democrats. The only bright spot was Bill Nelson's election to the U.S. Senate.

But the major event of course was Florida's controversial election and recount as the deciding factors in the presidential election that saw George W. Bush beat Al Gore by 537 votes. Poe oversaw the state party's efforts to investigate voting irregularities and help with recounts. In one instance he decided not to sue the Seminole County supervisor of elections, who had permitted two Republican Party of Florida operatives to fix more than two thousand fouled absentee ballot applications in her office over the

course of a week instead of tossing them out as she had told both parties she would, because he didn't want voters to see the party as litigious. Given the eventual margin of victory for Bush, Poe later commented, "That was the whole election right there. . . . It makes my head hurt."

Blew 2002 Redistricting

Poe was criticized by members of his own party structure as well as by newspapers for focusing narrowly on beating Jeb Bush instead of on the Republican-controlled redistricting process as the party's fate for the next decade in Tallahassee and Washington hung in the balance.

Blew The 2002 Election And Was Hung For It

Poe was rewarded for his 2000 performance with a salary quadrupled to \$100,000. He engaged a Washington, DC consulting firm to develop a plan to overhaul the party and its strategy, but sat on the draft of that document instead of sharing it with local party leadership. That was one of the many criticisms leveled at him after Democrats were beaten soundly once again at the polls. He was criticized, lambasted, and blamed by state legislators, local party leaders, political science professors, columnists, activists, and newspaper editorial boards for not providing any kind of training to candidates and field workers, failing to develop a message, failing to recruit candidates for cabinet positions, failing to raise funds aggressively, mounting an uncoordinated effort, and more. His record was portrayed as "1 and 14," having lost or failed to capture the White House, the governor's mansion, three U.S. House seats, two Cabinet posts, one state Senate seat, and six state House seats.

Poe and the party were criticized, including by black leaders and media, for taking African American voters for granted after good turnout in 2000, for not reaching out to them, for not engaging them or involving them in the party structure. He was criticized for putting too much stock in the 2000 election as motivation for 2002 turnout, for assuming Jeb Bush's dismantling of affirmative action would be enough to motivate African American voters, for thinking "anyone but Jeb" would be enough motivation for African Americans, for thinking the class-size amendment would be enough to turn Democrats out, for pushing gubernatorial candidate Bill McBride onto voters that had little interest in him, for having no strategy, etc.

The long string of emphatically negative adjectives used in the press to describe Poe and the party and their efforts in the 2002 election is enough to weave a rope to hang him for it a second time. Poe, the party, and their performance were labeled everything from disconnected to out of touch to horrific to inept, not up to the job, unilateral, stingy, without vision, failed miserably, not a legitimate leader, incapable, ineffectual, couldn't recruit viable candidates, didn't develop relationships with legislators, etc.

The party was labeled a wreck, rudderless, in disarray, as being in "abysmal pits", as low as it could go, incapable of delivering a coherent message, without drive, irrelevant, dead, nonexistent, etc. Aside from being called things like disastrous, humiliating, a drubbing, a trouncing, a mauling, a crash-landing, a rout, a dismal showing, the party's

spectacular failure was called the “low point of any Democratic Party in the history of the modern South,” “the party’s worst election year in modern history,” and “like the fall of the Roman empire and the end of the feudal system.” Not since Reconstruction, for example, had Democrats been completely frozen out of the executive branch.

Stepped Down And Left The Party Broke, In Debt, Feeble, And Irrelevant

Poe attempted to hang on after the November 2002 election - - and for context it should be noted that some wanted him to stay and didn’t hang all of the party’s woes around his neck. But the growing uproar over the party’s failure and his leadership and culpability continued to grow until he finally agreed in December 2002 to step down at the beginning of the year. Calls to resign came from all quarters, including legislators, local officials, local party members, top Democrats U.S. Sens. Bill Nelson and Bob Graham, and even his hometown newspaper, the *Orlando Sentinel*. Poe left the party \$200,000 in debt, with a staff of only four using old computers in a decrepit building on the outskirts of Tallahassee, with little fundraising ability and virtually no influence in state government.

Tied To Friend, Rep. Alan Grayson; Got Federal Contracts For His Company

Poe was a partner and president of Emergency Communications Network from 2003 to 2011. Alan Grayson had his first run in the U.S. House from January 2009 to January 2011. ECN got federal contracts with each branch of the armed services starting at least as early as FY 2008 and continuing through Grayson’s first term and beyond Poe’s sale of his portion of the company in 2011. The company received at least tens of thousands of federal dollars while Poe’s time at the helm and Grayson’s first term overlapped, and hundreds of thousands all told. It is unknown when their relationship started, and Grayson may not have had a direct mechanism to influence those awards from his perch in the House, but a relationship such as that one wouldn’t have hurt. When Grayson ran for office again in 2012, Poe contributed \$2,500 to his campaign and his daughter Ginni served as Grayson’s finance director. Once back in office, Grayson lavished praise on Poe and ECN in remarks on the House floor in June 2014.

Invested In Controversial Alan Grayson’s “Blood In The Streets” Hedge Fund

Poe was one of only a few investors in a Caymans-based hedge fund run by U.S. Rep. Alan Grayson, who has been under House Ethics scrutiny in 2015 and 2016 for those financial dealings and for allegedly using his office for personal financial gain by touting his status as a sitting Congressman as a selling point to prospective investors. The fund, set up in a tax haven, was designed to “capitalize on markets in turmoil due to economic, political or natural disasters.” Grayson encouraged prospective investors in the fund to take advantage of times when there was “blood in the streets”. The fund was started in April 2011 and only had either three or four investors, of which Poe was one. Poe sold out of ECN in October 2011; it is unknown when he bought into Grayson’s hedge fund. When public scrutiny fell on Grayson’s activities in 2015, he began making changes to the funds, shut down the Caymans-based entities while leaving related U.S.-based entities operational under new names, and most interestingly and unusually refunded Poe’s investment despite the fund’s losses. Grayson claimed he refunded Poe’s money because the fund was a “friends and family” kind of hedge fund.

Cheated On His Wife For 30 Years And Abandoned His Family

In 1980, the year after he married his wife, Poe by his own admission began cheating on her with men out of town. He soon became an alcoholic, which continued until 1994 by his account. He says he recommitted to the marriage in the late 1980s when she got pregnant, but began spending a lot of his time in California in the 2000s to further the growth of his business, Emergency Communications Network. While in California, he says he got swept up in the “heady gay party culture in Los Angeles and Palm Springs.” His daughter said that it was a scary time for the family and that “He pretty much fell off the map for a year or two.” He eventually bought a home in the Hollywood Hills in 2008, the same year he met his current husband Kenneth, and then moved to Beverly Hills in 2010. He divorced his wife in 2011 and married Kenneth in 2015.

Does Poe Fear A Carpetbagger-Themed Attack?

Some small clues *may* suggest Poe feels vulnerable to being labeled a carpetbagger. No one can contest his deep roots in Orlando or in Florida Democratic circles, but he did move to California for years, possibly enough to be criticized for being less in touch with local needs than candidates who have been there all along. There was originally a geo-tagged September 2013 status update post in his personal Facebook timeline that indicated he had moved back to Beverly Hills. By the end of March 2016, however, that post and all posts after 2012 and before January 2016 had been scrubbed, or at least removed from the view of non-friends. An initial review of those posts suggested nothing of obvious interest aside from that one post. His downtown Orlando condo appears to be a rental, which he had occupied by at least 2012, possibly 2011. He bought two lake houses down the street from one another north of town, possibly to put down some more permanent-sounding public record roots, but not until November 2015 after he was already on the path to candidacy. In a recent online testimonial for his Beverly Hills interior decorator, he conspicuously mentioned that his Beverly Hills home was his second home and that his primary residence was in Orlando - - information no prospective interior design client needed to know, but which any breadcrumb hunters would be sure find, and which he could point to as needed to help deflect any attacks. This could be much speculative ado about nothing, but Poe is a seasoned political operative and knows how the game works. If he does feel vulnerable, perhaps he is. This information could also be paired with a fat cat theme given that he is wealthy, lives in a penthouse, owns two lakefront homes and owns a home in Beverly Hills.

Charlie Crist: From Foe To Supporter To Friend And Business Partner

Poe was a top supporter of Charlie Crist’s gubernatorial run as a newly-minted Democrat, chairing the independent political committee that supported Crist and funded efforts on his behalf. He helped that organization raise over \$30 million for Crist’s campaign efforts. While Crist put all Florida Democrats in the awkward and unavoidable position of having to support a candidate they had opposed only a handful of years before when he was a Republican, it was once Poe’s job to go after Crist directly, which he did when state Democrats ran Buddy Dyer against him unsuccessfully for state attorney general in 2002. To the degree Poe could be hit for this flip-flop without the obvious implication that such an attack would apply to all state Democrats, there is some usable material there. He said Crist was unqualified for that position or his prior position as Education Commissioner and had also never found a race he didn’t like.

1: Candidate Background

Personal Details



Name: Robert Joseph “Bob” Poe

Age: 61, born August 18, 1954 in Long Island, NY. Moved to Orlando in 1969.

Profession: Retired, Hillary Clinton fundraiser

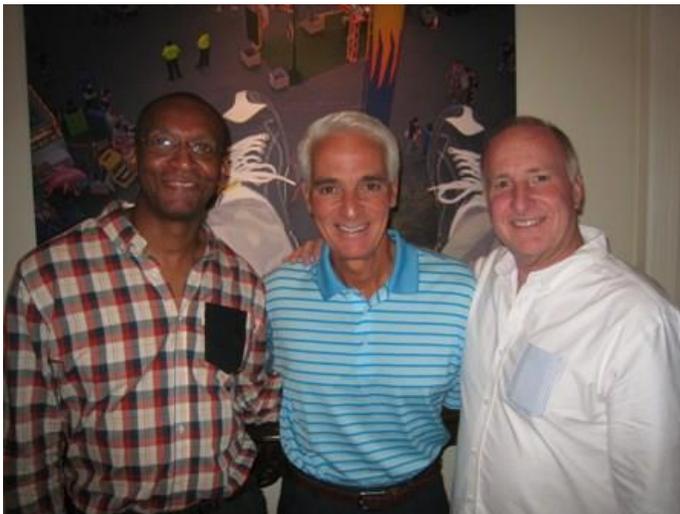
Family: Husband Kenneth Brown, ex-wife Virginia, daughter Virginia (Ginni)

Education: Maynard Evans High School in Pine Hills. Dropped out of college to work for a radio station.

Religion: Presbyterian

Family

Remarried In 2015: Poe has been married to Kenneth Brown of Ohio since July 4, 2015. Brown grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, and worked in a steel mill for 27 years. His passion is children’s theater. He has been a recovered alcoholic for over 20 years. He has one adult daughter. [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#); [Kenneth Brown Facebook](#); [Bob Poe Facebook](#)]



Brown, Charlie Crist, Poe, 2013

Married For The First Time In 1979: Poe married the former Virginia Lee Wharton in June 1979 at age 24. They divorced in July 2011. Facebook comments suggest they are on good terms. [Lexis Public Records; [Virginia Wharton Poe Facebook](#)]

Property & Personal Finances

Poe Lives In A Presumably Rented Penthouse Condo In Downtown Orlando: Poe lives in a 3 bedroom, 3.5 bathroom penthouse at The Vue at Lake Eola condominiums at 150 East Robinson Street, unit 3502 in downtown Orlando. He has used this address for at least several years in documents like voter registrations, deeds, etc. No ownership information for this unit has been located under this address or under Poe's name or his revocable trust's name. Zillow.com indicates that it was listed for rental in January 2011 and that the listing was removed in March 2011. Presumably Poe began renting it then or soon after. The rent at that time was listed as \$5,500 per month. [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#); [Orange County Property Appraiser](#); [Zillow.com](#)]

Poe Owns A Home On Lake Fairview Through A Trust: The Robert J. Poe Revocable Trust, of which a Robert J. Poe is the trustee, owns a home at 1507 Anchor Court on Lake Fairview in unincorporated Orange County north of Orlando. The property was purchased on November 7, 2015 from Neal and Jill Kimball. [[Orange County Property Appraiser](#); Lexis Public Records]

Poe Owns Another Nearby Home On Lake Fairview Through A Trust: In November 2015, the Robert J Poe Revocable Trust bought a 3 bedroom, 3.5 bathroom lakefront home at 71 Interlaken Road on Lake Fairview in unincorporated Orange County north of Orlando from Jane Williams for \$909,000. He recently held a fundraiser there. It is a block away from his other recent purchase at 1507 Anchor Court. [[Orange County Property Appraiser](#); Lexis Public Records]

Poe Still Owns His Home In Beverly Hills: In 2010, Poe bought a 5 bedroom, 5 bathroom home at 2207 Bowmont Drive in Beverly Hills from Richard Rho for \$3,550,000 with a loan of \$2,662,500. Taxes on the property are current as of April 1, 2016, with a second installment of \$22,782.22 due on April 11, 2016. Poe refers to this as his second home, such as in this conspicuously specific endorsement of an interior decorator: "We hired Mark Brunetz Designs to take on the renovation of our second home in Beverly Hills. It was critically important that we work with a design company that not only understood the architectural significance of this hillside property but our unique sensibilities as homeowners with primary residence in Orlando." [Lexis Public Records; [Los Angeles County Treasurer and Tax Collector, ID 4388-010-035; markbrunetz.com](#)]

Poe Previously Owned A Home In The Hollywood Hills: In 2008 Poe bought a 4 bedroom, 4 bathroom home at 2058 Curson Avenue North in the Hollywood Hills near Beverly Hills from Eric Eastman for \$1,455,000. In 2010 he sold it to Aaron Tornell for \$1,362,500. [Lexis Public Records]

Poe Used To Live In Sanford: Poe formerly owned 108 River Oaks Circle in Sanford. He appears to have interfamily-transferred the home to his ex-wife in 2012 after their 2011 divorce. A 2002 article reported that Poe was living in Seminole County at that time. [Orlando Sentinel, November 28, 2002; Lexis Public Records]

Poe Rented A Place North Of Downtown Orlando: Poe formerly listed 1009 E. Marks Street north of Downtown Orlando as his residential address in voter registration records and other records, but does not appear to have ever owned it. [Lexis Public Records]

Professional & Political Background

Hillary Clinton Fundraiser: Poe lists himself as a volunteer fundraiser for Hillary Clinton for President, with a start date of April 2015. The campaign recognizes him as a “Hillblazer,” who has raised more than \$100,000 towards the primary since that date. [[LinkedIn.com](#); [hillaryclinton.com](#)]

C2&P LLC With Charlie Crist: In March 2015, Poe started the firm of C2&P, LLC with Charlie Crist. It was voluntarily dissolved in October 28, 2015. [[sunbiz.org](#)]

Charlie Crist Political Committee Chairman: From November 2013 to November 2014, Poe served as the Chairman of Charlie Crist for Florida, the independent political committee supporting Crist’s gubernatorial run. Poe was its first donor in November 2013, contributing \$25,000. [[LinkedIn.com](#); [charliecristforflorida.net](#); [Florida Division of Elections](#); [Orlando Sentinel, February 1, 2015](#)]



Obama Finance Chair: Poe served as Central Florida Finance Chair for President Barack Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign. [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#)]

Poe Has Done Fundraising For Multiple Democratic Candidates And Progressive Causes: Poe began making a huge impact in fundraising for the LGBT community as well and was nominated to serve on the Board of the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. He personally hosted fundraisers for Obama, Elizabeth Warren, Alan Grayson, and Joe Sanders who all won their campaigns. [[DailyKos.com, January 13, 2016](#)]

Poe Kept Raising Money For Democrats Soon After He Left Party Leadership: “Nowadays, as president of a telecommunications firm, Poe says he’s happy with his lot in life. And he’s still a behind-the-scenes power player, working with Central Florida’s big-money Democrats to raise unprecedented amounts of cash.” [Orlando Sentinel, July 29, 2004]

Poe Is A Photographic Artist: From 2009 to 2010, Poe operated as a professional photographic artist, running an eponymous business, Bob Poe Photographic Art. In 2009 he leased gallery space at Bergamot Station in Santa Monica to professionally exhibit his iPhone photography. His company’s original website is inactive, but a Facebook page for it still exists and was last updated May 2015. [[archive of bobpoephography.com](#); [Facebook for Bob Poe Photographic Art](#); [LinkedIn.com](#)]

President, Emergency Communications Network: From January 2003 to October 2011, Poe served as president and as a partner in Emergency Communications Network, makers of the CodeRED emergency messaging system. He sold his share of the company in 2011 and retired. [[LinkedIn.com](#); [South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#)]

Poe Was Chairman Of The Florida Democratic Party 2000 Through 2002: From early 2000 until the beginning of January 2003, Poe was Chairman of the Florida Democratic Party. [[LinkedIn.com](#)]

Poe Was Doing Marketing For Internet Startups In 2000: In news articles in 2000, Poe was described as a self-employed strategic consultant who “helped businesses market themselves on the Internet” and provided “management, marketing and media services for start-up and turnaround companies” as well as companies “in trouble”. [Associated Press State & Local Wire, March 22, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, May 14, 2000; St. Petersburg Times, April 02, 2000]

East Central Florida Regional Planning Council: In 1999 Poe was listed as a former member of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. [Orlando Sentinel, July 18, 1999]

VP Of Connexions In Late 1990s, Related To Telemarketing, Junk Mail, And Catalogs: In 1998 and 1999 news articles, Poe was listed as the executive vice president of Connexions, an Altamonte Springs company that was listed variably as an e-commerce business and as a catalog servicing company. It provided comprehensive call center and fulfillment services for the direct marketing industry through Internet, direct mail, catalog and electronic media retailers. It employed a technology called RealCall that sounds similar to the CodeRED product he would later sell via Emergency Communications Network, though it was also used to send telemarketing messages:

“Connexions will employ a technology that has been successfully used as an early warning system in emergencies as a way to warn catalog shoppers that placing orders early will save them heartache if a strike occurs. ‘Our RealCall(tm) system can alert up to a million customers a day,’ said Poe, ‘and we think will actually result in increased sales for the catalogers who use it. RealCall(tm) helped alert residents to evacuate Florida’s wildfires this Spring, it has been used as an effective tool in political campaigns and it is in use by major publishers nationwide to retain subscribers.’

He said RealCall(tm) is a computerized telemarketing system capable of delivering a million prerecorded messages a day directly to answering machines and consistently delivers better response than direct mail and traditional telemarketing. ‘Catalogers can’t possibly call all of their clients, and direct mail would take too long,’ said Poe, ‘but this tool lets them put a message on the customer’s answering machine when they are at work, encouraging them to take the time to make their purchase now.’” [Orlando Sentinel, July 18, 1999; [Business Wire, November 19, 1998](#)]

ShopAmericaOnTheNet.com: In 1999, Poe formed ShopAmericaOnTheNet.com, Inc., a company of unknown purpose except what is implied by the name, with Jesse Graham Sr. of Winter Park and Bruce Cunningham of Heathrow. The company was administratively dissolved in 2002. [sunbiz.org]

Tell No Man: In 1999, Poe started the firm of Tell No Man, LLC, a business of unknown purpose, with V.T. Murray Jr. Its first filed document was a merger with a Tennessee company of the same name. It was voluntarily dissolved in 2003. [sunbiz.org]

Poe Served As Seminole County Democratic Party Chair And State Committeeman: Poe was unanimously elected chairman of the Seminole County Democratic Executive Committee in 1999 when his predecessor, Wanda Hampton, resigned for personal reasons. “When Poe joined Seminole's Democratic Executive Committee four years ago, it barely existed. Poe became the county's chairman a year ago after a stint as the county's state committeeman.” [Orlando Sentinel, May 14, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, July 18, 1999]

CMDS Polar Radio: In 1998, Poe formed CMDS Polar Radio LLC with Polar Radio, Inc., several doctors, and the Christian Medical & Dental Society. In 1999 the company filed for withdrawal from Florida. [sunbiz.org]

Skybox Associates: In 1995, Poe formed Skybox Associates Inc., a company of unknown purpose. It was administratively dissolved in 2004. [sunbiz.org]

Intervision Communications Technologies, Rebate TV: In 1994, Intervision Communications Technologies Inc. was formed. The oldest surviving annual report is from 1995, and it shows Poe as one of the directors along with Joseph Dambro and attorney Perry West, former vice chairman and executive vice president of American Financial Network, a Dallas-based national computer network for the real estate and financial services industry. It is unclear which of them may have been the original founders in 1994. It was at this company that Poe, whose role was once reported as “consultant,” developed the concept for Rebate TV, an infomercial concept. The entity was voluntarily dissolved in March 1996 as part of a complex series of mergers and reverse mergers through which he transferred ownership of the intellectual property to Interactive Technologies Corporation and became an officer and employee of that company. [Business Wire, March 27, 1996; [Orlando Sentinel, April 5, 1996](http://OrlandoSentinel.com); sunbiz.org]

Interactive Technologies Corporation: In March 1996, Intervision Communications Technologies Inc. was merged into the similar-sounding Interactive Technologies Corporation, a Melbourne-based developer and producer of interactive television and interactive digital media programming that was also tied to Perry West of Intervision Communications Technologies. As part of this merger, Poe transferred the intellectual property for Rebate TV to ITC and was named its chief operating officer and board member. He had reportedly already been serving as the company's director of Program Development. “Bob's

proven leadership and his involvement in the launching of Rebate TV make him the perfect candidate for chief operating officer and his presence on the board will help further ITC's growth and success,' said Perry Douglas West, Interactive Technologies Corporation's chief executive officer." ITC's products were designed to serve the growing demand for interactive media as a viable consumer marketing tool. Its programming was distributed via cable and direct broadcast satellite television and the Internet. Rebate TV was at the time in development at Century III at Universal Studios Florida in Orlando in preparation for its April 15, 1996, debut in Central Florida. [Business Wire, March 27, 1996; sunbiz.org]

Poe Developed Rebate TV, An Infomercial Concept: Poe created the concept behind Rebate TV, a short-form infomercial concept that offered viewers opportunities to claim product rebates from local retailers throughout the show. Viewers could claim the rebates by buying the items advertised on the show, then calling a toll-free number. A check was then sent to them. Its predecessor, "Deals! Deals! Deals!" which aired in 1996 was intended to be an eight-week pilot but lasted less than three weeks. But Rebate TV was Interactive Technologies Corporation's primary focus. Clients paid the cost of producing and airing informational segments on the show. They also paid ITC a negotiated fee for each product sold through the program. Because a rebate was tied to the advertising, companies had the benefit of knowing exactly how well the promotion was working. It debuted in 1996 but was off the air by May 1997. [Orlando Sentinel, April 5, 1996; Orlando Sentinel, May 31, 1997]

Poe Was A Licensed Corporate Real Estate Broker: From 1994 to at least 2008, Poe was a licensed corporate real estate broker, though the license itself is the only evidence in the public record that he was involved in real estate. [Lexis Public Records]

Bob Poe & Associates: In 1993, Poe formed Bob Poe & Associates, Inc. It was merged into an unspecified company in 1995. It was the sole member in Sound Alliance, Ltd, a company formed in 1994, which was revoked in 1995 in regard to its annual report. It had a trademark on Rebate TV, an infomercial concept. [sunbiz.org [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#); Justicia Trademarks]

Poe Formed Consulting Firm To Work With Companies In Political Crisis: In late 1993, Poe left radio station WMMO to form a consulting firm, with New York City political consultant Joe Slade White, who managed Linda Chapin's 1990 campaign for Orange County chairman and has since become one of the top Democratic political and media strategists in the country. Poe said he planned to plunge into the world of politics, targeting companies "who find themselves in a crisis." The name of this company was not given. [Orlando Sentinel, November 6, 1993; joesladewhite.com]

Poe Managed Radio Station WMMO 98.9 FM: In 1990, Poe left the Orlando Magic to form WMMO 98.9 FM for a group of investors, serving as its Vice President & General Manager until 1993. "A group of investors called a few weeks ago and asked me if I

wanted to get involved in a new venture in the FM market, and I took the deal,” said Poe. [Orlando Sentinel, May 14, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, May 22, 1990; [LinkedIn.com](#)]

Poe Helped Bring The Magic To Orlando And Handled Its Sponsorship Sales: Poe was part of the partnership and the management team that brought the Magic to Orlando, and served as the team's director of broadcasting and sponsorship sales from 1986-1990 (sometimes reported as beginning in July 1987). He left after their first season. [Associated Press State & Local Wire, March 22, 2000; [LinkedIn.com](#)]

The Robert Poe Company: In 1981 Poe formed The Robert Poe Company, a company of unknown purpose, with his wife Virginia. It was involuntarily dissolved in 1987. [[sunbiz.org](#)]

Ran For State Senate In 1980 And Lost: In 1980, Poe ran for state Senate and was routed in the Democratic primary, a defeat that Poe says taught him the value of reaching all voters, not just certain special-interest groups. [Orlando Sentinel, May 14, 2000]

Poe Spent 12 Years At Radio Station WKIS-AM: Prior to joining the Orlando Magic organization, Poe had worked at the former WKIS-AM, which later became WWNZ-AM (740). Starting in 1976 he worked his way up from producer of a late-night radio talk show to station manager over the course of 12 years. He lists his end date there as 1988, though his time with the Magic has been listed as beginning in 1986 or 1987. [Orlando Sentinel, May 21, 1990; [LinkedIn.com](#)]

ECN And CodeRED

Poe Became Partner And President Of ECN In 2003: “Earlier this year Bob Poe left politics -- sort of. The one-time leader of the Florida Democratic Party has landed as president at Emergency Communications Network, an Ormond Beach company. Poe, 48, resigned as chief of the statewide Dems shortly after the party's miserable showing in the November elections. In his new position Poe will keep his toe in political waters, but he's likely to encounter fewer sharks. Most of his responsibility will be selling the company's emergency-notification services to governments.” Later sources revealed that Poe was also a partner in the company. [Orlando Sentinel, March 9, 2003; News-Journal, March 16, 2004]

ECN's CodeRED Product Was A Reverse-911-Style Messaging System Used To Alert Citizens To Emergencies: ECN sold a product called CodeRED, similar to the Reverse 911 concept. “In the event of an emergency, such as a major hurricane or hazardous materials spill, a high-ranking city official would record an informational message that could potentially be sent to the entire city by phone in about an hour. It will leave a message to a voice mail, and would continue to call if it gets a busy signal.” The system “provides a mapping interface and customers supply their own database of telephone numbers. Police, fire or public works agencies call a dispatch center, requesting notification of the public and specify the size of the area. Dispatchers then

display a map on their computer screen, highlight the requested area, and record a message with instructions and a phone number to call for additional information. The CodeRED system dials homes and businesses within the specified area. The system can make up to 60,000 calls per hour, according to ECN in 2004.” CodeRED used a combination of phone numbers ECN culled from various sources such as credit bureaus and marketing lists, as well as numbers provided by citizens in a given area who manually registered with the service. [News-Press, October 26, 2006; News-Journal, March 16, 2004; News-Journal, May 12, 2006]

ECN Was An Offshoot Of A Voice Broadcasting Tech Company: Emergency Communications Network started in 1998 as a subsidiary of a similar and now-defunct Ormond Beach business called The Broadcast Team, founded by Mark Edwards and Rob Tuttle, which made voice broadcasting technology. [News-Journal, January 13, 2013; News-Journal, March 16, 2004]

Poe’s Business Associate – David DiGiacomo: One of Poe’s associates at ECN was David DiGiacomo, listed in 2004 as the executive director of the company. He has been a donor to Democratic political campaigns at the state and federal levels. [News-Journal, March 18, 2004; FEC; Florida Division of Elections]

Poe Said ECN Doubled Revenue In 2003: “‘We doubled revenue in 2003, and I see us doubling again in 2004,’ he [Poe] said, although he wouldn’t release specific sales figures.” [News-Journal, March 16, 2004]

ECN Employed 73 By 2013: News reports listed ECN as employing 73 people as of January 2013, up from 12 in March 2004. [News-Journal, March 16, 2004; News-Journal, January 13, 2013]

Poe Sold Out Of ECN When It Was Acquired In 2011: In October 2011, Emergency Communications Network was sold to The Riverside Company, a global private equity firm that specializes in investing in companies with annual revenues of \$200 million or less. Rep. Alan Grayson noted on the House floor that Poe and his business partners had sold out of the company in 2011. [News-Journal, January 13, 2013; [Congressional Record for June 12, 2014](#)]

ECN sold its product to agencies and municipalities all over the country. Below is a selection of some of the places in Florida that used the system:

ECN Had Clients Nationwide: “As of 2004, Emergency Communications Network Inc. had 12 employees in technical support, sales and management positions, and nearly 100 customers from Key West to Anchorage, Alaska, Poe said. Two of the early customers were Fort Lauderdale-based A Child is Missing, which works with police agencies across the United States, and the State of Idaho, which uses CodeRED in a number of its agencies. ‘We have about 100 clients, but there are hundreds of agencies that use the system,’ Poe said. ‘Probably in the second quarter (of this year) we’ll break the 100 barrier in the number of clients.’” [News-Journal, March 16, 2004]

ECN Sold CodeRED System To Cape Coral: ECN sold its CodeRED product to the City of Cape Coral in 2006. “The system will cost the city \$37,500 for a one-year contract, which includes 150,000 minutes. Additional minutes would cost more, but CodeRED President Bob Poe said if it is used in a federally declared disaster, FEMA would reimburse the city.” [News-Press, October 26, 2006]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Weston: ECN sold its CodeRED product to the City of Weston in 2003. The city paid \$10,000 for 30,000 prepaid minutes that could be used during the following two years to call its 20,000 housing units three times in the event of emergency situations. [Sun-Sentinel, July 4, 2003]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Hallandale Beach: ECN sold its CodeRED product to the City of Hallandale Beach. [Sun-Sentinel, July 4, 2003]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Boca Raton: ECN sold its CodeRED product to the City of Boca Raton. [Sun-Sentinel, July 4, 2003]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Flagler County: ECN sold its CodeRED product to Flagler County in 2003. The Flagler County Sheriff's Office spent \$7,000 to buy 20,000 calling minutes over two years to supplement its existing Reverse 911 system for more acute alert needs. [News-Journal, March 31, 2003]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Volusia County: ECN sold its CodeRED product to Volusia County in 2004 or prior. ECN charged a base rate of \$12,500 for 100,000 minutes of calls. [News-Journal, March 6, 2009]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Clay County: ECN sold its CodeRED product to Clay County in 2010. [Florida Times-Union, March 31, 2010]

ECN Sold CodeRED To St. Johns County: “The St. Johns County Sheriff's Office began using Code Red six months ago, paying \$30,000 in seized drug money for 100,000 minutes of airtime.” [Florida Times-Union, November 25, 2006]

ECN Sold CodeRED To Duval County: In 2007, Duval County (a.k.a. Jacksonville) bought Poe's CodeRED product. The annual cost was approximately \$100,000. [Florida Times-Union, November 25, 2006]

ECN Sold CodeRED to Hernando, Broward, And Orange Counties: As of 2004, Hernando, Broward, and Orange Counties used CodeRED. [St. Petersburg Times, December 22, 2004]

ECN Sold To Counties And Cities All Over Florida: By 2006 about a third of Florida counties and about 18 percent of Florida cities were using the CodeRED system. [Florida Times-Union, November 25, 2006]

Nonprofits

Poe Has An Eponymous Charitable Foundation: In 2011 Poe founded a tax-exempt private foundation called the Bob Poe Charitable Foundation. He, his husband Ken Brown, and his daughter Virginia Poe are listed as President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Director, respectively. None of them are compensated by the foundation. The most recent Form 990 available is for 2013. [[Bob Poe Charitable Foundation Form 990, 2013](#)]

Poe Is The Foundation's Primary Funder: In 2013, Poe's foundation took in a total of \$119,501 in contributions, interest, and net gain from sale of assets. A total of \$42,165 of that came from Poe in the form of securities. Other substantial contributors were Dorothy Benson of Celebration, Florida, and Catherine Hill of New Orleans. During that time it disbursed \$36,245, of which \$32,500 was in the form of contributions, gifts, or grants paid. That left and excess of \$83,256. That year it had \$222,003 in assets, between investments and cash, and \$15,572 in liabilities. [[Bob Poe Charitable Foundation Form 990, 2013](#)]

In 2012, Poe's foundation took in a total of \$6,376 and gave out \$41,750 in contributions, gifts and grants. In 2011, it took in a total of \$253,366, mostly in the form of personal and noncash gifts from Poe, but made no contributions or grants. [[Bob Poe Charitable Foundation Form 990, 2013](#)]

In 2013, The Foundation Contributed \$32,500 Amongst:

- Los Angeles Art Association (Hollywood, CA)
- Joy Metropolitan Community Church (Orlando)
- Downtown Arts District (Orlando)
- First Unitarian Church of Orlando
- Gay & Lesbian Victory (DC)
- GLBT Center of Central Florida (Orlando)
- Founders Metropolitan Community Church (Los Angeles, CA)
- Hope and Health Center (Winter Park)
- Zebra Coalition (Windermere)

[[Bob Poe Charitable Foundation Form 990, 2013](#)]

In 2012 The Foundation Gave To:

- Los Angeles Art Association
- HerShe Group Foundation (Los Angeles)
- St Andrews AME Church (Sacramento)
- Gay & Lesbian Victory Institute (DC)
- Hope And Health Center (Winter Park)
- Equality Florida Institute (St. Petersburg)

[[Bob Poe Charitable Foundation Form 990, 2013](#)]

In 2013 The Foundation Held Investments In The Following Alliance Bernstein Funds And Instruments:

- AB Wealth Apprec Strate
- AB BD FD Real Asset Str
- AB Bernstein Intermedia
- Overlay A Portfolio CL
- Overlay B Portfolio CL

[\[Bob Poe Charitable Foundation Form 990, 2013\]](#)

Poe's Foundation Funds His Husband's Theater Productions: In January 2016, the Bob Poe Charitable Foundation provided major funding to Poe's husband Kenneth Brown's theater company's production of Crowns, a gospel musical play, at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. [\[Charlie Maverick Entertainment\]](#)

Poe's Husband Runs A Nonprofit Theater Company: In May 2014, Poe's husband Kenneth Brown founded Cultural Fusion, a tax-exempt theater company classified as a Theater Organization by NTEE and an Educational Organization by the IRS, dedicated solely to producing works with a black or Hispanic point of view. It is also classified in various directories as a "private nonoperating foundation," which the IRS defines as "a private foundation that principally provides grants to other entities or to individuals for charitable or other exempt purposes" as opposed to a private operating foundation, which are "private foundations that actively conduct their own charitable, educational, or other exempt programs and activities." It has an eight-member board of directors, four of which are listed as Kenneth Brown, Michael Gonick (a realtor), Jada Jackson (a counselor and life coach), and Vivian Rodriguez (likely of Equality Florida, Rep. Grayson's staff, and multiple area Democratic bodies), all of the greater Orlando area. Poe has been reported as its stage director and is listed in its Form 990 as the keeper of its books. Its most recent and only 990 available online is for 2014, when the organization took in \$22,500 from the Bob Poe Charitable Foundation. Its address is Poe and Brown's penthouse condo in downtown Orlando. [\[Orlando Sentinel April 8, 2015; Florida National News, April 3, 2015; culturalfusion.org; Facebook; sunbiz.org; FindTheCompany.com; 2014 Form 990, FoundationCenter.org\]](#)

Brown's Theater Organization Is Expensing/Depreciating Business Property: Brown and Poe's Cultural Fusion organization's 2014 Form 990 includes a Form 4562 Depreciation and Amortization form for the purpose of deducting expenses through indirect depreciation under Section 179 for property placed into service in that tax year. This is a common type of deduction that businesses take on "business equipment" and related items but does not include land. Cultural Fusion lists a "maximum amount" of \$500,000 and a "threshold cost of section 179 property before reduction in limitation" of \$2,000,000. These are default figures from the instructions for this section of the form, which may suggest that the actual value of the property they are depreciating meets or exceeds these figures. Presumably the organization is taking this deduction on equipment and items related to theater production (by comparison, the Bob Poe Charitable Foundation has not listed such depreciation in its 990s), but it is not clear since the area of the form where the property is supposed to be described has been left blank. [\[section179.org; Form 4562 instructions; 2014 Form 990, FoundationCenter.org\]](#)

Personal Voting Record

Poe Is A Regular Voter: Poe is a regular voter and has been voting absentee since at least 2008. [Orange County Supervisor of Elections]

Platform

Poe's 2016 Platform: Economic Empowerment, Education, Constituent Services: Poe described to the *East Orlando Post* his top three areas of focus as a 2016 candidate:

Economic Empowerment: Making our community prosperous so that our businesses can flourish. More high paying jobs, increased Minimum Wage and expansion of Social Security and Medicare. I will be an independent voice for the people who feel like they have no voice. Because most politicians have to spend most of their time raising money – mostly from lobbyists, our political system has been hijacked by the special interests those lobbyists represent. I don't have to do that. My only special interest will be the people of the 10th Congressional District.

Education: The quality of education our children receive is directly proportional to the quality of life they will have as adults. And a college education can no longer be the privilege of the few. I'm a college dropout. I'm one of the lucky few who made it without a degree. Most others aren't as fortunate. No one should be forced, like I was, to choose between earning a living and earning a college degree. It must be the right of every young person who is dedicated to bettering themselves to have a tuition-free college education at a Community College. And those people who are already burdened by carrying a huge load of college debt must be able to re-structure that debt to a low interest loan.

Constituent Services: In addition to representing the District in Washington, the most important thing a Congressman can do is representing them here at home. Too often people are unable to navigate through the complicated maze of government bureaucracy when they have a problem. Adding to the problem is that many working people can't afford to take the time off during the day to address these issues. I will have a constituent services office that is open at nights and on the weekends so that people who can't deal with these issues during working hours can have the access to their government – which they rightly deserve. [[East Orlando Post, January 18, 2016](#)]

2: Vulnerabilities

Failed Miserably As Florida Democratic Party Chairman... Twice

Context: Florida Democrats Were Already In Bad Shape By 2000

Florida Democrats Had By 2000 Already Lost Control Of State Government: “Prior to Poe taking over as chairman of the Florida Democratic Party, Republicans had taken control of both houses of the Legislature, as well as the governor's mansion, the first time since post-Civil War Reconstruction that had happened in Florida.” [Orlando Sentinel, May 14, 2000]

Florida Democrats Had Also Lost Their Majority In The Congressional Delegation By 2000: “After all, the party has lost control of the state House, Senate and Governor's Mansion -- all within six years. Democrats have gone from holding a majority of the state's congressional seats in 1990 to holding eight of 23.” [Orlando Sentinel, August 14, 2000]

Democrats Had 45 Seats In Florida House When Poe Took The Reins: “Democrats held 45 seats in the Florida House when Bob Poe was named chairman of the Florida Democratic Party in March 2000.” [St. Petersburg Times, November 26, 2002]

Florida Democrats Were Down And Outgunned In 2000, But Poe Predicted A Surprise Upset: “Today, Republicans, who enjoy a sizable 75-45 advantage the state House and a 25-15 lead in the Senate, are stoked with confidence heading into the election season. Jamie Wilson, executive director of the Florida GOP, said Republicans are in great shape for the fall campaigns, in part, because their titular head, Gov. Bush, enjoys strong popularity ratings that could help Republicans in the general election. But Bob Poe, the chairman of the state Democratic Party, predicts a surprise Democratic victory. ‘Sure, the Republicans will have far more money than we will. They always do,’ Poe said. ‘But you can't discount how well we've been training our candidates This will be one of those Wednesday-morning-after-the-election factors that people say, ‘Wow, that surprised me.’” [Sun-Sentinel, July 16, 2000]

Poe Couldn't Take Credit For Democrats' Improvements Since 1999: “Still, if the Democrats make gains in the coming election, Poe said he can't take all the credit – [his predecessor, Charles] Whitehead will be the unsung hero. ‘He set the course,’ Poe said. ‘I just happened to get on the elevator when it was going up.’ Whitehead came out of retirement last year to rejuvenate the state party, which was in debt and rudder-less. He called in favors, bringing in President Clinton for a fundraiser and raising about \$2-million before unexpectedly giving up the job because of health reasons.” [Florida Times-Union, September 18, 2000; St. Petersburg Times, April 02, 2000]

Poe Took Over State Party In Spring 2000

Poe Took Over March 2000 To Fill An Unexpected Vacancy: Poe was named chairman of the Florida Democratic Party in March 2000 after his predecessor, Charles Whitehead, stepped down unexpectedly. [Palm Beach Post, November 23, 2002; Orlando Sentinel, December 5, 2002; Orlando Sentinel, March 25, 2000]

Poe Was Florida Democrats' Seventh Choice For Chairman: "Poe's performance as chairman has far exceeded anyone's expectations, especially because he was a last-resort candidate for the job that a half-dozen others turned down." [Orlando Sentinel, January 21, 2001]

Poe Set Conditions For His Success Upon Taking Office: "Poe said his success will be measured on whether Vice President Al Gore wins Florida, whether Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson is elected to the U.S. Senate and whether Democrats win three key congressional seats in November. 'We have a chance of getting Dick Gephardt three of the five seats he needs,' said Poe, referring to the House Democratic leader who needs just five seats to capture control of the House from majority Republicans. 'Florida is in play.'" [Florida Times-Union, March 26, 2000]

Poe's Original Agenda: Education, Health Care, Environment: "The most important goal for the state party is to get out the Democratic message on three key issues: education, health care and the environment, Poe said. Poe said he intends to narrowly tailor the Democratic message to individuals using e-mails and other Internet approaches. He said he wants to reach out beyond the Democratic Party and attract independent and unaffiliated voters." [Associated Press State & Local Wire, March 25, 2000]

Poe Planned Massive Turnout In 2000: "Bob Poe predicted the get-out-the-vote effort this year by the Democrats would be 'an incredible movement machine.' 'It is key,' he said. 'We have to get our voters to the polls.' He said the effort this year would be 'unsurpassed in Florida politics.'" [Bradenton Herald, November 5, 2000]

Slaughtered In 2000 Election; Flubbed Recount; Handed It To George Bush

Democrats Contested 83 Races Under Poe In 2000 With Redistricting At Stake: "Term limits forced out 51 members of the House and 11 members of the Senate, creating an unprecedented number of legislative choices this year. Winning is especially important this year because the party that controls lawmaking will redraw the lines for all of the state's legislative and congressional districts in 2002. The two parties were going head to head in 72 House races and 11 Senate races as returns trickled in from precincts where heavy voting left some people in line still waiting to cast ballots after the polls closed at 7 p.m." [St. Petersburg Times, November 08, 2000]

Democrats Lost At State And National Level In 2000: “Democrats lost more seats in the state House and Senate. They failed to win any of the three open congressional races and lost state Cabinet races. Democrats counter by noting that they did win the U.S. Senate race, came close to winning at least one congressional seat and lost the presidential ballot in Florida by just 537 votes. ‘People were saying this party was dead,’ Poe said. ‘I think we’ve proven we’re far from dead.’” [Palm Beach Post, December 19, 2000]

3 Of 4 Of Poe’s Top Horses In 2000 Legislative Races Lost: “In their fight for the Senate, Democrats fielded candidates to run in every seat where an incumbent was forced to leave office. Democrats also challenged several Republican incumbents who seemed vulnerable. Among the contests where Democrats smell blood is the Senate District 11 race. Florida Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe thinks Marion County School Board Chairwoman Leslie Scales [LOST] has a good chance of defeating Sen. Anna Cowin, R-Leesburg, in their matchup. Democrats are also staking their bets on: Tampa’s Kathy Castor [LOST], daughter of former state Education Commissioner Betty Castor, the University of South Florida’s president. She’s running against Republican Rep. Victor Crist for a seat vacated by retiring Sen. John Grant, R-Tampa. Gainesville State Attorney Rod Smith [WON], who prosecuted murderer Danny Rolling. He’s running against Rep. Bob Casey, R-Gainesville, for a seat being vacated by Sen. George Kirkpatrick, a Republican. Rep. DeeDee Ritchie [LOST], D-Pensacola, who is running against Rep. Durell Peaden, R-Crestview, for the seat of retiring Sen. W.D. Childers, R-Pensacola.” [Orlando Sentinel, September 7, 2000]

Republican Party Outperformed Poe’s Broke Democratic Party In Absentee Ballots In 2000 Election Loss: “After the disastrous 2000 election, Poe noted that the Florida Democratic Party tried to compete with the Republican Party of Florida to get more people to send in absentee ballots, but ran out of money. ‘It’s not that we don’t compete. We do. We just ran out of money. I mean, we didn’t have any money left in the bank.’ In Miami-Dade alone, Republicans cast 24,000 absentee ballots, while Democrats cast about 17,000 for a difference of 7,000 votes, almost all of which would have gone to Bush, dwarfing the thin margin by which he ultimately won the state.” [Orlando Sentinel, December 7, 2000; Miami Herald, November 15, 2000]

Poe Was Too Scared To Sue Over Republican Absentee Ballot Interference... Which Handed Florida To Bush: In October of 2000 during the presidential election campaign, the North Florida Field Director for the state Republican Party, Michael A. Leach, went to Seminole County with another person and, with the permission of Seminole Elections Supervisor Sandra Goard, spent over a week in a county office filling in missing voter-registration numbers on absentee-ballot requests that had been sent to registered Republicans by the Republican Party of Florida. Some of the ballots had been misprinted, omitting the legally-required voter identification number, others were duplicates, and others had other flaws. Goard told both state parties that she would reject the applications. However she allowed Leach and a helper to work in her office for over a week correcting the Republican ballot applications. They did this for 2,130 ballot applications, which meant George Bush almost certainly got almost all of

those votes, well more than the margin by which he ultimately won the state. Bush went on to win the Seminole absentee balloting by 4,797 votes. Poe learned of this ballot interference just before the November 7, 2000 election. He could have argued that the ballot requests were tainted and therefore invalid, but didn't. He was prepared to sue but decided not to because he thought that if the lawsuit failed, voters might have held it against the party. "It was more of a public-relations decision because we didn't want to be seen as lawsuit-crazy," he said. "That was the whole election right there. . . . It makes my head hurt," he later said. Democratic activist Harry Jacobs, an acquaintance of Poe's who overheard Republican operatives talking about Leach's work as he oversaw the recount there, did file suit. His suit requested that a judge throw out all of Seminole's absentee votes. [Orlando Sentinel, December 14, 2000; Associated Press, December 7, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, December 3, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, November 22, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, November 13, 2000]

Note: Poe said that he and Jacobs did discuss the suit before Jacobs filed it, but that it wasn't part of some unofficial party strategy. Realistically, Jacobs was probably a proxy for the party. Poe may be willing to admit that now in an attempt to defuse this hit. His other defenses would likely include all of the other things that went wrong with the recount including decisions by the Gore and Bush campaigns, state and national Republican Party actions, various lower court decisions, the Supreme Court decision, etc. But just as when any given legislator's vote can be framed as "the deciding vote" when a bill wins or loses by one vote, each element of the total recount picture mattered and could have changed the outcome if handled differently. Even Poe acknowledged that he was responsible for one of those elements.

Poe Chose Not To Focus On 3,000 Disqualified Votes In Lake County In Razor-Thin 2000 Election Loss: During the ballot fights that ensued after the debacle of the 2000 presidential election, Poe announced that the Florida Democratic Party would not focus on the 3,114 ballots that were disqualified in Lake County because voters made a mistake and over-voted, a total that was double Bush's eventual margin of victory by even the most lenient standard of interpretation for disputed ballots and nearly six times greater than the most accepted interpretation. Initially Poe said of the situation, "That's insane. We're not trying to be litigious, but gosh, I just don't know." Later he said, "That's a very serious situation in Lake County. But we just have to focus our resources." He said Lake County would have to wait or be ignored while the party focused on Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach. It is unclear what further efforts the party may have undertaken in Lake County, if any, or to what degree it was rendered moot by other events, however a St. Petersburg Times article the following year determined that Gore's best net gain in votes would have been 151 in Lake County. [Orlando Sentinel, November 15, 2000; Orlando Sentinel, November 14, 2000; [St. Petersburg Times, November 12, 2001](#)]

Redistricting: Florida Democratic Party Eulogy In Advance

Florida Democrats Blew 2002 Redistricting And Their Future; Poe And Party Accused Of “Suicidal Indifference” By Focusing On Beating Jeb Bush Instead Of On Redistricting: In February 2001, several months after Florida fell to George Bush, Martin Dyckman of the St. Petersburg Times issued what would turn out to be a prophetic eulogy-in-advance for Democrats in Florida, hinging on the issue of redistricting:

“The political version of the Golden Rule, ‘Do to them what they would do to you, but do it first,’ will be in force throughout the nation as state legislatures redistrict themselves and their congressional delegations.

“In Florida, ‘them’ means the Democrats, and they are defenseless. It’s rather late for them to wish that they had given the job to an independent commission when they had the chance, but not too late to try.

“Only 10 years ago, they had majorities of 74 to 46 in the House and 23 to 17 in the Senate and expected to stay in power by controlling the redistricting of 1992. The Republicans, however, had powerful help from the first Bush administration’s Justice Department, and from some black politicians in Florida who were more interested in creating seats for themselves than in how the legislature might respond to the needs of their constituents.

“Peter S. Wattson, Minnesota’s Senate counsel, summarized the Florida experience for interested members of his legislature:

“Those of you who have drawn plans know that you often start by packing your opposition into as few districts as possible and then fragmenting the rest of the opposition into as many districts as possible, in order to minimize the total number of seats they will win. In the 1990s round of redistricting, the natural desire of some minority groups to be grouped together in districts they could win coincided with the desire of some plan drafters to pack them. Since African-Americans and Hispanics have tended to vote Democratic, Republican plan drafters were more than willing to accommodate their desire to have districts drawn for them.”

“The Republicans eventually would have taken over Tallahassee even without intervention from Washington and the courts (Florida’s Supreme Court ultimately redistricted the Senate) but by less than today’s huge margins of 77 to 43 in the House and 25-15 in the Senate. The reversal began with the famous 20-20 Senate tie in November 1992.

“That Senate voted for a redistricting commission. The House killed it. The Democrats, still in control there, couldn’t read the handwriting on the wall, and the Republicans, who could, no longer wanted what they had fought for since the 1970s.

“The Constitution Revision Commission took up the idea, but sponsors were foiled by intense pressure from the House Republican leadership.

“CRC Chairman Dexter Douglass and a coalition of public interest groups have put together an initiative campaign, ‘People over Politics,’ but their proposal for a redistricting commission would be too late to affect the 2002 redistricting and, more important, doesn't seem to be going anywhere.

“It takes money, lots of it, to get an initiative on the ballot, and so far the Democratic Executive Committee hasn't sprung a penny. That indifference borders on being suicidal.

“Bob Poe, the state party chairman, says the party doesn't have much money, and there are leaders - not him - who wouldn't favor the attempt in any case.

“They're more focused on defeating Jeb Bush in 2002 than on trying to recover strength in the Legislature.

“‘You can live with the 43 and 15,’ Poe said recently, ‘if you've got the one.’

“But bagging Bush would be a Pyrrhic victory for the Democrats if, at the same time, they lost even a few more seats in the House and Senate. With only 39 in the House and 13 in the Senate, they couldn't count on sustaining any of their governor's vetoes as Democrats were able to do for Lawton Chiles.

“The Democrats are also neglecting what the loss of even one more Florida congressional seat, let alone the Republicans winning Florida's two new ones, could mean for their chances of recapturing the U.S. House.

“It's true that the People over Politics initiative would not apply until the 2012 redistricting. True, also, that no initiative could be adopted in time to supersede the political Golden Rule when the Legislature redistricts next year.

“Suppose, however, that the Democrats sponsored a new initiative, calling for an independent commission to redistrict ‘upon ratification of this section,’ and after every census subsequently. Let the voters approve that, and the new Legislature would be a one-term legislature. Just the threat of that on the ballot might persuade the Republicans to draw the lines with a little more respect.

“In California, where ‘them’ means the Republicans, their national committee put some \$ 1.3-million into a redistricting initiative that would have had the state's Supreme Court redistrict in place of the Democratic legislature. The court threw it off the ballot for a violation of California's single-subject rule. (Sound familiar?)

“Ted Costa, the Republican anti-tax crusader who had promoted the initiative, took his defeat sportingly.

“Let's be fair about this,’ he said. ‘Republicans will gerrymander Democrats out of office wherever they are in control, like they're going to try to do in Florida.’

If it isn't already too late for the Democrats, it soon will be. [St. Petersburg Times, February 25, 2001]

Poe: “All We Can Hope For Is Fairness” In Republican-Led Redistricting: In December 2001, Chairman Poe said of the coming redistricting process, which would be controlled by Republicans, “All we can hope for is fairness. Republicans already have it about as good as they can, especially in a state that has 300,000 to 500,000 more Democrats registered.” [[South Florida Sun-Sentinel, December 16, 2001](#)]

Ausman Attacked Poe For Failing To Challenge Redistricting Realistically: In April 2002 Jon Ausman, a fixture in the state’s Democratic party circles for decades, called for Poe to step aside. Among his criticisms of Poe’s job performance, he included Poe’s failure to credibly challenge state Republicans’ redistricting efforts. “When you can't recruit viable candidates, when you can't challenge redistricting realistically, then that's a reflection on your leadership,” he said. [Tallahassee Democrat, April 13, 2002]

Poe’s Failed Legal Challenge Of The 2002 Redistricting Process And Plan Was Too Little, Too Late: Poe was one of multiple plaintiffs in *Martinez v. Bush*, the case that challenged the 2002 redistricting plan passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature and Gov. Jeb Bush:

“Plaintiffs and intervenors brought this action for declaratory and injunctive relief against the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, the President of the Florida Senate, the Governor of Florida, the Florida Secretary of State, and the Florida Attorney General. Plaintiffs alleged

- (1) that the process used to arrive at the redistricting plan was inadequate under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d, because minorities were not given sufficient opportunity to participate;
- (2) that the reapportionment plan led to the dilution of black voting power in violation of section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 42 U.S.C. § 1973; and
- (3) that the Florida legislature politically gerrymandered the congressional districts to favor Republicans, thereby violating the rights of Democratic voters guaranteed by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.”

The court found that plaintiffs had failed to present sufficient evidence to support item 1 above and rejected the claims in items 2 and 3. [[Case No. 02-20244, *Martinez v. Bush*, United States District Court, S.D. Florida, Miami Division, December 3, 2002.leagle.com](#)]

Slaughtered In The 2002 Election

Poe's Salary Quadrupled In 2001: "Democrats meeting last weekend at a Miami Beach fund-raiser voted to raise Poe's salary from \$25,000 to \$100,000." [Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 2, 2001]

Poe Hoped To Hold House Minority And Pick Up Seats In Senate: "The Democrats will be happy to hold their 43-seat minority in the 120-member state House this fall, Poe said. The party hopes to erode a 25-15 GOP advantage in the Senate." [Orlando Sentinel, July 27, 2002]

Poe Hoped To Pick Up Four Senate Seats: "Poe said [Bob] Butterworth 'starts our march toward taking back the Senate,' which is controlled 25-15 by Republicans. He said the Democrats have a good chance of gaining four seats in the Senate." [Tallahassee Democrat, July 26, 2002]

Instead, Democrats Lost Seats In The Legislature, Lost All Cabinet Seats, Failed To Recapture The Governor's Mansion, And Lost All Three Congressional Races To Land At An 18-7 Delegation Minority: "[Jeb] Bush handily beat Bill McBride to become the first member of his party to be re-elected governor while voters filled all three Cabinet seats with Republicans. The GOP also increased its overwhelming majority in the Legislature and picked up three seats in Congress. Republicans now hold a 18-7 advantage in Florida's congressional delegation." [Bradenton Herald, December 5, 2002]

Party's Worst Showing At The State Polls In Modern Times: "Florida Democrats, reeling from their party's worst showing at the state polls in modern times, met privately on Saturday to plot a better future." [Sun-Sentinel, November 24, 2002]

Poe Lost Every Executive Office For First Time In Over A Century And Left Democrats Powerless: "Democrats had been slipping as the state's dominant party for more than a decade, but losses this year brought the party to a new low. It lost every executive office of the state for the first time in more than a century. It lost one existing congressional seat, two new seats and five more state legislative seats -- reduced to a powerless minority in the state House." [Orlando Sentinel, December 13, 2002]

"The Party's Dismal Showing": "[Scott] Maddox, 34, replaces Bob Poe, the chairman since mid-2000, who was blamed for the party's dismal showing in the last elections." [St. Petersburg Times, January 5, 2003]

"Dismal Showing On Election Day": "Florida Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe, under pressure to resign since the party's dismal showing on Election Day, will remain at his post -- at least for now." [Sun-Sentinel, December 5, 2002]

"Disastrous November Election": "State Democratic leaders are expected to choose Maddox as the party's chairman, replacing Bob Poe, who stepped down after a

disastrous November election that saw Republicans keep the governor's office, take all three Cabinet seats and increase their majorities in the House and Senate." [Florida Times-Union, January 4, 2003]

"Election Day Trouncing Beyond Most Anyone's Predictions": "One month after Florida Democrats suffered an Election Day trouncing beyond most anyone's predictions, the party chairman told U.S. Sens. Bob Graham and Bill Nelson in a conference call Tuesday that he in-tended to step down." [St. Petersburg Times, December 5, 2002]

"A Rout"; "Reduced To A Powerless Minority": "The Democratic Party, which dominated Florida politics for much of the 20th century, suffered a rout this year. It lost every executive office of the state for the first time in more than a century. It lost one existing congressional seat, two new seats and five more state legislative seats -- reduced to a powerless minority in the state House." [Orlando Sentinel, December 4, 2002]

"Electoral Crash-Landing": "Since the electoral crash-landing on Nov. 5, Poe has attempted to focus on a new strategic plan for party-building and recruiting candidates." [Sun-Sentinel, December 4, 2002]

A "Drubbing": "Poe, still bearing the brunt of criticism for the Democrats' drubbing on Election Day..." [St. Petersburg Times, November 24, 2002]

"Humiliating Losses": "Fuming and squabbling Democrats agreed their party is in disarray, proving it Saturday by continuing to disagree about almost everything else. Their only other consensus is that drastic change is needed if the party is to recover from humiliating losses to the Republican Party in the 2002 election." [Palm Beach Post, November 24, 2002]

"Thrashing At The Polls"; "Poe Is Getting Most Of The Blame": "The thrashing at the polls has Democrats engaged in an extraordinary round of soul-searching and demanding a bottom-up overhaul of their party. Democrats are complaining about a lack of coordination, a fuzzy message, and a sloppy grass roots effort. Poe is getting most of the blame." [St. Petersburg Times, November 22, 2002]

"Mauling At The Polls": "Florida Democrats are understandably looking for blood after their mauling at the polls. One potential victim looks to be state party Chairman Bob Poe, who lives in Seminole County. The party needs something new." [Orlando Sentinel, November 10, 2002]

Democrats And Sentinel Called For Poe's Head

Headline:

Step Aside; Our Position: For The Good Of Florida, Democratic Party Head Bob Poe Should Resign.

[Orlando Sentinel, December 3, 2002]

Orlando Sentinel Called For Poe To Step Down: The editors of the *Orlando Sentinel* called for Poe to step down in December 2002:

"Bob Poe has outlived his effectiveness as leader of Florida's Democratic Party.

"The numbers simply don't lie -- and they don't bode well for Mr. Poe's future. The presidential election fiasco in 2000 occurred on his watch. And Democrats steadily have lost ground in both houses of the Florida Legislature during his two-and-a-half-year tenure. At present, Republicans comfortably control the Legislature and the governor's mansion.

"That has occurred even though registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans in the state, almost 3.9 million to 3.5 million.

"Simply put, many Democrats in Florida understandably are frustrated that they lack a strong voice in the cacophony of state politics.

"Mr. Poe certainly is an affable enough guy. But as Democratic leader, his job is to build a viable party structure in the state, field candidates for state and local offices, raise money, invigorate and mobilize Democratic voters and, perhaps most important, define a cohesive vision for the party.

"And by those measures, he has failed to deliver. For the good of the party -- indeed, for the betterment of Florida -- Mr. Poe should resign.

"Mr. Poe, of course, is not solely to blame for all the Democratic shortcomings. He has been hampered by legislative redistricting that has heavily favored Republicans and by lack of help from high-profile Democratic officeholders. Also, local Democratic Party leaders have made little effort to find and groom candidates to challenge entrenched incumbents and become potential statewide candidates.

"The distinct lack of Democratic leadership in Florida damages the whole notion of a democracy, where important public-policy decisions ideally are forged through compromise -- not ideological fiat.

“Already, Florida's Republican Gov. Jeb Bush has a tendency toward imperial political rule. And that style of governance is exacerbated absent a sustained political challenge.

“As it stands, the Florida Democratic Party is a wreck, failing even to muster enough energy in the last election cycle to field candidates in some of the state's most high profile races. Republican Tom Gallagher ran unopposed for chief financial officer. And the Democratic candidate for agriculture commissioner was nearly bereft of party support.

“In local statehouse races, the tiny Libertarian Party made more effort to field candidates. The Democratic Party was so inept, in fact, that it lost heavily Democratic House District 49 this fall, even though Republicans redrawing political boundaries had all but conceded the seat. Even more telling, both high-profile Democratic candidates in the gubernatorial election appeared to distance themselves from party politics.

Fortunately, some bright, politically savvy potential stars are waiting in the wings to succeed Mr. Poe. He should give them a shot at reintroducing two-party politics to Florida's electorate. [Orlando Sentinel, December 3, 2002]

Caution: If citing this article, take note of the part that says Poe was not solely at fault and spread the blame to redistricting, Democratic officeholders, and local Democratic party officials. Poe could potentially use the same citation as defense to deflate attacks based upon it.

Florida's Top Two Democrats, Sens. Nelson And Graham, Told Poe To Go:

“Florida's two top elected Democrats -- U.S. Sens. Bob Graham and Bill Nelson -- conferred with Poe by phone Tuesday, expressing their concern about the party. Tallahassee Mayor Scott Maddox, Poe's eventual successor, said in early December 2002 that Sen. Nelson had asked him to serve as party chairman.” [Orlando Sentinel, December 4, 2002; Tallahassee Democrat, December 4, 2002]

Sen. Skip Campbell: Democrats In “Abysmal Pits”; Consensus Wanted Poe Out:

“Spurred by Republican victories in Tuesday's elections, influential Florida Democrats are calling for the ouster of state party Chairman Bob Poe and are lobbying to get the party headquarters pulled out of Tallahassee. [...] ‘The consensus is that we've got to get new leadership,’ said state Sen. Walter ‘Skip’ Campbell, D-Tamarac. ‘And the consensus is that we are as low as we should ever get, and we need someone to lead us out of the abysmal pits that we're in.’” [Orlando Sentinel, November 8, 2002]

Ausman: Poe “Not Up To The Job,” Time For A Change At The Top:

“To Jon Ausman, the longtime Leon County party boss, the Democratic disarray looks a little like FSU's plight in 1973. After the fabled winless season, Coach Larry Jones was fired. ‘Our current guy is just not up to the job,’ said Ausman, who has been a vocal critic of Poe and was local party chairman for several years. ‘When a team gets its butt kicked like we did, you make changes, and you start at the top.’” [Bradenton Herald, November 20, 2002]

Ausman: Poe “Didn’t Have A Specific Vision”: Jon Ausman, a former Leon County Democratic Party chairman, said he would have been among those pushing for a vote of no confidence next month if Poe had tried to stick it out. ‘It was very obvious to me talking to him over the years that he didn’t have a specific vision for the party,’ Ausman said. ‘His moving out today will be very helpful to the party.’ [Bradenton Herald, December 13, 2002]

Ausman: Poe “Made Decisions Unilaterally”; “Stingy About Sharing Strategy With Local Parties”: “State party vice chairman Jon Ausman, who led the rush to dump Poe, said Poe was stingy about sharing strategy with local parties and made decisions unilaterally. He expects Maddox to change that. “Whenever you have an individual making too many decisions, you have to fail, because it can’t work in a state this size,” Ausman said.” [St. Petersburg Times, January 5, 2003]

Ausman Had Asked “What’s He Doing?” Seven Months Before The 2002 Election: “[Jon] Ausman, who has warred publicly with previous state party chiefs and other Democratic leaders for nearly 30 years, said Poe should step aside as chairman if the party can’t field a competitive team. ‘We don’t have a credible candidate for CFO, we don’t have a credible candidate for agriculture commissioner -- what’s he doing? When you can’t recruit viable candidates, when you can’t challenge redistricting realistically, then that’s a reflection on your leadership,’ Ausman said.” [Tallahassee Democrat, April 13, 2002]

Rep. Sara Romeo: “Poe Must Go”; “Failed Miserably”: “‘Bob Poe must go - that’s my mantra,’ said state Rep. Sara Romeo, D-Lutz, who lost her re-election bid to Republican Ed Homan. ‘The Florida Democratic Party, under the guidance of Bob Poe, failed miserably. It was his job to deliver a message, organize a campaign and communicate.’” [St. Petersburg Times, December 5, 2002]

Rep. Christopher Smith: Poe “Not A Legitimate Leader”; Should Resign: “Rep. Christopher Smith, D-Fort Lauderdale, said he can’t count on the party anymore. He has formed his own political action committee to pay for his get-out-the-vote efforts. ‘Bob Poe should say, ‘I resign.’ Meeting over,’ Smith said. ‘It’s hard to lead people who say you’re not a legitimate leader.’” [St. Petersburg Times, November 22, 2002]

Rep. Curtis Richardson: Poe “Out Of Touch”; No Relationship With Legislators: “State Rep. Curtis Richardson, D-Tallahassee, said he felt Poe was out of touch with many lawmakers and said Poe has never as much as come over to say ‘hi’ to him at a public event. ‘He had not taken it upon himself to develop a relationship with Democratic lawmakers. That and the results of this fall’s election, made it clear it’s time for a shake-up at the top,’ Richardson said. [Bradenton Herald, December 13, 2002]

Committeeman Mike Moskowitz: Poe Must Go Immediately: “I couldn’t say it better than Democratic state committeeman Mike Moskowitz: ‘These state senators are wrong. We need to change the state party now.’ Moskowitz says state party Chairman Bob Poe must go immediately because of the Democrats’ disastrous showing in the November election.” [Sun-Sentinel, December 7, 2002]

Palm Beach Party Chairman Friedkin: “There’s No Florida Democratic Party”; Poe “Not Capable Of Doing The Job”: “There's no Florida Democratic Party,’ said Monte Friedkin, the outgoing chairman of the Palm Beach County party. ‘Bob Poe is not capable of doing the job. He needs to step down and we need to bring someone in who doesn't need a salary and can work full time raising money and getting this party act together.’” [Palm Beach Post, November 7, 2002]

Mayor Clarence Anthony: “We’re At The Bottom”; Called For Poe’s Replacement: “‘We're at the bottom,’ said Clarence Anthony, South Bay mayor and a party activist. ‘I do think there has to be some changes to the organization, and that includes the chairman.’” [Palm Beach Post, November 23, 2002]

Committeewoman Diane Glasser: Democrats Would “Hang Him From A Tree” If He Didn’t Step Down: “‘He's going to have to leave,’ said Diane Glasser, a Democratic state committeewoman from Broward, the biggest Democratic county in the state. There is too much at stake in Florida in the 2004 presidential campaign, Glasser said. If Poe is still in charge, then Democrats ‘will hang him from a tree.’” [St. Petersburg Times, November 22, 2002]

Hernando County Democrats Furious At Poe: “The real problems are on the state level, especially with Democratic Party chairman Bob Poe, he said. ‘I'm furious at Bob Poe,’ [Hernando County Democratic Party Chairman [Dom] Cabriele said. The party did not do enough to support Thurman and spent too much money on state House candidate Gregory Williams, who had lost to Russell in 2000, Cabriele said. The party failed to find a candidate to run against Paula Dockery, a Republican from Lakeland who will represent eastern Hernando County in the state Senate.” [St. Petersburg Times, November 12, 2002]

Poli Sci Professor Jewett: Poe Unable To Lead Or Develop Strategy: According to Aubrey Jewett, a University of Central Florida political science professor, “For the party to make headway it's essential that the party get behind one person and develop a strategy everyone can agree to, and that probably wasn't going to happen under Bob Poe because the losses were so big.” [Tallahassee Democrat, January 4, 2003]

Poe’s Leadership Seen As “Ineffectual”: “Critics of Poe were not sorry to see him step down. They feel his ineffectual leadership led to the re-election of Gov. Jeb Bush, the party losing ground in the Legislature and three fewer seats in Congress. Also, the party lost its only seat on the Florida Cabinet when Republican Charlie Crist replaced longtime Democrat Bob Butterworth as attorney general. Butterworth could not run again because of term limits.” [Bradenton Herald, December 13, 2002]

Leading Democrats: Poe Failed To “Produce A Clear Message” To Defeat Jeb Bush And Other Republican Candidates: “Bob Poe said Thursday he will step down as chairman of the Florida Democratic Party early next year, an expected move that comes two months after his party suffered historic Election Day losses. Calls for Poe's resignation began almost immediately after the Nov. 5 election, with several leading

Democrats blaming Poe for the party's failure to produce a clear message to combat Republican Gov. Jeb Bush and other candidates." [Orlando Sentinel, December 13, 2002]

Poor Vision And Strategy

Poe Said In 2001 That Democrats Would Mount A Campaign Never Seen Before: "We are getting our party ready to mount the kind of campaign we have never seen before," said Bob Poe, chairman of the Florida Democratic Party. He said he has been approached by fundraisers eager to start campaigning against Gov. Jeb Bush." [Miami Herald, February 2, 2001]

Poe Thought The 2000 Election Debacle Would Fuel 2002 Wins: "We are a different party than we were a year ago, there is no question about that," Poe said. 'We were at a point where losing the November election could have been very difficult for us. As it turned out, we now have a level of commitment to winning next year that is much higher today because of what happened in the 2000 election.'" [Palm Beach Post, June 24, 2001]

Five Months Later, Poe Said Relying On 2000 Election Debacle Not Good Strategy For 2002: "People have already heard enough about the 2000 election," state Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe said. 'You couldn't run a campaign based on the 2000 election.'" [Associated Press State & Local Wire, November 3, 2001]

Poe Said Party Was Resurgent In Spring 2002; Field Said It Was Dead, Broke, Toothless, And Rudderless: "The leader of Florida's Democratic Party opened a weekend political rally Saturday by proclaiming that the record crowd of 2,400 delegates was a 'testament to the rebirth and renewal' of the beleaguered party. But beneath the sign-waving and button-wearing enthusiasm of the delegates was grumbling that the party is in disarray, woefully outgunned by the Republican fundraising effort, incapable of delivering a coherent message and unable to field credible candidates in two of the three statewide Cabinet races. 'We've just laid down and died,' said Rep. Cindy Lerner, a Democrat whose South Miami-Dade House seat is largely erased under the new GOP-drawn political boundaries. 'All of this energy will go nowhere after this weekend because the party doesn't have the money and doesn't have the drive.' Party chief Bob Poe dismissed the complaints and said the party is only now rebounding after several years of political exile. 'The Democratic Party is alive and well,' he told the delegates." [Miami Herald, April 14, 2002]

Poe Thought Class Size Amendment Would Motivate Democrats To Vote Against Bush: "Poe maintains that Democrats will spend their money this fall pointing out to voters that Bush remains skeptical about the class size amendment and other issues that they themselves support. 'Wrapping those issues around this election is what will help bring him down,' said Poe." [Sarasota Herald-Tribune, July 1, 2002]

Poe Said Jeb Bush Was What Would Unite Florida Democrats: “Florida Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe said he expects the Democrats to come together because of their common goal of trying to oust Gov. Jeb Bush. ‘There is no more single unifying factor in the Democratic Party than Jeb Bush,’ Poe said.” [Ledger, September 19, 2002]

Poe Bet The Farm On McBride For Governor In 2002, Whose Poor Loss Dragged Others Down: “Poe had bet his political future on the ill-fated campaign of Tampa lawyer Bill McBride, who was soundly whipped by Bush. Many Democrats believe McBride's poorly run campaign contributed to other Democratic losses.” [Palm Beach Post, December 13, 2002]

Poe’s Single-Issue Class Size Strategy Didn’t Work: “‘The Democratic leadership is going to have to change,’ said state Senator Tony Hill, D-Jacksonville. ‘There are calls for Bob Poe to step down. His strategy is not working. We took a beating. ... There will be long Monday-morning quarterback conversations about this election. We can’t wait until six weeks before the election to educate people,’ Hill said. ‘Our base was lukewarm on the McBride ticket, and we tried to push the McBride ticket on them. They forgot about what happened in 2000. We used a single-issue strategy [the class-size amendment] to rally our base.’” [Sun-Sentinel, November 17, 2002]

Mayor Scott Maddox: Poe Didn’t Provide Training For Candidates Or Anyone In The Field: Tallahassee Mayor Scott Maddox said of Florida Democrats under Poe in the 2002 elections, “We’ve failed to reach out to our grassroots constituencies or to provide any kind of training for our candidates, precinct workers, campaign treasurers, organizers and party workers.” [Bradenton Herald, November 20, 2002]

Rep. Ed Jennings: “We Had No Message”: “‘We had no message. Where was our message?’ asked state Rep. Ed Jennings of Gainesville.” [Sun-Sentinel, November 24, 2002]

Poe Insisted In May 2002 He Would Recruit Candidates For CFO And Agriculture: “Poe, who insists he still is recruiting candidates for agriculture and finance, said afterward: ‘There is a philosophical debate that is raging within the party: Whether to focus our efforts on two races or stretch out our resources.’” [Orlando Sentinel, May 8, 2002]

Two Months Later, Poe Wasn’t Even Going To Contest Two Cabinet Positions; One Candidate Came At The Last Minute: “With the election ballots finalized yesterday, Democrats did not field a candidate in the race for the newly created post of chief financial officer, handing the job to Republican Insurance Commissioner Tom Gallagher. Everglades activist Mary Barley on Friday joined two lesser-known Democrats in the agriculture commissioner race against incumbent Republican Charles Bronson. But even though party leaders touted Barley's candidacy, she likely would face an uphill campaign against Bronson, who has already raised \$832,000 for the race. Until Barley qualified, Democratic leaders had largely dismissed the two Cabinet races [CFO and Agriculture

Commissioner], saying they were focusing the party's money and energy on races for governor and attorney general. Democratic Chairman Bob Poe said the once-dominant party is trying to carefully rebuild after losing control of state government in recent years. 'What we have seen in the Democratic Party didn't happen overnight,' Poe said. 'It's going to take us a while to come back. You just have to pick the battles you can win.' But University of Florida political scientist Richard Scher said the party's troubles in contesting the Cabinet seats show how it has failed to recruit and develop candidates over the years." [Florida Times-Union, July 28, 2002]

Poe Couldn't Recruit Anyone To Run For CFO, So Ran No One: "State Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe said the party decided not to challenge [Insurance Commissioner Tom] Gallagher because it couldn't find a candidate with much of a chance to take out a popular candidate with high name recognition who has already amassed \$1.6 million for the race. Without an opponent, Gallagher would have to close his campaign account before the election. 'We didn't want just any candidate in there,' Poe said. 'If he had the least bit of an opponent, he could spend millions of dollars strengthening himself. The better alternative is to just shut him down.'" [Miami Herald, July 27, 2002]

Poe Withheld Party Overhaul Plan From Field: "Among those voicing a lack of support for Poe Saturday were Bob Rackleff, a Leon County commissioner; Mike Moskowitz, the Broward County Democratic state committeeman; Tallahassee Mayor Scott Maddox, a possible candidate to succeed Poe; and Shannon Collins of Clearwater, executive vice president of the Florida Young Democrats. Collins expressed anger at Poe for not distributing a year-old draft report by a consultant that recommended ways to overhaul the party. Poe said the document is not final. 'How can we work together as a statewide party organization if they won't even share their plans with us?' Collins said." [St. Petersburg Times, November 24, 2002]

Lost African Americans

Poe Targeted African Americans In 2000: "Meanwhile, in Florida's urban areas, unions and Democratic activists had worked hard to get the vote out in their districts. The party was able to put together a coalition of seniors, women and African-Americans behind Gore, said Bob Poe, Democratic state chairman 'Then the whole thing was turnout,' Poe said. Poe said Gov. Jeb Bush's One Florida plan to eliminate affirmative action provide the spark needed to mobilize the African-American community." [Florida Times-Union, November 8, 2000]

African Americans Turned Out For Gore In 2000: "The driving force for Democrats was unquestionably a historic turnout among black voters. The now disputed exit polls show that blacks constituted 15 percent of the statewide vote, which would represent a 50 percent boost in black participation. While the numbers might be a bit off, most who tracked the election agreed there was a perceptible jump in the number of black voters and the survey showed they voted overwhelmingly -- 93 percent -- for Gore. 'Without

question, there was a huge get-out-the-vote effort in the black community,' said Susan MacManus, a political science professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa. 'I think that was the key.' Democrats say black voter enthusiasm can be traced directly to Jeb Bush's push to end affirmative action programs in the state. But the party also aimed other messages at blacks, airing radio ads -- bitterly criticized by Republicans -- that tied the GOP to racial profiling and police stops for 'driving while black.'" [Ledger, November 18, 2000]

Poe Seemed To Suggest African Americans Couldn't Vote Capably In 2000 Election: "With rare unanimity, state Democratic and Republican leaders agree that blacks and Democrats were the most likely to have their votes thrown out. Florida Democratic Chairman Bob Poe said it might be because blacks in the November election were more likely to be first-time or infrequent voters. A high proportion of 'working class' voters might tend to jam the polls before and after work, and black precincts on average have more voters in them, Poe said." [Orlando Sentinel, May 6, 2001]

Poe Assumed Black Voters Would Show Up In Force To Vote Against Jeb Bush In 2002: "The traditional Democratic constituencies, namely the labor unions and teachers' union that criticize Bush's educational priorities, are already ganging up on Bush. Black voters, wooed so strongly by Bush in 1998, were upset with the governor's 1999 initiative to scrap racial quotas and remain disillusioned after the 2000 presidential election recount. 'We think there is enough out there for us in terms of issues and voter discontent,' state Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe claims." [Associated Press State & Local Wire, July 17, 2002]

Poe Targeted African Americans In 2002 Over Bush's Affirmative Action Dismantling: "They [the party] are particularly targeting black voters, who remain upset about Bush's dismantling of state affirmative action programs and the perception that many black voters were denied access to the polls in the last presidential election." [Ledger, April 15, 2002]

Poe Was All Talk With African Americans: "'The African-American community is outraged at what happened and squarely blames Jeb Bush for disenfranchising them,' Poe said.'The African-American community is going to vote for ABJ -- Anybody But Jeb -- and I would think that there potentially, certainly, is a place for an African-American candidate as governor or lieutenant governor.'" [Florida Times-Union, February 18, 2001]

Poe Miscalculated On African Americans In 2002: "Conventional wisdom presumed blacks would come out in high numbers to pay back Gov. Bush for his One Florida policy and the 2000 election fiasco, both of which were seen as contrary to minority interests. But people have short memories, said political scientist David Bositis of the Washington, D.C.-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a black think tank. 'In terms of One Florida and the 2000 election, black reaction was in 2000 for One Florida. The 2000 election was too far distant now. The impact declines with time. It

may have motivated some voters, but it was not a generic, across-the-board kind of motivation,' Bositis said." [Sun-Sentinel, November 17, 2002]

Poe Couldn't Turn Out The Black Vote: "A certain amount of finger-pointing and blame-shifting is sure to follow any electoral setback. But when they could not even motivate a large turnout of black voters - their most loyal constituency - Democrats decided it was time to get back to the grassroots of cultivating candidates and spreading their messages at the lowest possible levels." [Bradenton Herald, November 20, 2002]

Keith Clayborne Of The Broward Times: "Poe Gotta Go": Keith Clayborne, editor of the African American weekly newspaper, the *Broward Times*, said after the 2002 election, "Mitch Caesar, leader of the Broward Democrat Party and Bob Poe, who leads Florida Democrats. They both gotta' go. Black Democrats must lead the charge to reshape the Florida Democrat Party. There's no alternative. The 'Old Guard's relationship is kaput, finished." [Broward Times, November 15, 2002]

Miami-Dade Black Caucus Wanted Poe Out For Lousy Job: "Henry Crespo Sr., president of the Miami-Dade Democratic Black Caucus, said he will ask Poe to resign. 'It's about accountability, and at the end of the day we have to hold someone accountable,' Crespo said. 'They did a lousy job in mobilizing and energizing. It's time for a new direction and new ideas, attracting bright charismatic people.'" [Bradenton Herald, November 7, 2002]

Florida Black Leaders Said Poe Took Them For Granted: "Black leaders also are upset with Poe, saying the party did a poor job of campaigning in the black community because party officials have for too long taken black voters for granted." [Palm Beach Post, November 7, 2002]

Black Democrats Thought Poe Was On Another Planet With His Talk Of Unity; Already Knew Before The 2002 Election That The Party Had Taken Them For Granted And Alienated Them: "State Democrat Party Chairman Bob Poe was ecstatic about the debate, 'The one thing we'll have coming out of this primary is a united Democratic Party,' he said. Many blacks are wondering what planet Poe is on. 'He obviously isn't on this one,' said Chris Hood. The party's over for Democrats in Florida until they come to grips with the changing demographics of the state and truly bring blacks into substantive roles within the party while addressing issues of concern to all minority communities -- they're clearly out of touch -- that old style pandering to blacks is over,' says Hood. Blacks needed to see the 'real' Democrat Party and this is it.' [Broward Times, August 30, 2002]

Keith Clayborne: Poe Ignored Black Voters, Funders, And Media: Keith Clayborne of The Broward Times wrote in July 2002:

"The Florida democrat party is a hoax. They've been pimping black folks, and you'd think after the 2000 election they learned a thing or two -- but they're about as out of touch and lost as a political party could be. Everybody likes a good fight but the democrat leadership in Florida disintegrated during the Buddy McKay

campaign when prominent black politicians like Congressman Alcee Hastings and state legislators like Chris Smith and Mandy Dawson openly opposed MacKay. Heck, democrat Smith endorsed Bush for governor. How crazy was that? Trouble is, they didn't have an alternative game strategy except (and they still don't) to join the Republican 'I'm impressed,' speaking of then candidate Bush. 'He is taking time to understand our issues,' Hastings said. About MacKay, Hastings pretty much sums up my sentiments today about the Florida democrat leadership under Bob Poe, 'He is as Hastings described MacKay 'the same old passive kind of politician, patronizing towards us.' It was evident last weekend at the annual democrat 'white gala' -- I mean the Jefferson-Jackson affair held here in Broward County to raise money for the party and bring together some synergy among party supporters. Well, if blacks were an integral part of the party you wouldn't know it by gazing around these democrats. They were few and far between for a party that 'needs' the black vote to win anything now or in the future in the sunshine state.

"According to state democrat party chair Bob Poe he gave hundreds of comp tickets to State Rep. Chris Smith so us poor black folks could attend. He doesn't know what to make of it; maybe Smith used it to fire up his barbeque grill or sent them to Jeb -- who knows? Then I asked Poe, that's interesting --and why didn't you invite the Black Press? You didn't, we basically invited ourselves -- outreach, hmm -- but come on, did you go on black-oriented radio, how bad did you want to include us. Of course the obvious answer is -- not bad enough -- after-all, what choice do loyal black democrats have -- we've already given our vote to the democrats and demanded nothing in return. The only time you'll see these white folks is when they come parading through your church on election eve, stand to be recognized and leave. The church ought to at least charge these political whores for the privilege to screw us year after year." [Broward Times, July 26, 2002]

Republicans Vastly Outraised Democrats Under Poe

Poe Ran Out Of Money During The 2000 Election: In speaking of how the Republican Party outperformed Democratic Party in pushing absentee voting during the 2000 election, Poe said, "It's not that we don't compete. We do. We just ran out of money. I mean, we didn't have any money left in the bank." [Orlando Sentinel, December 7, 2000]

Poe Aimed To Raise \$10 Million For The 2002 Race: "The Democratic Party, which has spent more than \$6 million on all of its campaign efforts this year, has re-ported spending just over \$500,000 on TV ads for McBride. The party started a new TV-ad campaign for him last week. 'We've increased the exposure and we'll be buying what we need to be buying through the rest of the campaign,' says Bob Poe, state Democratic Party chairman. 'The \$10 million number is where we are targeted,' Poe said. 'There is only so much money you can spend in five weeks anyway.'" [Orlando Sentinel, October 1, 2002]

Poe Thought His Fundraising Targets For The Party Would Be Enough To Beat Bush Despite Being Outgunned: “Bob Poe, chairman of the Florida Democratic Party, said Democrats do not have to match the Republicans' fundraising. ‘When we sat down and we said what is it going to take to win this race, we mapped out a plan, and we're confident of that plan,’ he said.” [St. Petersburg Times, June 22, 2002]

Florida Republicans Outraised Poe's Democrats 5 To 1 In Q1 2002; Poe Said That Was Fine: “Bush had raised \$2.4-million in the first three months of the year, more than twice what all the Democrats had raised combined. The Florida Republican Party, which continues to benefit from multimillion-dollar fund-raisers featuring President Bush, had raised nearly \$10-million - nearly five times what the Democratic Party had [\$5.1 million]. State Democratic Party chairman Bob Poe insisted Friday that state party fundraising is in fine shape, even though it will never match what Republicans raise. ‘We're on track to where we projected we should be. We're where we need to be,’ Poe said after a private meeting with Reno on Friday. Reno predicted that Democrats would ‘be in the ballpark’ to compete with the Republicans and that, in the end, the issues and her track record will overcome the Republicans' huge money advantage.” [St. Petersburg Times, July 6, 2002]

Florida Republicans Outraised Poe's Democrats Nearly 7 to 1 By May 2002: “The state GOP has outrun the Democrats by nearly 7 to 1 in fund raising so far this year.” [Orlando Sentinel, May 8, 2002]

Florida Republicans Outraised Poe's Democrats 4 To 1 By Summer 2002: “So far in the 2001-2002 election cycle, the GOP has raised a staggering \$27.7 million and spent \$17.6 million. The Democratic Party reported spending \$7.4 million -- more than the \$7.15 million it raised. A party spokesman said the Democrats bridged the gap by using unspent money from the 2000 election. State party chief Bob Poe said the party used cash from previous quarters and now has nearly \$900,000 available. Next week, both parties will show additional ‘hard’ dollars raised when they submit additional finance reports to the Federal Elections Commission. Poe said the party is doing better at this point than it was in 1998 -- when then Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay lost to Bush. Poe expects the party -- and the candidates -- to raise and spend between \$12 million and \$15 million.” [Miami Herald, July 11, 2002]

Florida Republican Cooffers In The Home Stretch Of 2002 Campaign Were 13X Bigger Than Democrats' Under Poe: As of September 2002, the Republican Party of Florida had \$23.6 million in reserve, while the Florida Democratic Party had \$1.8 million. Poe argued that it was closer to \$2.5 million. [Associated Press State & Local Wire, September 20, 2002]

Sen. Skip Campbell Blamed Poe For Failing To Fundraise Aggressively In Advance Of 2002 Election: “State Sen. Skip Campbell's Fort Lauderdale law firm gave \$160,000 to the Democratic Party in 1998 but nothing this year. He blamed the party leadership for failing to aggressively court contributors or demonstrate how the party will

convert contributors' money into victory. Last week, Campbell met with several Senate Democrats to discuss the situation. 'We need to start having some major events where people (are encouraged) to make an investment,' Campbell said. 'And it is an investment. You have to make sure it pays certain dividends, which is to have the type of government you really want to have. And I don't think we've really done that.'" [St. Petersburg Times, May 12, 2002]

Ausman Called For Poe To Resign When He Gave Himself A Big Raise While The Party Raised Peanuts: "Now there's a call to oust Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe and install someone new. Nothing like changing horses -- or in this case donkeys -- in the middle of the stream. But not only did Jon Ausman, a member of the Democratic National Committee and former eight-year vice chairman of the state Democratic Party, make very public his call for Poe's resignation, Poe slammed back just as publicly. Ausman says Poe gave himself a nice raise while the Democratic Party, statewide, banked just \$175,000 to spend on candidates. Na, na, na, na, na. Poe says Ausman is just upset because he wouldn't break the rules and give Ausman a lucrative contract. Na, na, na, na, na." [Tallahassee Democrat, April 26, 2002]

Ausman Noted That The Party Ran Deficits In 2001 And Stuffed The Field While Poe Took A Huge Raise: "Ausman was Leon County party chairman from 1980 to 2000 and has managed dozens of city, county, state and congressional races. He blasted Poe last Friday on the eve of the party's gala state convention in Orlando, saying the party took in less money than it spent in three out of four quarters over the past year. 'During 2001, the Florida Democratic Party chair arranged to give himself a \$75,000 pay raise even though we were running a deficit all year long,' Ausman said. Ausman also complained that the party has no serious candidates for chief financial officer or agriculture commissioner. He said the headquarters is not providing county units with computers, voter registration lists or other technical support. 'These are my fellow state employees losing their jobs, our teachers working in crowded classrooms, our Leon County residents seeing vouchers replace support for public schools,' Ausman said. 'Meanwhile, Bob Poe gives himself a raise from \$25,000 to \$100,000 a year -- and he says I'm trying to blackmail the party?'" [Tallahassee Democrat, April 19, 2002]

Scrambled To Save His Job Via Closed-Door Meetings

2000: Poe Blasted Jeb Bush For Closed-Door Meetings: "Gov. Jeb Bush and the two men likely to run the Legislature for the next two years met behind closed doors for three hours Tuesday and sketched a Republican agenda of more tax cuts, a leaner state workforce and help for the ailing nursing home industry. Bush met in the governor's mansion with Sen. John McKay, R-Bradenton, and Rep. Tom Feeney, R-Oviedo, who likely will become Senate president and House speaker this fall if Republicans maintain their majority. The governor's chief of staff, Sally Bradshaw, and budget director Donna Arduin also attended - a further signal that Bush is not waiting for the elections to begin formulating a set of common priorities. [...] Florida Democrats, at their party's convention in Los Angeles, got wind of the private strategy session and

blasted Bush long-distance. State Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe called the meeting 'horrible public policy.' 'It's absolutely unconscionable, and he knows it's wrong,' Poe said. 'The spirit of the law is that you ought not to have closed-door meetings.'" [Miami Herald, August 16, 2000]

but...

Poe Held Closed Door Meetings After Disastrous 2000 Election: "Poe, who convened a private meeting of party leaders at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables after the 2000 presidential election, plans another closed-door session at Orlando's Airport Hyatt on Nov. 23. With the help of a consultant, the chairman hopes to forge a party-building 'road map.'" [Orlando Sentinel, November 15, 2002]

Poe Held Closed Door Meeting After Disastrous 2002 Election: "Poe called about 100 activists to a hotel ballroom for what many participants described as a gripe session that dealt mostly with what went wrong and less about how to rebuild a party that lost ground in 2002 in a state where Democratic voters still outnumber Republicans. Poe insisted the meeting be closed. Democrats who don't like him streamed out of the ballroom all day, seeking out the half-dozen reporters waiting outside." [St. Petersburg Times, November 24, 2002]

Closed Meetings Didn't Save Poe Or His Plans And Set A Bad Precedent: "The Democrats were getting a little better until Rep. Doug Wiles, D-St. Augustine, took over as minority leader in the House this year. Wiles has decided to take them into hiding. They have twice retreated into secret meetings since being sworn in last month, locking out the public and reporters while they do whatever it is they are doing. By retreating into a private room, they are following the lead of party chairman Bob Poe, who kept holding secret sessions as he tried to save his job. (Poe announced Thursday that he will resign Jan. 4, just barely escaping a public beheading.) It's a strange way to get a message out. And it didn't work for Poe either. [St. Petersburg Times, December 14, 2002]

Poe Acknowledged 2002 Was His Fault But Tried To Hang On: "A 4 1/2-hour closed-door session of activists, most of them invited by the chairman, ended with Poe still in charge of a dispirited party, even after he accepted 'full responsibility' for the many setbacks." [St. Petersburg Times, November 24, 2002]

Blamed Campaigns, Party, And Field

Poe Implied Party's Expectations Of Him Were Unrealistic; Admonished It Not To Treat Next Chairman The Same Way: As Poe stepped down as party chairman to make way for new party chairman Scott Maddox, he took a passive shot at the criticism that had been leveled at him by party members for his performance as chairman: "You will do a great disservice to hang the success and the failures of this party on the new chair. Remember that you gave him a gavel and not a magic wand." [Bradenton Herald, January 5, 2003]

Poe Blamed Campaigns For Losses, Saying They Ignored His Advice To Focus On Grassroots: “The emphasis has to be on developing the local party infrastructure, developing an army of activists and volunteers who can do the ground work,’ Poe said. ‘I think that campaigns have gotten into this habit of so much relying on media and forgetting about the grassroots and this is something I have been talking about for a long. I think we now have a stunning example that makes that case,’ Poe said.” [Ledger, November 7, 2002]

But Poe Had Previously Said The Grassroots Were Going To Produce A Big Turnout: “Poe said polls are less important than ground-level organization in the final days. He said labor unions, civil rights groups, education associations and other mainstays of the Democratic Party base will be ‘getting their people fired up’ and produce a big turnout Tuesday.” [Tallahassee Democrat, October 31, 2002]

Poe Blamed Party Structure And Field For Losses: “Poe blamed a weak party structure that allows all 67 counties to be ‘little kingdoms.’ He said the party structure limits the power of the state chairman and makes it difficult to raise money and coordinate campaigns.” [Palm Beach Post, November 7, 2002]

Poe Denied Responsibility For Inadequate Fundraising; Blamed McBride’s Campaign And Local Parties And Al Gore For Not Listening To Him; Blamed Party Structure: According to *Orlando Sentinel* columnist Myriam Marquez after the many 2002 election losses, “You won’t hear Poe taking responsibility for any of those losses, that’s for sure. He says it’s not his fault that the party was so underfinanced this year, that the big donations came too late to mobilize voters. It’s not his fault that Bill McBride’s people were not taking his advice, that the county Democratic Executive Committees across the state don’t take his advice, that back in 2000 Al Gore’s people didn’t take his advice. It’s all about the party’s messed-up structure, Poe says. Excuses, pathetic excuses.” [Orlando Sentinel, November 26, 2002]

Forced Out

Poe Attacked By State Democrats Immediately After Disastrous 2002 Election Until He Agreed To Resign: “Poe has been under constant attack since Nov. 5 and considered resigning two weeks ago, only to be talked out of it by lawmakers. But as he helps coordinate the annual meeting of the state committee in Orlando next month, he said he felt it was time to go. ‘In trying to pull the committee together and get the work done, I constantly found myself bogged down in discussions about the leadership change,’ Poe said Thursday evening. ‘I felt we should get this out of the way so we can get the work done.’” [Bradenton Herald, December 13, 2002]

Poe Resigned As State Party Chair After Leaving Florida Democrats With Nothing: “Florida Democratic Party chairman Bob Poe said Thursday he will resign in January, bowing to pressure to step aside after the November election left the party with effectively no power in the state Capitol and a weaker presence in Washington.” [[St. Petersburg Times, December 13, 2002](#)]

Poe's Terrible Record

Headline:

Many Blame Poe For The Party's Worst Election Year In Modern History, One That Has Made The Party Politically Irrelevant In Tallahassee.

[Palm Beach Post, November 23, 2002]

Poe's Record: 1 Win, 14 Losses, And Defensiveness: *Orlando Sentinel* columnist Myriam Marquez summed up Poe's legacy as party chairman in November 2002:

"The scorecard speaks for itself: 1 win, 14 losses.

"That's Bob Poe's record since he became the Florida Democratic Party chairman. Since Poe took the helm in March 2000, Democrats have lost the White House, the governor's mansion, three U.S. House seats, two Cabinet posts, one state Senate seat and six Florida House seats. Overall, Democrats have lost 20 state House seats since 1996.

"The only Florida Democrat to have won a statewide election since 2000 is U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, and the party can thank Bill McCollum's Monicagate baggage for that.

"You won't hear Poe taking responsibility for any of those losses, that's for sure. He says it's not his fault that the party was so underfinanced this year, that the big donations came too late to mobilize voters. It's not his fault that Bill McBride's people were not taking his advice, that the county Democratic Executive Committees across the state don't take his advice, that back in 2000 Al Gore's people didn't take his advice. It's all about the party's messed-up structure, Poe says.

"Excuses, pathetic excuses.

"Bottom line: Democratic Party registration continues to outnumber the Republicans'. So why are Democrats staying home on Election Day?

"Poe failed to put into place a strategy that would unite his party's disparate factions -- whites and ethnic minorities, Jews, Christians, environmentalists, small-business people and workers -- with a message they could all embrace. He had a strategic plan a year ago. The party paid big bucks to a Washington consultant to draft it, but many local party leaders have yet to see it. To add insult to Democratic losses, Poe now says he wants two more years to implement the plan.

"Saturday's powwow in Orlando, with 100 Democratic Party leaders from around the state, illustrates Poe's cluelessness. He told reporters after the closed-door

meeting that no one in that room asked him to resign. Obviously, he wasn't listening, because many of those who came out of that meeting said the party needs new blood at the top.

“Oh, Poe did offer to give up his \$100,000 salary to remove any perception that he wants the job for the money. It's not about the money, chico. It's about spine, about character, about being humble enough to step down and give people with fresh ideas and enthusiasm the chance to do better in a swing state where independents along the Interstate 4 corridor and Central Florida's growing Hispanic population have changed the nature of the game.

“All we've heard from Poe since the 2000 defeat is petty, petulant posturing. Heck, that whole flap over Re-publicans donating money to an event put together by Hispanic Christian churches earlier this year shows how out of touch some Democratic Party leaders are about hard-working people of faith.

“Instead of attacking potential voters who happen to be evangelicals, instead of insulting their sense of decency by alluding to GOP vote-buying, Poe should have picked up the phone and invited himself and other party leaders over to meet with the Hispanic ministers and participate in their events. He missed an opportunity to bring some of them into the Democratic fold -- as Bill Clinton was able to do in substantial numbers in 1992.

“It's not as if the Democratic Party isn't involved with black church leaders, and often those leaders' congregations don't march lockstep with the party's positions, such as on abortion rights. Why treat Hispanic churches, who have many Democrats and independents within their ranks, as the enemy?

“That's just one example of Poe's inability to connect, to expand the party's potential voter base. Even heavy hitters from Puerto Rico, legislative leaders on the island who wanted to raise money and campaign to help Central Florida Democrats win, were ignored at critical junctures this year.

“If Poe wasn't taking a Washington consultant's advice, he certainly wasn't taking advice from the rank-and-file.

“A smart leader buries his ego, listens to others' advice, learns from his mistakes, makes sweeping changes if necessary and follows through with consistency. On each count, Poe has failed. His defensiveness has only served to marginalize the Democrats at a time when they need a visionary leader to move them forward.”
[Orlando Sentinel, November 26, 2002]

Poe Left Party Indebted And Irrelevant: “The good news for Maddox is that the party has almost nowhere to go but up. November brought the Florida Democratic Party to the brink of irrelevancy, with no voice on the state Cabinet, an even smaller minority in the Legislature and congressional delegation, and an overwhelming loss in the governor's race. Reeling party activists demanded the ouster of former chairman Bob Poe. In January, they elected Maddox to fill out the last two years of Poe's term. ... Maddox inherited a four-person staff working out of a decrepit building on the outskirts

of Tallahassee. The party had a handful of clunky, old computers with no server, about \$200,000 of debt and, with virtually no influence in Tallahassee, little fundraising ability.” [St. Petersburg Times, June 23, 2003]

Poe Left Party Broke With Nothing To Show For \$21 Million Spent In 2002: “The party is broke, and top fundraisers suggest that with virtually no power in state government and nothing to show for the \$21-million spent in the last election, raising money will be hard.” [St. Petersburg Times, January 5, 2003]

Poe Left Florida Democrats In The Dumps; “As Low As We Could Go”: “With just 31 seats in the Florida House and 14 in the Senate and the GOP holding the governor's office and all Cabinet seats, the 2002 elections left the Democrats right where the Republicans were in 1980. The difference is the GOP knew its fortunes were on the upswing as Ronald Reagan took office - while the Democrats are nervously hoping that theirs have finally bottomed out. ‘We're probably as low as we could go at this point, and the only way to go now is up,’ said state Rep. Curtis Richardson, D-Tallahassee. ‘People are excited about the fact that Scott is young, energetic and he exerts leadership.’ After Gov. Jeb Bush beat Democrat Bill McBride with 57 percent of the vote and the GOP sweep of Cabinet seats, Democratic Party Chairman Bob Poe of Orlando tried briefly to hold onto his job. But dissatisfaction in the party's southeast Florida base, where Maddox ran surprisingly well in his near-miss primary for attorney general, forced Poe to resign halfway through his term.” [Tallahassee Democrat, January 19, 2003]

Tallahassee Democrat: Democrats Couldn’t Sink Much Lower, But Did Under Poe: “The Florida Democratic Party couldn't sink much lower when Bob Poe took over as chairman in March 2000. But it has.” [Tallahassee Democrat, November 23, 2002]

Poli Sci Professor Jewett: Democrats Did “Horrific Job”; “No Silver Lining”: “The Democratic Party in Florida has just done a horrific job, said Aubrey Jewett, a University of Central Florida political science professor. ‘There's no way to soften this. There is no silver lining anywhere in this election for Democrats. I just can't be negative enough.’” [Tallahassee Democrat, November 3, 2002]

Poli Sci Professor Niven: “Disastrous Performance”; “Low Point Of Any Democratic Party In The History Of The Modern South”: “‘I would argue that it's the low point of any Democratic Party in the history of the modern South,’ said David Niven, a Florida Atlantic University political science professor. ‘Their performance, it was disastrous.’” [Tallahassee Democrat, November 23, 2002]

Broward Commissioner Ben Graber: Poe’s Fall Like “The Fall Of The Roman Empire”; Poe “Disconnected With The People”: “It's like the fall of the Roman empire and the end of the feudal system,” said Ben Graber, a Broward County commissioner. “The leaders [of the party] are disconnected with the people. And we're at the point now where we are throwing out our leaders.” [Orlando Sentinel, November 8, 2002]

Poe Left Democrats Powerless: “Democrats no longer hold any statewide office in Tallahassee. They have just seven of 25 congressional seats, 39 of 120 state House seats and 14 of 40 state Senate seats. Democrats have both U.S. Senate seats.” [Palm Beach Post, November 23, 2002]

Poe’s Total Losses, 2000-2002: “Since Poe took over in March 2000, Democrats have failed to regain the governor's mansion and lost three seats in Florida's delegation to the U.S. House, two state cabinet positions and one state Senate seat. In the state House, the number of Democratic representatives has fallen under Poe -- 45 when he took over, 43 after the 2000 election and 39 who will serve this legislative session.” [Sun-Sentinel, November 24, 2002]

2006: Poe Acknowledged His Legacy On The Florida Democratic Party As “Professional Underdogs”: In 2006, as Republicans still held all major statewide offices except Sen. Bill Nelson’s seat, Poe commented on the status of the Democratic Party in Florida: “We're getting to be the professional underdog here.” [Orlando Sentinel, February 17, 2006]

Invested In Friend Alan Grayson’s “Blood In The Streets” Fund

Poe Invested In The Controversial Hedge Fund That Got Grayson Investigated

Poe Was Invested In Alan Grayson’s Controversial Hedge Fund That Capitalized On “Blood In The Streets” Turmoil Around The World: Bob Poe was formerly invested in an exclusive hedge fund started by Rep. Alan Grayson in April 2011 that, according to Grayson’s marketing materials, was designed to “capitalize on markets in turmoil due to economic, political or natural disasters.” According to the *New York Times*, “Grayson told potential investors in his hedge fund that they should contribute money to the fund to capitalize on the unrest he observed around the world, and to take particular advantage when there was ‘blood in the streets.’” Originally called Grayson Fund, LP, it was renamed in 2015 as The Sibylline Fund LP during a time when Grayson was under Congressional ethics scrutiny for using his office to promote his private interests and for other allegations of wrongdoing. As of October 2015 the fund had \$16,350,000 in it, and had only ever had four investors, and according to Grayson had had no new ones since he resumed office in 2013. According to Grayson, one investor was himself and one was a family trust, which means one of the other two was Poe. However a Grayson spokesperson said that there was a typographical error in the fund’s SEC reports, which originally listed three investors through 2014 but four in 2015. Either way, Poe was one of them. [[New York Times, February 11, 2016](#); [Sibylline Fund, LP, Form D, October 2, 2015](#); [Delaware Registration Of Sibylline Fund, LP](#)]

Note: As one of the only investors in this multi-million dollar hedge fund, the opportunistic strategy of which Grayson spelled out clearly in his marketing materials, Poe had to know he was investing in a fund that attempted to profit off of human misery.

Grayson Is Being Investigated By Congress For Potential Ethics Violations Related To His Hedge Funds:

In July 2015, two ethics complaints were filed against Grayson, one by the conservative Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust and one by St. Lucie County Democratic Chairwoman Celeste Bush. The complaints charged that Grayson's hedge funds violated U.S. House of Representatives rules, including a prohibition on members allowing their names to be used by a "firm, partnership, association, corporation, or other entity." Bush's complaint alleged that Grayson failed "on his 2013 personal financial disclosure statement to properly disclose his interest in his hedge fund, the source and amount of his outside earned income; and most importantly, by apparently accepting outside income and owing the fiduciary duty of loyalty to his unknown investors and business partners instead of the American public."

[[Palm Beach Post, July 7, 2015](#)]

Poe Knew What He Was Into; Grayson Considered Him A "Sophisticated Investor" To Whom He Owed No Fiduciary Duty Regarding His Investments:

Grayson stands accused of violating congressional ethics rules that ban sitting members from using their names as part of company names. Grayson claimed he had not violated those rules because he had no "fiduciary duty" over the funds. "The reason why the funds' offerings are 'exempt' is that all of the fund's investors are qualified investors," Ken Scudder, a Grayson spokesman stated. "Qualified investors,' by definition, are sophisticated investors to which no fiduciary duty is owed."

[[Politico.com, June 30, 2015](#)]

Note: Several law professors and attorneys in the linked article criticized Scudder's assertion on Grayson's behalf as "complete nonsense" and "absolutely incorrect" as a matter of securities law, yet the assertion sheds light on what sort of investor Poe was, i.e., one who knew very well what he was investing in.

Grayson's Hedge Fund Was Structured To Operate Through An Entity In The Notorious Offshore Tax Haven Of The Cayman Islands, Which He Shut Down Under Congressional Scrutiny:

According to the *Tampa Bay Times*, Grayson's "hedge funds were structured so that all trading would be done through an entity based in the Caymans." [Grayson Fund, LP](#) was controlled by a Grayson entity called The Grayson Fund General Partner, LLC. That LLC also controlled a Caymans-based entity called [Grayson Master Fund \(Cayman\) LP](#). An additional Caymans-based entity called [Grayson Fund \(Cayman\) Ltd.](#) appears to have been controlled by Grayson directly as its director. Under Congressional scrutiny in 2015, Grayson shut down the Caymans entities and renamed Grayson Fund, LP as Sibylline Fund, LP. Grayson claimed that no Cayman entity was ever used. "The listed address of Grayson's Caymans-based hedge fund was the Ugland House in Grand Cayman, where nearly 20,000 companies list their address in order to minimize their taxes. 'Either this is the largest building in the world or the largest tax scam in the world,' Barack Obama said of Ugland House in 2009." [[New York Times, February 11, 2016](#); [Tampa Bay Times, October 9, 2015](#)]

Note: As one of the only investors in this multi-million dollar hedge fund, Poe had to know that his friend Grayson planned to take advantage of the tax-dodging

benefits of operating out of the Cayman Islands. That is the reason people operate out of the Cayman Islands.

In A Highly Unusual Move, And While Under Congressional Ethics Scrutiny, Grayson Refunded His Friend And Campaign Donor Poe's Full Investment Despite Losses: Poe claims that he called Grayson in 2014 when he became concerned about the hedge fund's losses. "This fund is taking a beating," Poe said he told Grayson. "It just doesn't fit my investment temperament." He said that Grayson called him in 2015 and said he would be refunding his money in full despite the losses. Grayson said he refunded Poe's money because his fund was a "friends and family" hedge fund. Poe had contributed \$2,500 to Grayson's 2012 campaign, and Grayson had honored him on the House floor in 2014. [[New York Times, February 11, 2016](#); [Congressional Record for June 12, 2014](#); [Center for Responsive Politics: Poe's contributions](#)]

Poe Is Grayson's Friend, Fundraiser, Supporter, And Former Investment Client

Grayson Praised Poe On The House Floor In 2014 And Plugged Poe's Former Company: In June 2014, Grayson praised Poe on the House floor in honor of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month. He also mentioned Poe's former company favorably: "Most recently, Bob was President of Emergency Communications Network, Inc. (ECN) — the nation's leader in critical communications infrastructure allowing municipal governments to rapidly communicate with their residents in times of emergencies. Bob and his business partners sold ECN in 2011." [[Congressional Record for June 12, 2014](#)]

Poe Held A Fundraiser For Grayson In 2012: "And most impressively, he was the Central Florida Finance Chair for President Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. During the next several months, Poe hosted fundraisers for Obama, and also for Massachusetts U.S. Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren, Florida U.S. House candidate Alan Grayson and Florida House candidate Joe Saunders." [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#)]

Poe Gave Grayson's Campaign \$2,500: In July 2012, Poe contributed \$2,500 to Grayson's Congressional campaign. [[Center for Responsive Politics: Poe's contributions](#); FEC]

Poe's Daughter Was Grayson's Finance Director: In 2012, Poe's daughter Virginia (Ginni) served as Finance Director for Rep. Alan Grayson's campaign. [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#); [LinkedIn.com](#)]

Poe Got Federal Contracts And Funds While Grayson Served In Congress

Poe Was President Of Emergency Communications Network 2003-2011: Poe served as president of Emergency Communications Network (ECN) starting in 2003. "ECN developed and markets a unique emergency notification system called CodeRed.

CodeRed is a patented, real-time Internet-based message delivery system that can make over 60,000 phone calls per hour into a geographic area based on the specifics of the situation. CodeRed was designed to provide immediate access to timely information, including boil water alerts, weather emergencies, local criminal activity, and homeland security issues.” The company was acquired by private equity firm Riverside Co. in October 2011. [[PR Newswire, March 6, 2003](#); [Crain’s Cleveland Business, October 4, 2011](#)]

Emergency Communications Network Got Federal Contracts And Funding While Grayson Was In Congress: Poe’s Emergency Communications Network received federal funds on contracts for its CodeRed product every year since at least as early as FY2008, the earliest records available online, through at least FY 2015. The company’s customers have been the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force and their products have been designated for use at facilities such as Sheppard Air Force Base, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, and the Washington Navy Yard. The company has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from FY 2008 to present, at least tens of thousands of which came during fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011, during all or part of which Grayson served in Congress and while Poe was still with ECN. [USASpending.gov, [FY 2008](#), [FY 2009](#), [FY2010](#), [FY2011](#), [FY 2012](#)]

Timeline

March 2003: Poe became partner and president of ECN.

At least as early as FY 2008: Poe’s ECN got federal contracts with branches of the military to use its CodeRED emergency communications system, a trend that has continued to the present.

January 2009: Grayson took office for the first time.

January 2011: Grayson left office.

April 2011: Grayson created his hedge fund entities and related entities in multiple places including Delaware, Florida, and the Cayman Islands.

October 2011: ECN was acquired. Grayson later characterized it on the House floor as Poe and his business partners selling the company.

June 2012: Poe’s daughter Ginni became the finance director for Grayson’s Congressional campaign.

July 2012: Poe contributed \$2,500 to Grayson’s campaign (and some to Demings).

Undated 2012: Poe held a fundraiser for Grayson.

January 2013: Grayson took office for the second time.

January 2013: The point past which no additional investors bought into Grayson's fund, according to Grayson.

June 2014: Grayson praised both Poe and ECN on the House floor.

Undated 2014: Poe claims he called Grayson to express concern for the fund's losses.

July 2015: Two ethics complaints filed against Grayson over his hedge funds.

Undated 2015: Poe claims Grayson called him to alert him he would be refunding his investment in full despite losses.

Caveats, Context, Questions

While this document attempts to paint a picture of damning relationship between Poe and Grayson, and perhaps succeeds in regard to the hedge fund investment, it should be noted that small contracts of the sort that Poe's ECN company got from the federal government at the time Grayson was first in office would not likely have required specific Congressional approval, nor did Grayson serve on any House committees during that time that would have approved such contracts for the military if they did. Aside from painting a picture of Poe being friends with a sitting Congressman in general, with whatever hazily inappropriate implications that might suggest, the potentially most fertile ground here relates to the hedge fund investment.

Caution: Poe Also Contributed To Demings, Murphy, And Other Democratic Causes: In addition to Grayson, Poe also contributed a total of \$1,000 to Val Demings in July and September of 2012 and \$500 to Patrick Murphy in 2013. He was also an Obama bundler, is a Hillary Clinton fundraiser, and continues to give to other brand name Democrats and to the national party, the DCCC, and the FDP for any sensitivities this may trigger in terms of targeting his campaign contribution to Grayson. [[Center for Responsive Politics](#)]

Grayson Raised Funds For Poe's 2016 Opponent Fatima Fahmy: Despite the above illustration of Poe and Grayson's friendship and financial ties, Grayson was listed as the special guest for an early March 2016 fundraiser for Poe and Demings' opponent, Fatima Fahmy at a private residence in Orlando. [[Orlando Political Observer, February 29, 2016](#)]

Note: Could this be a collusive attempt to help Poe distance himself from the troubled Grayson? Was there a falling out between Grayson and Poe?

Hedge Funds Offering Investors Refunds Despite Losses Is So Unheard Of That It Is A Novelty: There is apparently precedent for hedge funds to offer their investors refunds on losses. It is so rare, however, that it is considered a radical idea. Adage Capital Management offers refunds to its investors if performance falters. The fact that

they do this, yet almost no other fund does, suggests that it is perfectly legal but simply not something that other hedge fund managers would want to do since the industry norm is for managers to rake in high fees whether their funds are up or down. [[Financial News, September 10, 2015](#)]

Conclusion: Grayson's refund to Poe was not illegal – it was his prerogative, even if an extremely rare practice in the investment world – but the fact that he made such an unusual move while under Congressional scrutiny for his hedge funds and while reconfiguring them and dropping the Cayman entities smells bad, even if the campaign can't necessarily level a specific charge of impropriety.

When Did Poe Become An Investor In Grayson's Fund? Does It Matter?: Part of the ethics investigation into Grayson's hedge funds is the question of whether he used his political office as a selling point to benefit himself financially. Grayson lost his first reelection campaign and left office in January 2011. The hedge fund entities were set up in April 2011 when he was a private citizen again. However he was reelected in 2012 and resumed office in January 2013. Grayson claimed in 2016 that he had not solicited any new investors since taking office again and that no new investors had joined the fund in that time. The fund's reports to the SEC had only ever listed three unnamed investors from its inception in 2011 through its 2014 report, meaning (unless some investors left and others entered) that no new investors had been added during that time. But in 2015 the fund's report listed that there were now four investors. Grayson's spokesperson claimed that was just a typographical error and that the fourth investor had bought in earlier.

The spokesperson said that the fourth investor, who had entered the fund after Grayson resumed office but before 2015, had been cashed out "without any gain, loss, income or profit to the partnership" [the fund]. "The partnership is a 'friends and family' partnership, and that one investor was a long-time personal friend of Rep. Grayson whose relationship goes back many years before Rep. Grayson ever was elected to Congress," the spokesperson said.

Did Grayson take on another investor while in office and via marketing materials that touted his position as a sitting Congressman? That is what the ethics investigation seeks to determine.

Who was this fourth and final investor? Could it have been Poe? Poe claimed publicly in a *New York Times* article that he had called Grayson in 2014 with concerns about the fund's performance, telling him it didn't fit his investment temperament, which would suggest that he could have been one of the original investors, which would have meant a cozy group consisting of Grayson, his family foundation, and Poe. Was he already invested prior to Grayson resuming office?

And if Poe was unhappy with the fund in 2014, why didn't he withdraw then? Grayson claimed in the *New York Times* article that he refunded the full investments of his two

outside investors in 2015, one of which Poe claimed to be, leaving only Grayson and the family trust invested.

While it might make a better hit against Poe if he had been enticed to invest in Grayson's fund while Grayson was in office, the fact that he was in such a cozy investment with Grayson that was based on "blood in the streets" can stand on its own as a hit. [[New York Times, February 11, 2016](#); [TheHill.com, November 17, 2015](#); [Sibylline Fund, LP, Form D, October 2, 2015](#); [Grayson Fund, LP, Form D, November 24, 2011](#)]

Cheated On His Wife For 30 Years And Abandoned His Family

Poe Began Cheating On His Wife And Drinking Soon After Marriage: Poe told *South Florida Gay News* that around 1980 he "began engaging in occasional and furtive out-of-town same-sex encounters... which created guilt... which fueled a growing problem with alcohol. When I started drinking, I really got wrapped around the axle of it." When his wife got pregnant, he says he recommitted to the marriage. His daughter was born in 1988. [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#)]

Poe Is A Recovered Alcoholic: Poe started drinking around 1980 and became an alcoholic. In 1994 he joined Alcoholics Anonymous and has been sober ever since. "I had to have a drink and I couldn't have a drink, all at the same moment," he said. "Things were out of control, so I got involved in AA and I haven't wanted to take a drink since." [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#)]

Poe Lived In Hollywood and Beverly Hills And Got Into The Gay Party Scene While Still Married To His Wife; His Daughter Said He "Fell Off The Map" During That "Scary Time": According to Poe, in order to provide his growing company (Emergency Communications Network) with a national footprint, it was necessary for him to spend much of his time in California. There, "he felt free to experiment and got swept up in the heady gay party culture in Los Angeles and Palm Springs. According to daughter Ginni, it was a scary time for the family. 'He pretty much fell off the map for a year or two,' she said. It was a 'bad, bad time' Poe says. He describes the period as 'a horrible, guilt-ridden dual existence,' with one life as a father and businessman, and another immersed in a party scene he characterizes as 'exhilarating but not joyful, and ultimately depressing.' All that changed in 2008, when he met Brown. 'I wasn't looking for a relationship,' Poe said. 'I was still out there just playing. But when I met Ken the attraction was immediate and it very quickly became something more. I realized that if I wanted to have a relationship with this remarkable man, I needed to do something about the tornado that was my life.'" [[South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#)]

Flip Flopped On Charlie Crist

“Charlie Crist is a career politician who has his business card written in pencil. He hasn’t found a race he doesn’t like.”

-Bob Poe, 2002

2001: Poe Chided Crist For Being Unqualified For Either Education Commissioner Or Attorney General: When Poe learned in September 2001 that Charlie Crist, then the Republican candidate for state attorney general, had twice failed the state bar exam, he commented, “He obviously isn’t qualified to be education commissioner; otherwise the governor wouldn’t have appointed another one. And now he probably isn’t qualified to be the state’s attorney general. Are we going to have the governor appointing a second attorney general to work with Charlie?” [St. Petersburg Times, September 1, 2001]

2002: Poe Blasted Crist For Being A Political Opportunist: When Poe was chairman of the Florida Democratic Party in 2002, running Buddy Dyer for Attorney General against then-Republican Charlie Crist, he dismissed Crist as a political opportunist. “Charlie Crist is a career politician who has his business card written in pencil. He hasn’t found a race he doesn’t like,” Poe said. [[Herald-Tribune, September 16, 2002](#)]

2008: Poe Not Exactly Complimentary Of Crist: In 2008, Poe noted that “Crist’s stock looks diminished,” referring to then-Republican Governor Crist’s slipping poll numbers as the economy plummeted into recession, as did his chances of being named John McCain’s vice presidential running mate. [Miami Herald, August 26, 2008] (*Note: It may simply have been an objective observation of data but it wasn’t a compliment.*)

2013: Poe Chaired Crist’s Gubernatorial Campaign PAC And Made The First \$25,000 Contribution Toward An Eventual \$30 Million: From November 2013 to November 2014, Poe served as the Chairman of Charlie Crist for Florida, the independent political committee supporting Crist’s gubernatorial run. The committee raised over \$30 million for Crist. Poe was its first donor in November 2013, contributing \$25,000. He later gave another \$12,050. He also gave \$2,700 to Crist’s campaign (not the political committee). [[LinkedIn.com](#); [charliecristforflorida.net](#); [Florida Division of Elections](#); [Orlando Sentinel, February 1, 2015](#); Tampa Tribune, November 16, 2013]

2013: Poe Defended Crist And Gushed About His Appeal: When Charlie Crist ran for governor, Poe was one of his top supporters. “‘People say to me all the time, ‘Yeah, but what about the activists and Crist?’ said Bob Poe, former state party chairman, who only a few years ago blasted Crist in press release after press release. ‘Look right there,’ Poe said, pointing to a scrum lining up to shake Crist’s hand and pose with him

for a photo. 'I'm not worried about the activists. I can't even get him across the room.'" [Tampa Bay Times Blogs, October 26, 2013]

2015: Poe Formed Business Consulting Company With Charlie Crist Briefly: In March 2015, Poe formed C2&P LLC with Charlie Crist. The company was voluntarily dissolved seven months later. "Former Republican governor and Democratic candidate for governor Charlie Crist is getting into the consulting business. He and Orlando investor Bob Poe, the Democratic fundraiser, former state party chairman and chairman of the Charlie Crist for Florida political committee, recently created a St. Petersburg-based company - C2&P LLC - that Poe said is for business consulting. A couple deals are in the works, said Poe, but they are not far enough along to discuss publicly." [Tampa Bay Times Blogs (The Buzz), March 31, 2015; sunbiz.org]

2016: Crist Helping Raise Money For Poe: In March 2016, Crist sent a fundraising email on Poe's behalf with a subject line of "My friend Bob Poe":

"To me, there's no higher calling than public service. We both know how important it is to do the people's work. There's a race in Central Florida to elect a new member of Congress -- and it's a competitive one.

"Bob Poe is my friend. He has a public servant's heart. So I wanted to tell you how much his support of our shared values means to me.

"Learn more about my friend Bob's people-powered campaign to represent you in Washington >>>

"Bob will be a strong voice for equality, better education, and an economy that works for all of us. He'll stand up for rights restoration, equal pay for women, and fairness in our criminal justice system.

"These are things Bob and I believe in, and I'm sure you do too.

"Most of all, Bob will put the people of Florida's 10th Congressional district first. Washington could use a few more leaders like my friend Bob.

"Sign up to learn more about Bob and his campaign to represent each of you in Washington.

"-Charlie"

[email from Charlie Crist at campaign@bobpoeformcongress.emailnb.com, March 17, 2016]

Does Poe Fear A Carpetbagger Label?

Poe Scrubbed His Facebook History Including A Post About Moving To Beverly Hills In 2013, And Has Left Other Possible Clues That May Suggest Preparation To Defend Against Carpetbagger Attacks: Poe appears to have purged part of his personal (not candidate) Facebook history. As of mid-March 2016, there was a geographically-tagged September 2013 status post visible in his timeline that read:

Bob Poe in Beverly Hills, California
September 20, 2013 ·
Moved to Beverly Hills, California

As of March 29, 2016, the post had been removed along with all posts after 2012 and before January 2016 on his Facebook timeline. Why were these posts deleted? Are they still visible to his Facebook friends? An initial scan of these posts revealed nothing of research interest except for the item above.

Poe was raised in the Orlando area and lived there for a long time, but effectively decamped to California in the 2000s for work reasons. He eventually bought homes there in 2008 and 2010 and still owns one in Beverly Hills. He served as President Obama's central Florida finance chair in 2012 and as Charlie Crist's political committee chair starting at least as early as November 2013. Did he do either of those things from a home base in California or while shuttling back and forth? Had he ever really moved back to Orlando permanently or planned to stay? Did he move back to Beverly Hills in September only to get the call from Crist and come back? Was it just a casual notice to local friends that he was back in the area for a while?

A *South Florida Gay News* article in December 2012 said he had "recently" returned to the area and already had his current penthouse condo at The Vue in downtown Orlando, but it appears to be a rental (unverified, but no sales records have been found). A Daily Kos article noted he had moved back to Orlando to serve as Obama's finance chair. A Watermark Online article noted that he moved back to Orlando for that reason as well, though in each case this information came from Poe. He bought two lake houses north of Orlando, but only in late 2015 after his name was already out there as a candidate. Was this done to cement the idea of him being a permanent resident when a rental scenario and California property records might suggest otherwise? One of the lake houses was recently used for a fundraiser. Could that be the more mundane explanation?

He seemed to have been very conspicuous in a recent online testimonial for his Beverly Hills interior decorator to point out unnecessarily that his Beverly Hills home was his second home and that his primary residence was in Orlando. Why would prospective interior design clients care or need to know any of that? Was this a deliberately laid breadcrumb to support and cement the idea of him as an Orlando resident when otherwise that story might be in doubt?

There may or may not be any worthwhile substance here. The Facebook post(s) may have been purged in an attempt to prevent opposition researchers from getting the wrong idea and trying to make an issue of it, or for other reasons. The post in question can no longer be viewed anyway, so it can't be used as evidence. Its disappearance may suggest that other available breadcrumbs could be put to use, however, or that less specific needling could find a soft spot, e.g., "While Bob Poe was off (partying) in California/Beverly Hills for years, I was right here where I've always been, working on the issues that..." [[Facebook status post, September 20, 2013](#) (link is now broken); [South Florida Gay News, December 21, 2012](#); [DailyKos.com, January 13, 2016](#); [WatermarkOnline.com, July 20, 2015](#); [markbrunetz.com](#); [Orange County Property Appraiser](#); [Zillow.com](#)]

Supported Demings

Poe Said Demings Would Be A Great And Successful Candidate: In 2013, Poe said he had urged Val Demings to run against Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs. "She would be a great candidate, and I think she would win," he said. [Orlando Sentinel, March 18, 2013]

Poe Contributed To Demings' First Congressional Campaign: In July and September 2012, Poe gave Demings' first Congressional campaign a total of \$1,000. [FEC]

Court Record

Volusia County Sued Poe's ECN Unsuccessfully For Refusing To Disclose Registrants' Contact Information: In March 2009, Volusia County sued ECN for refusing to turn over registrant information it compiled under its county contract, such as names and telephone numbers, which it drew from its own in-house database and via registrations by city residents directed to ECN by the county. As ECN's five-year contract with Volusia County was drawing to a close in early 2009, a bidding process resulted in a recommendation that the county choose a new vendor for the service. The city demanded that ECN hand over the registration information on the premise that ECN had acted as a de facto government agency and that the county would therefore be on the hook to treat that registration information as public records. But ECN refused to turn it over, citing privacy concerns. It did offer however to give the information directly to the new vendor subject to a non-disclosure agreement. The county declined and instead sought a writ of mandamus against ECN to compel it to turn over the information, arguing that while ECN was not an agency according to the "totality of the factors" standard, it was an "agency" via delegation of governmental responsibility. The court decided that it was not an agency by either standard. ECN won the case and the appeal. [News-Journal, March 19, 2009; [Case 2009 11269 CIDL, Volusia County Circuit Court, filed March 13, 2009](#)]

Poe Sued ITC For \$1.35 Million For Breach Of Employment Contract; ITC Counterclaimed; Parties Settled: In May 1997, Poe sued his former employer Interactive Technologies Corporation in an attempt to recover in excess of \$1.3 million that he claimed was owed to him by ITC for violating his employment agreement. He claimed that the company behind Rebate TV stopped paying him in October 1996, so he resigned in December 1996. He claimed that the company breached his employment agreement and owed him more than \$1.35 million, the salary and bonuses due him over the years remaining on the contract, which ran through 2006. The company's CEO, Perry West, counterclaimed that it was Poe who breached the contract by leaving. The company had announced plans to expand to Atlanta in January 2007 and 23 other markets later. West said the expansion was stymied when Poe left. "Poe created the Rebate TV concept while a consultant for one of ITC's predecessor companies. Through a series of highly complex mergers and reverse-mergers, he transferred ownership of the intellectual property to Interactive Technologies Corporation and became a Director and Chief Operating Officer of the company. 'Knowing what we know now, and looking back at those transactions, I believe that entire process deserves further scrutiny. We are currently examining the merits of a second suit against ITC, the predecessor companies and the individuals involved in these transactions,' said Poe." The parties settled in January 1999 and dismissed the suit. [Business Wire, October 7, 1997; [Orlando Sentinel, May 31, 1997](#); [Case 1997-CA-004570-O, Poe, Robert J vs. Interactive Tech Corp Inc, Orange County Circuit Court, filed May 30, 1997](#)]

Misc.

Poe Is Or Was "Right In The Middle" Ideologically: "Now along comes Poe, a counter to some of the more liberal Democrats in the Legislature. He comes from the I-4 corridor, which stretches from Tampa Bay through the Orlando area to Daytona Beach and is filled with swing voters who can decide close elections. 'Ideologically,' Poe said, 'I'm right in the middle.'" It is unclear whether he meant right in the middle of the range of Democratic views or right in the middle between Democrats and Republicans. [St. Petersburg Times, April 02, 2000]

Poe Went To Cuba In 2016 And Wants To End The Embargo: Poe mentioned on his Facebook page that he went to Cuba in February 2016: "Last month I had the opportunity to go to Cuba with a bi-partisan Congressional delegation. I am firmly convinced that the Embargo no longer serves the best interests of either the United States or the Cuban people. In fact, the only purpose it serves today is to provide an excuse for the current regime as to why their policies have failed." Poe's opponent, Fatima Fahmy, commented cordially on this and other of Poe's Facebook posts around that time. [[Poe Facebook, March 21, 2016](#)]

Poe Totaled John Travolta's Rolls Royce: "For starters, the car enthusiast is probably the only Democratic chairman who once owned a Rolls Royce (the car was once owned by John Travolta, and Poe planned to sell it back to him before it was totaled in a wreck)." [St. Petersburg Times, April 2, 2000]

3: Campaign Finance

Overview

Poe Had Raised \$342,000 By Early February 2016: At the time of this research, Poe had not yet filed his first campaign finance report. However in early February 2016, his campaign claimed that he had raised \$77,000 in 24 days and had loaned himself \$265,000. [[Politico Florida, February 3, 2016](#)]

LGBT Supporters Held A Fundraiser For Poe At His Lake House In February 2016: On February 29, 2016, a large “LGBT & Allies” host committee held a fundraiser for Poe at one of his lake houses at 71 Interlaken Road on Lake Fairview:

BOB POE
CONGRESS

Please Join our Hosts

Ken Brown, Ted Maines & Jeff Miller, Joe Saunders, Eric Rollings, John Ruffier,
Tom Dyer, Nadine Smith, Bill Segal, David & Dorothy Benson, Julie Edwards,
Carlos Guillermo Smith, Stratton Pollitzer, Skip Kirst & Eric Hogan, Gina Duncan,
Wendy Wallenberg, Keith Morrison, John Morgan, Sean Ashby, Michael Gonick,
Paul Bryan, Danny Humphress & Enrique de la Torre, Karen Castellones, Joel Gunter
Michael Farmer & Boyd Lindsley, Martha Haynie, Joe Seagle & Philip Richardson,
Lauren Goodman & Harry Jacobs, Ron Ginsburg & Santiago Corral, Jason Lowe
Mary Meeks & Vicki Nantz, Jennifer Foster & Mary Anne Metaxas, Jeff Voss,
Terry DeCarlo & Bill Huelsman, Brad Partridge, Brad Grosberg & Phil Kean



For an LGBT community & Allies reception supporting
Bob Poe for Congress

Monday, February 29, 2016
6:30pm-8:30pm

The MEZZ
100 South Eola Drive
Orlando, FL 32801

Contributions Welcome
Please make checks payable to:
Bob Poe for Congress ~ 71 Interlaken Road ~ Orlando, FL 32804
RSVP to Virginia Poe (321) 578-0574 or viginia@bobpoecongress.com

Paid for and authorized by Bob Poe for Congress

[[Orlando Political Observer, February 4, 2016](#)]

Raised Millions For Crist

Poe Chaired Crist’s Gubernatorial Campaign PAC And Helped Raise \$30 Million:

From November 2013 to November 2014, Poe served as the Chairman of Charlie Crist for Florida, the independent political committee supporting Crist’s gubernatorial run. The committee reported raising \$30,269,982 and spending \$30,184,365. Poe was its first donor in November 2013, contributing \$25,000. He later gave another \$12,050. He also gave \$2,700 to Crist’s campaign (not the political committee). The political committee’s largest donors were the Democratic Governors Association, labor unions, and lawyers. “Bob Poe, who ran Charlie Crist for Florida, said candidates no longer have any choice but to raise money this way. Since Florida is so big and has so many scattered TV markets, Poe said the minimum needed to run a governor’s race is ‘north of \$25 million.’ That’s the equivalent of a million \$25 checks. ‘So it’s a matter of necessity,’ Poe said. ‘And the other reason that people do it is because they can. The law provides for it.’ [[LinkedIn.com](#); [charliecristforflorida.net](#); [Florida Division of Elections](#); [Orlando Sentinel, February 1, 2015](#); Tampa Tribune, November 16, 2013]

Presidential Campaign Bundler

Poe Was A Top Obama Bundler In 2012: Poe was a top bundler for at least President Obama’s 2012 campaign. His total “bundle” was \$191,132. [[opensecrets.org](#)]

Poe Is A “Hillblazer” Bundler For Hillary Clinton In 2016: Poe is a member of 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s National Finance Committee, nicknamed “Hillblazers,” each of whom have raised more than \$100,000 for Clinton in the primary since April 12, 2015. [[hillaryclinton.com](#)]

Political Contributions To Others

Poe’s record of political giving at both the state and federal level is 100% Democratic and defensible with the possible exception of the contribution to Alan Grayson.

Campaign Contributions To Federal Candidates & Committees:

Date	Recipient	Amount
06/26/03	Penelas, Alex	\$500
10/25/04	Castor, Betty	\$250
04/25/07	Obama, Barack	\$1,000
07/26/08	Obama, Barack	\$1,300
11/10/09	DNC	\$10,000
12/10/09	Pouget, Stephen P	\$2,400
01/12/10	DNC	\$10,000
01/20/10	DNC	\$20,400
03/26/10	Pouget, Stephen P	\$2,400

06/08/10	Hulburd, Jon	\$2,400
06/30/10	DCCC	\$30,400
09/01/10	Giffords, Gabrielle	\$1,000
09/30/10	NH Dem. Party	\$1,000
02/18/11	Brown, Sherrod	\$250
04/07/11	Obama Victory Fund 2012	\$2,500
04/07/11	Obama, Barack	\$2,500
05/24/11	Cicilline, David N	\$1,000
10/06/11	DNC	\$30,800
10/06/11	Obama Victory Fund 2012	\$33,300
10/06/11	Obama, Barack	\$2,500
12/29/11	Colorado Dem. Party	\$550
12/29/11	DEC Of Florida	\$850
12/29/11	Dem. Party Of Wisconsin	\$300
12/29/11	Nevada State Dem. Party	\$300
12/29/11	NC Dem. Party - Federal	\$550
12/29/11	Ohio Dem. Party	\$800
12/29/11	Pennsylvania Dem. Party	\$650
12/29/11	Swing State Victory Fund	\$5,000
12/30/11	Dem. Party Of Virginia	\$550
02/17/12	Obama Victory Fund 2012	\$30,000
02/28/12	Wasserman Schultz, D.	\$2,500
02/29/12	DNC	\$30,000
04/30/12	Colorado Dem. Party	\$462
04/30/12	Dem. Party Of Wisconsin	\$252
04/30/12	DNC	\$800
04/30/12	Iowa Dem. Party	\$210
04/30/12	Nevada State Dem. Party	\$252
04/30/12	NC Dem. Party - Federal	\$462
04/30/12	Obama Victory Fund 2012	\$5,000
04/30/12	Ohio Dem. Party	\$672
04/30/12	Pennsylvania Dem. Party	\$546
06/27/12	Warren, Elizabeth	\$2,500
07/18/12	Warren, Elizabeth	\$2,500
07/21/12	Demings, Valdez Val	\$500
07/21/12	Grayson, Alan Mark	\$2,500
08/21/12	Barber, Ronald	\$2,500
09/10/12	Demings, Valdez Val	\$500
09/30/12	DEC Of Florida	\$714
09/30/12	Dem. Party Of Virginia	\$462
02/20/13	Barber, Ronald	\$500

03/26/13	Murphy, Patrick E	\$500
05/28/13	DEC Of Florida	\$1,800
08/15/13	Braley, Bruce L	\$500
08/20/13	Graham, Gwen	\$500
08/23/13	Barber, Ronald	\$1,000
06/04/14	Grimes, Alison Lundergan	\$500
08/22/14	DEC Of Florida	\$10,000
04/13/15	Clinton, Hillary Rodham	\$2,700
04/30/15	Taddeo, Annette	\$500
09/10/15	Taddeo, Annette	\$785
09/17/15	DCCC	\$5,000
09/18/15	DEC Of Florida	\$2,500
10/21/15	Crist, Charlie Joseph	\$2,700
12/01/15	Clinton, Hillary Rodham	\$2,700

[FEC]

Campaign Contributions To Florida Candidates & Committees:

Date	Recipient	Amount
08/19/97	Florida Democratic Party (PTY)	\$30
03/09/99	Florida Democratic Party (PTY)	\$25
08/06/99	Geller, Joseph 'Joe' (DEM)(STR)	\$100
05/18/12	Saunders, Joe (DEM)(STR)	\$500
07/19/12	Lamar, Lawson Ledran (DEM)(STA)	\$500
08/30/12	Saunders, Joe (DEM)(STR)	\$500
10/24/12	Stewart, Linda (DEM)(STR)	\$250
06/12/13	Dentel, Karen Castor (DEM)(STR)	\$500
06/12/13	Stewart, Linda (DEM)(STR)	\$500
07/03/13	Florida Governance Fund (CCE)	\$10,000
08/09/13	Florida Democratic Party (PTY)	\$2,500
08/19/13	Torres, Victor M. (DEM)(STR)	\$500
11/04/13	Crist, Charlie (DEM)(GOV)	\$3,000
11/06/13	Charlie Crist for Florida (PAC)	\$25,000
08/19/14	Charlie Crist for Florida (PAC)	\$10,000
08/27/14	Crist, Charlie (DEM)(GOV)	\$3,000
09/23/14	Charlie Crist for Florida (PAC)	\$2,000
10/30/14	Charlie Crist for Florida (PAC)	\$50
09/21/15	Alexander, Ramon Jermaine (DEM)(STR)	\$1,000

[Florida Division of Elections]