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DOLLINGER, TAXPAYERS DEMAND REPUBLICAN JOE ROBACH RETURN TAINTED CHRISTA \$\$\$

Company responsible for botched Greece school renovations bankrolling Robach and Senate GOP

Greece, NY – October 9, 2008 – While our country’s economy is struggling, Republican Joe Robach and Senate Republicans continue to take money from big business even when it comes at the expense of taxpayers. Robach and the Senate GOP have accepted \$75,000 in political contributions from Christa Construction, the same company that fleeced millions from Greece taxpayers after notoriously botching a \$119.5 million renovations project approved by the voters. By comparison, Christa has contributed \$0.00 to Rick Dollinger and Senate Democrats.

Democratic State Senate candidate Rick Dollinger today was joined by Greece taxpayers who slammed Robach and the Republicans, and demanded that these contributions be returned immediately.

Dollinger explained, “People can tell when someone is speaking out of both sides of their mouth, and that is exactly what Joe Robach and his Republican cronies are doing by taking this money and condoning this kind of unethical behavior. Robach and the Senate GOP must return this tainted money—particularly as our neighbors are working so hard to recoup these wasted funds.” Today’s event came days after citizens’ groups filed an audit request with Attorney General Andrew Cuomo’s office as part of their financial recuperation effort.

Christa was originally set to profit \$3,999,400.00 for serving as contractor, but actually pocketed an additional \$1,375,761.00.

So far, Christa Construction (through Christa Construction, LLC., Christa Development Corp. and David Christa) has donated more than \$24,000 in recent years to the Senate Republican Campaign Committee (SRCC). An additional \$50,300 was given to Senate Republicans, including \$1,850 directly to Robach whose campaign coffers have been filled with \$143,900 from the SRCC for this year’s election.

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(Robach Return Tainted \$\$\$ Continued)

“Follow the money and it leads straight to Robach’s campaign account. The taxpayers entrusted Christa Construction and then-Superintendent Steven Walts to safely renovate our schools and provide our kids with the education they deserve. Instead they squandered the money, put our kids in danger, broke the voters’ confidence and quite possibly broke the law,” Dollinger added.

Christa Construction appears to have violated their contractual agreements by not adequately completing inspections as mandated, and also may have violated State Finance Law which states that expenditures may not exceed what has been authorized by voters by so much as a single penny.

“Taxpayers are being looted and Rick is the only candidate willing and committed to showing real leadership by standing up to these people,” said Sue Hotaling, who is a familial guardian of a student with disabilities in the Greece School system. “I feel sick that money that should have gone to our kids’ education is lining the pockets of Robach donors. It’s time for him to stop sweeping this controversy under the rug and return that money—not next week, or after the election—now!”

Because of extremely poor construction and oversight of the renovations, children and staff were willingly placed in danger. Taxpayers are paying upwards of \$3 million dollars more than they had approved just fixing Christa’s stunning mistakes and mishaps. One example of the sheer disregard for engineering safety is that wind clips used to secure steel structures were not installed, compromising the integrity and stability of the buildings.

Ratcheting up costs even further, Walts and Christa Construction engaged in an unapproved arrangement wherein work-change orders costing less than \$20,000 each bypassed necessary Board of Education approval thusly removing the public from any participation on topics for which they are footing the bill. There is no record indicating that the Board of Education approved or even considered allowing this to occur.

“This is typical behavior of Joe and the Senate Republican conference—say one thing but do another all while taking gifts from big business that is hurting our community,” **Dollinger concluded.** “How could Joe and the GOP possibly justify accepting gifts from a company that took millions from our neighbors? He can’t.”