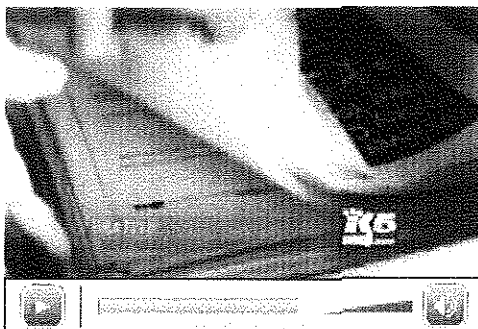


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Rossi accused in BIAW fundraising controversy

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By DEBORAH FELDMAN / KING 5 News



Video: Rossi may have played role in BIAW illegal fundraising

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SEATTLE - Republican gubernatorial candidate Dino Rossi faces new accusations today that he may have played a role in illegal campaign fundraising by the Building Industry Association of Washington, or BIAW.

Seattle attorney Knoll Lowney was instrumental in getting the attorney general's office to prosecute the BIAW for an illegal fundraising campaign that paid for numerous negative ads against Gov. Christine Gregoire.

Recently, he reviewed a document from the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties, and he found what he believes is a smoking gun.

"It shows that Dino Rossi was not just a beneficiary of this illegal activity but actually was a knowing and active participant," Lowney said. "Shows here that he made three calls that apparently were about the fundraising campaign itself."

Internal minutes taken during the May 2007 meeting document a discussion involving the association's officers. They read as follows: "Doug moved into discussion regarding the request from BIAW to use excess money from the ROI refund to fund the BIAW's war chest ... Doug, Joe and John reported that they had received a call from Dino Rossi. John stated that he reiterated the Board's sentiment to Rossi, stating that it was too early ..."

Just a few months ago, Rossi's spokeswoman said the gubernatorial candidate had no connection to independent groups who have run negative ads during this campaign season.

Today, his campaign insists the old meeting minutes are being misinterpreted and blown out of proportion.



KING

Dino Rossi

"He didn't solicit money on behalf, and in fact, never even talked about specific contributions," said Jill Strait, campaign spokesperson. "And even if he had, it wouldn't have been illegal. He wasn't a candidate and at that time and he could talk about whatever to whoever he wants."

Gregoire supporters say they believe the documents prove a collaboration between the BIAW and Rossi that they've suspected all along.

The spokeswoman for BIAW declined to be interviewed.

The Master Builder's Association of King and Snohomish Counties has released a statement saying their officers did not talk to Rossi about funding his campaign, or the fundraising tactics of the BIAW's fundraising tactics.