

Express-Times: Lawsuit Could Trouble Garrett

Campaign News:

Posted by: webmaster

Posted on : 2005/9/22 23:29:31

FEC probes group that worked for him.

Thursday, September 22, 2005

By BILL CAHIR

The Express-Times

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- When Scott Garrett, a New Jersey state representative, ran in Republican primaries against then-U.S. Rep. Marge Roukema in 2000, Garrett was backed by the Club for Growth, a highly aggressive political group run by supply-side enthusiasts in Washington, D.C.

When Roukema retired in 2002, Garrett ran in a five-way Republican primary. The Club for Growth endorsed Garrett's candidacy, and helped the anti-abortion, gun-rights conservative win the GOP nomination in a heavily Republican district. Garrett cruised to victory in the general election.

Now the Club for Growth faces a major lawsuit from the Federal Election Commission. The bipartisan panel contends that the club's activities in each of the past three election cycles -- a time frame that would include three of Garrett's campaigns for the U.S. House -- have been illegal violations of federal campaign law.

Garrett, interviewed Wednesday, played down his ties to the Club for Growth, which is headed by former U.S. Rep. Pat Toomey, R-Lehigh Valley.

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