# Sid Miller On Corruption

**Highlights:**

* Sid Miller improperly used taxpayer funds to travel.
  + In February 2015, Miller took a taxpayer-funded trip for a potential “Jesus shot.”
    - In February 2015, Miller spent $1,120 of taxpayer money on a trip to Oklahoma City.
    - Miller claimed the trip was made at state lawmakers’ request, however state lawmakers challenged that claim.
    - Miller’s trip was allegedly really to receive a “Jesus shot.”
  + In February 2015, Miller used taxpayer funds to travel to Mississippi to compete in a rodeo.
* Sid Miller helped his friends land lucrative appointments.
  + Miller handed out jobs to friends via unposted appointments.
* Sid Miller gave huge bonuses while raising fees on farmers.
* One of Sid Miller’s top aides was indicted for theft and bribery.
  + Miller aide Todd Smith was indicted on felony charges of theft and bribery.

**Miller Improperly Used Taxpayer Funds To Travel**

**February 2015: Miller Took A Taxpayer-Funded Trip For A Potential “Jesus Shot”**

**February 2015: Miller Spent $1,120 Of Taxpayer Money On A Trip To Oklahoma City**

**February 2015: As Agricultural Commission, Miller Spent $1,120 Of Taxpayer Money On A Trip To Oklahoma City.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “Less than a month after taking office, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller flew to Oklahoma City with a top aide, billing the taxpayers at least $1,120 for flights and a rental car, budget records show.” [Houston Chronicle, [3/18/16](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Oklahoma-lawmakers-deny-inviting-Sid-Miller-on-6920385.php)]

**Miller Claimed The Trip Was Made At State Lawmakers’ Request While Lawmakers Challenged That Claim**

**Miller Claimed He Took The Trip After Lawmakers Invited Him To The Capitol.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “At the time, Miller said he made the trip to tour the Oklahoma National Stockyards and meet with Oklahoma lawmakers as well as the state’s top agriculture official. His office posted a picture on Facebook of him with three lawmakers who his office said had invited him to the Sooner State’s Capitol.” [Houston Chronicle, [3/18/16](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Oklahoma-lawmakers-deny-inviting-Sid-Miller-on-6920385.php)]

**Lawmakers Challenged Miller’s Purpose For The Trip, And Said No Meeting Took Place.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “Recent interviews have cast doubt on that description, however. All of the lawmakers in the photograph, or their aides, said they did not invite Miller or even expect him in their state that day in February 2015. The president of the stockyards said it did not give him a tour. And Miller himself now acknowledges that he requested the meeting with the Oklahoma agriculture official - and then did not show up.” [Houston Chronicle, [3/18/16](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Oklahoma-lawmakers-deny-inviting-Sid-Miller-on-6920385.php)]

**Miller’s Trip Was Allegedly Really To Receive A “Jesus Shot”**

**A Potential “Jesus Shot” Was Suggested As The Real Reason For Miller’s Trip.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “The interviews suggest a possible explanation: One of the lawmakers and another person with direct knowledge of the trip both said Miller told them that he got a medical procedure while in Oklahoma. Miller, a former rodeo cowboy who suffers from chronic pain, acknowledged to the Houston Chronicle that he has received the ‘Jesus Shot,’ a controversial but legal medication administered only by a single Oklahoma City-area doctor who claims that it takes away all pain for life. Miller declined to confirm or deny whether he received the injection during the February 2015 trip.” [Houston Chronicle, [3/18/16](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Oklahoma-lawmakers-deny-inviting-Sid-Miller-on-6920385.php)]

**February 2015: Miller Took A Taxpayer-Funded Rodeo Trip**

**February 2015: Miller Used Taxpayer Money And Campaign Funds To Fly To Mississippi To Compete In A Rodeo For Prize Money.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller used a combination of taxpayer money and campaign funds to fly to Mississippi last year to compete in a rodeo for prize money, according to newly obtained records. Miller spent nearly $2,000 in state and campaign cash on the three-day trip to Jackson, Miss., in February 2015, in the middle of last year’s legislative session, records show. He used an agriculture department credit card for the airplane flights and a campaign account card for a hotel room and a rental car. Weeks later, he wrote a check from his campaign account to reimburse the state for the flights, according to department records. During the trip, Miller spent two days competing in calf-roping events at the horse show at the Dixie National Rodeo, according to the Mississippi Quarter Horse Association. He won $880. Miller did not have any scheduled meetings or events other than the horse show, according to his calendar.” [Houston Chronicle, [4/8/16](http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/texas/article/Miller-used-state-campaign-funds-on-trip-to-7237990.php)]

**The Texas Ethics Commission Fined Miller $500 Over The Trip.** According to the Texas Tribune, “Nearly four years after traveling to a Jackson, Mississippi, rodeo using state funds, Sid Miller — Texas’ colorful agriculture commissioner — has been slapped with a $500 fine from the Texas Ethics Commission.” [Texas Tribune, [12/21/18](https://www.texastribune.org/2018/12/21/sid-miller-texas-agriculture-commissioner-fine-rodeo/)]

## Miller Helped His Friends Land Lucrative Appointments

**Miller Handed Out Jobs To Friends Via Unposted Appointments**

**Miller Handed Out Jobs To Close Friends Without Posting Them, With An Average Salary Of About $150,000.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “Miller has given his unposted hires the highest salaries, with an average of about $150,000, largely due to his creation of four new ‘appointed’ assistant agriculture commissioner positions, each paying $180,000 per year. The commissioner filled those jobs with two former colleagues from the state House, a campaign aide and the wife of a campaign consultant.” [Houston Chronicle, [4/8/16](http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/texas/article/Texas-officials-frequently-ignore-hiring-law-for-6576780.php?t=809e23acc9438d9cbb&cmpid=twitter-premium)]

## Miller Gave Huge Bonuses While He Raised Fees On Farmers

**Miller Gave Out Huge Bonuses While Raising Fees On Farmers**

**During His First Nine Months In Office, Miller Doled Out $413,700 In Bonuses To 144 Employees, While Raising Fees On Farmers.** According to the Houston Chronicle, “Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, a first-term Republican who campaigned as an uncompromising conservative, gave out more bonuses to agency employees in his first nine months in office than his predecessor awarded in his first two and a half years on the job, according to an analysis of personnel data. Miller doled out $413,700 in one-time cash rewards to 144 employees between January and September - the most of any statewide elected official in that time, and more than the total given by Gov. Greg Abbott, Attorney General Ken Paxton and Comptroller Glenn Hegar combined, according to the Houston Chronicle data analysis. Miller’s predecessor, Todd Staples, gave $161,800 in bonuses during his first nine months and $369,300 overall in his first 2½ years. Most of Miller's bonuses were handed out in September - the same month he announced he was sharply raising fees on farmers, grocery stores and others, sparking surprise and anger among some state lawmakers. The fees are set to take effect Jan. 1.” [Houston Chronicle, [12/17/15](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/article/Ag-commissioner-doled-out-410k-in-bonuses-in-6703743.php)]

## One Of Miller’s Aides Was Indicted For Theft And Bribery

**Miller Aide Todd Smith Was Indicted On Felony Charges Of Theft And Bribery**

**Miller Aide Todd Smith Indicted On Felony Charges Of Theft And Bribery.** According to the Texas Tribune, “Todd Smith, a top political consultant to Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, was indicted Tuesday on felony charges of theft and commercial bribery related to taking money in exchange for state hemp licenses that are doled out through Miller’s office, according to Travis County district attorney José Garza. Smith was arrested in May, accused of taking $55,000 as part of the scheme, according to an arrest warrant affidavit. Smith and others were accused of soliciting up to $150,000 to get an ‘exclusive’ hemp license from the Texas Department of Agriculture. Smith allegedly said $25,000 would be used for a public poll on hemp. A hemp license from the state costs $100, according to the arrest warrant. ‘We are holding accountable powerful actors who abuse the system and break the law,’ Garza said. ‘Our community needs to know that no one is above the law and will face justice.’” [Texas Tribune, [1/18/22](https://www.texastribune.org/2022/01/18/sid-miller-todd-smith-hemp-licenses-indicted-ag-department/)]

**Todd Smith’s Trial Was Set For August 2024.** According to the San Antonio Express-News, “A former top aide to Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller pleaded not guilty Tuesday to charges of soliciting bribes from farmers in exchange for state licenses to grow hemp. At a court hearing, the state said it had offered Todd Smith, a longtime political adviser to Miller, a plea deal that included a four-year deferred sentence, $50,000 in restitution payments and 200 hours of community service. Smith, who has maintained his innocence for years, did not accept. State prosecutors said Tuesday that Smith has until the end of March to change his mind, but Travis County district Judge Dayna Blazey set an initial trial date for Aug. 5.” [San Antonio Express-News, [1/30/24](https://www.expressnews.com/news/texas/article/hemp-bribery-todd-smith-18637573.php)]