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**'Moon River' crooner Andy Williams dies at age 84**


4A

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# Disbarred 'Immigrant Angels' lawyer charged

## Michael Wyman faces 10 counts of breach of trust with fraudulent intent



**By ALLISON STICE**  
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A disbarred Hilton Head Island lawyer has been accused of cheating 10 people who paid him for immigration services he never provided — and investigators say many more people might have been swindled.

Michael George Wyman, 55, was charged Tuesday with 10 counts of breach of trust with fraudulent intent. The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office ICE Task Force is sifting through hundreds of files seized during a search of Wyman's Immigrant Angels Inc. Wyman opened Immigrant Angels in March. The registered nonprofit organization at 10 Office Way advertised on its door "full service" immigration assistance. It abruptly closed in September, and victims began contacting the Sheriff's Office after discovering paperwork Wyman was supposed to have prepared for them was never filed with the Department of Homeland Security.

Please see **LAWYER** on 7A

**VICTIM OF IMMIGRATION FRAUD?**

Anyone who has dealt with Michael George Wyman or Immigrant Angels Inc. is encouraged to call Cpl. L. Resto at 843-255-3510 or Lance Cpl. J. Shelton at 843-255-3511.

### CAMPAIGN FUNDS

## Harrell's spending under fire

The S.C. House speaker has reimbursed himself about \$280,000 from his campaign account since 2008.

**By SEANNA ADCOX**  
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA — Campaign spending by South Carolina House Speaker Bobby Harrell has come under fire recently, ratcheting up pressure to overhaul state ethics laws criticized for being vague and open to interpretation.

Harrell, one of the state's most powerful politicians, was adamant he did nothing improper and showed documents Tuesday to back up his assertions. He acknowledged, however, that he could be more specific on campaign finance forms about how he is reimbursed from his campaign account when he uses his personal credit card and pays bills online, among other things.

Harrell, speaker since 2005, has reimbursed himself about \$280,000 from his campaign account since the summer of 2008, according to quarterly spending reports filed with the state.

Please see **HARRELL** on 7A



**Rep. Bobby Harrell**



**SARAH WELLIVER • Staff photo**

**One of the cats at the Beaufort County Animal Shelter purrs from the top of a scratching post Wednesday afternoon inside the shelter's adoption room in Beaufort.**

**By ERIN MOODY •** emoody@beaufortgazette.com • 843-706-8184

**HOW TO HELP**

**Want to adopt an animal or help the Beaufort County Animal Shelter?** Call 843-255-5010 or go to the shelter at 23 Shelter Church Road in Beaufort. You can also view photos and biographies of cats on the shelter's website at [www.bcgov.net/departments/public-safety/animal-control](http://www.bcgov.net/departments/public-safety/animal-control), or on the Beaufort County Animal Shelter & Control Facebook page. **For other ways to help**, please see 7A

Please see **CATS** on 7A

# Akin picks up endorsements from Santorum, DeMint

**By LISA MASCARO**  
Tribune Washington Bureau

KIRKWOOD, Mo. — Republican Todd Akin's beleaguered campaign for Senate won support Wednesday from prominent conservatives, including some who had called on him to withdraw after he said victims of "legitimate rape" rarely become pregnant.

Former presidential candidate Rick Santorum and South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint jointly backed Akin one day after the final deadline passed for him to get off the ballot.

The Republican Senate campaign committee, whose chairman had asked Akin to abandon the race, now says it hopes he wins. And Republican Sen. Roy Blunt, a party leader in the Senate, dropped his



**Rick Santorum**  
**Todd Akin**  
**Jim DeMint**

Please see **AKIN** on 7A

**DEMINT TO SPEAK ON HILTON HEAD**

U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-South Carolina, will speak at 8:30 a.m. **Oct. 8** to the Hilton Head Island Republican Club meeting at the Royal Sonesta Resort in Shipyard Plantation. Cost is \$20 per person. To make required reservations, call the club at 843-682-2058 or stop by election headquarters at Suite B4 in Port Royal Plaza. Details: Call Tom Hatfield at 843-681-2170



# LAWYER

Continued from 1A

In 2002, Wyman was disbarred and sentenced to at least a year in jail for embezzling nearly \$700,000 from a local couple during a real estate deal.

He was being held in the county jail Wednesday for prosecution, with bond set at \$21,300, on the breach-of-trust charges, according to the Beaufort County Detention Center.

The victims say they paid him between \$75 and \$2,090 for immigration services, according to the Sheriff's Office.

They include Glaister Brockett, a Jamaican national who went to Wyman for help obtaining permanent residency after he married an American citizen. Brockett said he first contacted Wyman in December when Wyman was employed at another immigration service that was one flight of stairs above what would become Wyman's Immigrant Angels office.

Glaister said it took him and his wife eight months to save up more than \$1,700. By then, the immigration services office had shut down, and Wyman had opened Immigrant Angels.

Brockett said he paid Wyman in money orders Aug. 15. After that, Brockett said he couldn't reach Wyman at his office — a complaint echoed by other Wyman clients.

When Brockett discovered that Immigrant Angels had closed, he put a trace on the money orders. It showed they had been cashed. One was for \$985 for rent at Courtney Bend apartments in Hardeeville. That's where Wyman lives, according to the jail log.

Brockett said another payment of \$85 was sent to a Bluffton post office box belonging to Cynthia Lilly, Immigrant Angels' registered agent. The Sheriff's Office said no contact has been made with Lilly, and no one else is currently under investigation for fraudulent activity at Immigrant Angels.

## THE SERVICES

Before opening Immigrant Angels, Wyman was an office manager at Lowcountry Immigration Services, an independent agency that opened in 2008 and was subsidized in part by St. Francis By the Sea Catholic Church after it was authorized to do so by the Catholic Diocese of Charleston, according to a statement from the diocese.

Lowcountry Immigration Services closed March 30, 2012, and Catholic Charities opened in its place, the diocese statement reads.

Wyman then opened Immigrant Angels on the floor below, according to authorities.

The diocese was never associated with Immigrant Angels, did not collect money from any of its clients and has never received any of its clients'



File photo

The closed Immigrant Angels office is pictured above.

files, according to the diocese's statement.

In August, Wyman demanded that the diocese pay him \$60,000, the statement said. In September, Wyman "showed up at the Chancery office in Charleston unannounced," eventually meeting with Sister Sandra Makowski after demanding to see a bishop and a vicar, the statement said.

A flyer posted on Immigrant Angels' door Sept. 20 told clients to seek refunds and documents from Makowski. The diocese said it had nothing to do with posting the flyer. Since then, Makowski has received about 25 calls, the statement said, and in every case, Makowski has referred callers to Cpl.

Luis Resto with the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office ICE Task Force.

## THE CLIENTS

A Sheriff's Office statement said investigators will tell Wyman's clients how to notify the Department of Homeland Security about the fraud on a case-by-case basis. However, they do not know how the victims' immigration status will be affected, the statement reads.

Victims seeking to recover their money "will most likely have to take civil actions," the statement said.

Reid Trautz, director of practice and professionalism with the Washington, D.C.-based American Immigra-

# AKIN

Continued from 1A

opposition to Akin's candidacy, saying he will support his fellow Missourian.

With Republicans struggling in their bid to pick up the four seats they need to wrest control of the Senate, some have calculated they must back Akin. Missouri still represents perhaps the party's best chance to defeat an incumbent Democrat.

"If Republicans are to win back the Senate and stop President Obama's liberal agenda, we must defeat Sen. Claire McCaskill in Missouri," Santorum and DeMint said in a joint statement sent to donors and posted on Facebook. "Todd Akin is a principled conservative who is committed to winning and fighting for freedom in the U.S. Senate."

Support from these members of the conservative flanks of the party raises the question of whether other GOP leaders in Washington and Missouri will follow — and open the door for campaign money to flow to his race.

"As with every Republican Senate candidate, we hope Todd Akin wins in November and we will continue to monitor this race closely in the days ahead," said Rob Jesmer, executive director of the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Despite the controversy, Akin had retained support from two big-name conservatives: Mike Huckabee and

Newt Gingrich.

Democrats have sought to use Akin's views to tarnish Republicans in other races. On Wednesday, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, the head of the Democratic Senate campaign committee, called GOP support for Akin "absolutely shameful."

"All Republican candidates across the country are now going to have to answer for their party's support of Akin," she said.

The controversy began in August when an interviewer asked Akin if rape victims should be able to get an abortion. Akin said it was "rare" for a rape victim to become pregnant. "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down," he said. "But let's assume that maybe that didn't work or something. I think there should be some punishment, but the punishment ought to be of the rapist, and not attacking the child."

Akin has apologized, saying he used the "wrong words." He opposes abortion, even in the case of rape and incest.

The six-term congressman came under pressure to quit the race from the GOP's top tier: presidential nominee Mitt Romney, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, and Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, chairman of Senate campaign efforts. Lesser known elected officials, activists and Republican candidates echoed the call, and major conservative groups American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS pulled out of Missouri and halted their ads against McCaskill.

# CATS

Continued from 1A

"I hate to bring her, but we have too many animals at our house, and that's expensive to feed," Spooner said.

The stories are all too common for shelter administrative technician Lindsey Edwards, who said the shelter's cat crowding problem continues. A warm winter has meant more time for breeding, and continued financial problems have people struggling to pay to spay or neuter their pets.

So the shelter stays crowded.

"If it doesn't get cold, I have no hopes for this to slow down," Edwards said of the growing cat population.

As many as 50 cats have arrived at the shelter in a day, Edwards said. On Wednesday, it housed about 160 cats, and another 50 were being fostered by Beaufort County families, she said. Shelter volunteer Jessica Weiss is fostering 30 cats.

The shelter is built to hold about 90 cats, so the employee break room now has stacks of cages full of recent arrivals, Edwards said. They are monitored for bad behavior and disease before being sent to foster homes, put up for adoption or transported to shelters in need of cats.

Up to 60 cats a week have been sent to shelters in other states. But that option is becoming a challenge. An Atlanta shelter that typically

## OTHER WAYS TO HELP

■ Volunteers are needed to play with the animals, clean the shelter and assist staff with other duties.



takes some of the overflow has reached capacity, Beaufort County shelter director Tallulah Trice said. Nonetheless, the transport program has helped cut the county's cat euthanasia rate in half some months, she said.

The shelter has taken other steps to try to reduce the cat population. It has arranged for discount prices at the Spay & Neuter Alliance & Clinic for owners to get their cats fixed, she said.

The shelter also has started a trap-and-release program, in which stray cats are caught, spayed or neutered, implanted with microchips, and released outside the shelter. If given

tion Lawyers Association, said a "real problem" has emerged with workers who leave accredited immigration services to start their own businesses, still claiming they have the credentials to prepare immigration forms.

"They're violating the law, and probably because they can get rich doing it," Trautz said.

Besides immigration attorneys, only accredited representatives with organizations recognized by the Executive Office of Immigration Review through the U.S. Department of Justice can prepare immigration documents, Trautz said. Still, Trautz said he recommends people seek licensed attorneys.

The Sheriff's Office ICE Task Force — composed of deputies who are also certified as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents — is leading the investigation. The charges against Wyman are not federal, Atlanta-based ICE spokesman Vincent Picard said.

Picard said the federal immigration agency "is monitoring the case but so far is not involved in the investigation."

Sheriff's Office ICE Task Force members "can exercise federal authority, but the investigations they conduct related to violations of state law do not necessarily come under that federal umbrella," Picard said.

Follow reporter Allison Stice at twitter.com/LCBlotter.

# HARRELL

Continued from 1A

The reasons for the spending were largely generic, such as "legislative travel" and "conference fees." Some were downright confusing: "staff Christmas," which Harrell explained was presents for staff.

The vague descriptions, first reported by The (Charleston) Post and Courier, brought about accusations that the Charleston Republican couldn't account for hundreds of thousands of dollars taken from his campaign. A government watchdog group has called for an investigation, but South Carolina's law doesn't appear to require him to be more specific on the forms.

"The current ethics structure is grossly flawed. We need a different type of enforcement mechanism," said John Crangle of the watchdog group Common Cause.

Harrell has not faced strong opposition in years, and with his name recognition, he doesn't have to spend a great deal of money to win re-election. Still, he's raised \$470,000 in the last two years, and has more than \$144,000 available, according to his latest campaign finance report.

State law allows campaign donations to be spent on campaigning or official duties, which are broad for Harrell because of his leadership role.

"The way I've been doing it is within the law," Harrell said. "Going forward, I probably will be more specific."

Last week, Harrell put nearly \$23,000 back into his campaign account, acknowledging in a letter to

## A LOOK AT S.C. SPEAKER'S CAMPAIGN REIMBURSEMENTS

S.C. House Speaker Bobby Harrell showed The Associated Press documents to support his withdrawals. Here are some examples and his explanations:

■ **June 19, 2012:** \$3,976 for "administrative assistant." Covers most of the monthly pay for an employee in his Charleston business office whose duties include legislative scheduling and keeping up with his campaign account. A payroll service cuts her check along with the other employees of his insurance agency, and he reimburses himself from his campaign for a portion.

■ **Feb. 2, 2012:** \$36,733.26, a many-month lump sum for the "administrative assistant" hired in January 2011. He didn't start to reimburse himself until this date. This is the largest single reimbursement in four years.

■ **May 9, 2012:** \$591.71 "phone reimbursement" for monthly Verizon bill. He says the entire bill is paid online and includes cellphones used by family members. He gets reimbursed for his, his spokesman's, and two assistants' cellphones and their AirCards.

■ **Feb. 6, 2012:** \$11,951 for "legislative travel." His American Express bill showed this included airline tickets, hotel stay, and meals in San Francisco. Harrell, immediate past president of the National Speakers Conference, said the trip was the group's executive committee meeting. State law allows campaigns to spend money only by check, debit card, or online transfers. Harrell said that's why he uses his personal credit card to pay such travel expenses.

■ **June 3, 2009:** \$22,008 for "travel." A spreadsheet showed Harrell, a pilot, made 35 trips on his plane between November 2008 and May 2009. Reasons include fundraisers, business meetings and trips to the Statehouse.



The Associated Press

the Ethics Committee that a four-year review determined he didn't have records for that amount in withdrawals. While he believes the expenses were legitimate, he said, he doesn't have the documents to support them.

He attributed the missing records to moving an office in Charleston in 2011.

Ethics reform promises to be much-debated when the legislature reconvenes in January. Both the House and

Senate are working on plans to close ethics loopholes, such as requiring public officials to disclose all of their income and who's paying them. Republican Gov. Nikki Haley, herself the subject of an investigation, toured the state touting her own plan.

Haley, a former House member, was cleared by the House Ethics Committee in June of allegations she illegally lobbied for a hospital and an engineering firm as a state representative.

Harrell criticized Haley's fly-around, saying then her own ethics case emphasized the need for reform.

State law, which also offers virtually no guidance on reimbursements, requires candidates to maintain expense records for four years — something Harrell says he has done.

Harrell, a 10-term incumbent, showed a stack of documents to back up his withdrawals, including American Express bills, phone bills, hotel invoices and pay stubs. Harrell did not allow copies to be made, saying the bills also contained personal spending and information. He also noted they were not public documents under state law.

The director of a libertarian think tank called on Harrell to release the documents.

"We need to see the documentation to have complete confidence the speaker did indeed reimburse himself for actual cost and that the travel is legitimate," said Ashley Landess of the SC Policy Council, which is promising to stir up a grass-roots movement to demand ethics reform.

Most of Harrell's largest reimbursements involved flights on his single-

engine plane to Columbia and to legislative events across the state. For those, he offered spreadsheets, such as one detailing a \$17,325 withdrawal in May 2011 for 30 trips flown over seven months.

State law does not address how such reimbursements should be calculated. Harrell, who holds a commercial pilot's license, said he determines what charter companies charge to fly his same aircraft for the leg, then reimburses himself less than that.

Harrell said he saves taxpayers money by flying his own plane on trips when he could've used the state plane, and it allows him to get to multiple events in a day he otherwise couldn't.

Crangle, of Common Cause, said he will try to file his complaint with the House Ethics Committee this week, and will ask the panel to waive its jurisdiction and send the case to the attorney general. He contends there's a conflict of interest because five of its six members received donations from the Palmetto Leadership Council, a pro-business fundraising group Harrell supports.

The committee's options, if it found wrongdoing, include public or private reprimands, fines, or ordering corrective action, which can include paying a campaign back.

Former Gov. Mark Sanford paid the state's largest ethics fine in 2010, when he agreed to pay \$74,000 to resolve dozens of state Ethics Commission charges that he violated state ethics laws with his campaign spending and travel. He also agreed to put about \$3,000 back into his campaign account as a reimbursement for personal use of campaign funds.