AIG Gives $644,000 in 'Campaign Bonuses' to U.S. Senators and Representatives

73% of Americans Want Congress to Give Bonuses Back

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Washington, D.C. — As President Barack Obama and Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) continue to point fingers over which one of them is to blame for the stimulus bill's "Dodd Amendment," which specifically excludes bonuses from caps on executive pay, one thing is clear: both Obama and Dodd profited from AIG campaign "bonuses" and an overwhelming majority of Americans want them to give this money back.

According to a breaking poll conducted by *The O'Leary Report* and Zogby International, 73 percent of Americans think any members of Congress who received campaign contributions from AIG over the last two years should return the money.

This might go double for President Obama and Senator Dodd, who were by far the largest recipients of AIG campaign cash in the last election cycle. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Obama received $104,332 from AIG and Dodd raked in $103,900. Obama and Dodd far outpaced the rest of Congress, as the next largest beneficiary received about $45,000 less than each of them. All told, AIG gave a total of $644,218 to federal candidates over the last election cycle.

The O'Leary Report/Zogby poll, which was conducted March 20-23 and has a margin of error of plus-or-minus 1.5 percentage points, asked 4,523 likely voters: "Should members of Congress who received campaign donations over the past two years from the troubled financial giant AIG return the contributions?"

Seventy-three percent of all respondents say "yes," these members of Congress should return their AIG bonuses. Among self-described Democrats, 61 percent say yes, as do 83 percent of Republicans and 78 percent of Independents.

Sixty-four percent of young voters aged 18-29 years old, one of the President's most enthusiastic support groups, think that Obama and congressional recipients of AIG donations should return them. Seventy-four percent of taxpayers and 70 percent of Americans who have no federal income tax liability also think the money should be returned.

The Center for Responsive Politics lists AIG as the fourth largest contributor to Senator Dodd, who chairs the Senate Banking Committee, giving him a total of $281,038 in campaign bonuses over his career. Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, has received more money from AIG over his career ($91,000) than he has from any other company. The Center also reports that stimulus bill supporter Senator John Kerry (D-MA) "was by far the biggest investor in AIG, with stock valued around $2 million."

Congress may be undecided on how best to recoup AIG's taxpayer-funded bonuses, however, a clear majority of American voters want members of Congress to return the campaign bonuses they received from AIG.

Brad O'Leary is publisher of "The O'Leary Report," a bestselling author, and is a former NBC Westwood One talk show host. His new book, "Shut Up, America! The End of Free Speech," will be in bookstores April 14. To see more poll results, go to www.olearyreport.com.