

## Biden 2008 presidential campaign penalized \$219,000

### Biden 2008 presidential campaign penalised RM700,000

**WASHINGTON (July 18, 2010):** Vice-President Joe Biden's 2008 US presidential campaign has been ordered to pay a US\$219,000 penalty for improperly accepting a discounted private plane flight and taking individual campaign contributions above the legal limit, according to the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Biden, a US senator at the time, was one of several Democratic candidates for president in 2008, but dropped out early in the campaign before being selected as Democratic nominee Barack Obama's running mate.

The FEC took the action against the Biden for President organization after an audit of the campaign's activities, according to a statement dated Friday on the agency's website. Federal law requires the commission to audit every political committee created by a presidential candidate who gets public funding for the party primary races.

A Biden spokeswoman said the vice-president will pay the penalty to the US Treasury to resolve the matter.

Biden spokeswoman Elizabeth Alexander told Politico, a news organisation that covers US politics, that the penalty was "relatively small" and that "some repayment is commonplace after presidential campaign audits."

The audit showed that Biden's campaign accepted an improper corporate contribution -- round-trip flights for three people between New Hampshire and Iowa on a private airplane in June 2007. The audit did not identify the three people.

Biden's campaign understated the value of the flights, reimbursing a company called GEH Air Transportation at too low a rate, according to the FEC audit.

The FEC said Biden's campaign should have paid US\$34,800 for the flights. It said that by failing to pay a charter flight rate as required, the campaign received from GEH an improper contribution of US\$26,889 -- the US\$34,800 owed for the flights, minus the US\$7,911 actually paid.

Politico reported that government records show GEH is owned by a New York hedge fund called the Clinton Group that has been implicated, but not charged, by New York state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo in a pension fund kickback investigation.

The FEC audit also faulted Biden's campaign regarding US\$106,000 in contributions from individuals that exceeded the US\$2,300 maximum per election set out by US election law. - **Reuters**

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WASHINGTON – [Election watchdogs](#) have directed Joe Biden's 2008 presidential campaign to pay the U.S. Treasury more than \$219,000 to resolve issues caused by sloppy bookkeeping and accepting excessive contributions, including a discounted flight on a private jet.

The audit was released Friday by the [Federal Election Commission](#).

It determined that the Biden campaign accepted an improper corporate contribution in the form of a round-trip flight between New Hampshire and Iowa in June 2007 for three people. The Biden campaign paid [GEH Air Transportation](#) \$7,911 for the first-class airfare, but regulators say the campaign should have paid the charter rate of \$34,800.

The FEC also found that the Biden campaign could not document repaying at least \$106,000 in donations that were over the limit, and the campaign was ordered to pay the U.S. Treasury more than \$85,000 for stale-dated checks.

The [Biden campaign](#) also failed to disclose more than \$3.7 million in payments and roughly \$870,000 in debts.

The audit was conducted in part as a condition of Biden's accepting taxpayer funds for his campaign through the [presidential public financing system](#).

Biden, now the vice president, campaigned for president for nearly a year before dropping out in January 2008 after a poor showing in the Iowa caucuses.

Elizabeth Alexander, a spokeswoman for Biden in the vice president's office, on Saturday said the campaign would repay the money.

"Some repayment is commonplace after [presidential campaign audits](#) and the repayment ordered here is relatively small. Payment is due to the Treasury 30 days after the FEC issues its formal ruling and Biden for President will comply with that," she said Saturday.

Alexander said the campaign raised just over \$12 million. And she said that "stale-dated checks" are where someone contributes over the allowed maximum and the campaign sends back refund of the overpayment, but the check is never cashed.

"This is common and obviously not in campaign's control," she said, adding that the excess contributions were less than 1 percent of the money raised.