

Exclusive

## Rudy Giuliani jets to campaign stops using casino kingpin's plane

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Sheinwald/Bloomberg

Gulf Stream G-IV, like the one provided by Sands casino executive for Rudy Giuliani's use.

Rudy Giuliani is jetting around the country wooing Bible-thumping conservatives, but his plane is often provided by a king of Sin City.

The Republican presidential hopeful anted up more than \$122,000 last summer alone for jets traceable to casino kingpin Sheldon Adelson, whose Las Vegas Sands empire has made him the third-richest American, a Daily News review of campaign records shows.

Last quarter, The Sands' innocuously named Interface Operations LLC was the top provider of corporate jets to the frequently flying Giuliani, who was whisked around the country on the casino's plush Gulfstream G-IV in late August and early September, records show.

"You have to follow the money and ask, 'Why is Sheldon Adelson partnering with Rudy Giuliani?'" asked Stacey Cargill, an anti-gambling and Republican Party activist in Iowa, where the nation's first presidential caucus is set for Jan. 3.

Cargill, who views even legal gambling as a magnet for crime and vice, said, "If Rudy Giuliani wants to be the crimefighting candidate, why is he partnering with a large and growing gambling empire?"

Until eight weeks ago, candidates could hop aboard private corporate jets at a fraction of their actual cost, reimbursing benefactors only for the price of a first-class commercial ticket between the same two points.

Critics long viewed the formula as a back-door way for corporations to donate to campaigns. Congress agreed, and on Sept. 14, the Federal Election Commission changed the rules to require presidential campaigns to pay fair-market prices for corporate planes.

Giuliani certainly took advantage of the bargain rates before they went away, as did some of his competitors. Fellow Republicans Mitt Romney and John McCain use corporate aircraft to varying degrees, as does Democrat John Edwards, records show.

Democrats Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama accept no corporate aircraft, choosing instead to rent planes at full market cost to avoid the appearance of a conflict.

Some even rub elbows with the common folk: Democrats Christopher Dodd and Dennis Kucinich were spotted flying commercial to last week's Las Vegas debate.

In addition to the Las Vegas Sands, Giuliani's fleet of corporate connections includes more than a dozen big-moneyed interests, among them:

Hedge fund owner Paul Singer, a top Giuliani fund-raiser whose Elliott Asset Management provided some \$90,000 in air support to the former mayor from July 1 through Sept. 30 - on top of the \$176,000 it provided the previous quarter.



Drake/Bloomberg

Casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson (above) shares politics — and plane — with Rudy Giuliani (below).



Smialowski/Getty

### A fan of the jets

Some of the corporate aircraft used by Giuliani include:

GULFSTREAM G-IV, registered to Interface Operations LLC

- Hourly operating cost: about \$6,500 (includes plane and two pilots; does not count fuel or landing fees).
- Maximum speed: 527 mph
- Capacity: up to 19 passengers, but most G-IVs are configured for fewer
- Fuel consumption: Roughly 5,000 gallons for a Los Angeles to Washington flight.
- Range: 4,872 miles

RAYTHEON 400A, registered to Scotts Miracle-Gro Co.

- Hourly operating cost: about \$2,700
- Maximum speed: 518 mph
- Capacity: up to seven passengers
- Range: 1,482 miles

British Aerospace 125, Series 800A, registered to Alticor

- Hourly operating cost: about \$3,800
- Maximum speed: 514 mph
- Capacity: up to eight passengers
- Range: 2,522 miles

SOURCES: OneSky Jets; Federal Election Commission; Federal Aviation Administration

Zuffa LLC, a company whose creations include "Ultimate Fighting Championship," a particularly brutal hybrid of boxing and martial arts that critics have dubbed "human cockfighting."

Two New York real estate developers - Donald Trump and Stephen Ross of Related, the company Giuliani picked to develop the lucrative Time Warner Center at Columbus Circle when he was mayor.

Alticor Inc., the parent company of Michigan-based Amway, a major multilevel marketing corporation with deep ties to the GOP whose vice president for public policy, Richard Holwill, is a top Giuliani fund-raiser.

Giuliani's campaign aides insist corporate plane providers are not promised anything in return and the campaign follows all applicable laws.

"The bottom line is we have always fully complied with Federal Election Commission rules and regulations," said Giuliani spokeswoman Maria Comella.

Campaign watchdogs - while generally pleased by the new, stricter rules - nevertheless believe planes will remain a valuable perk corporations will use to build goodwill. They can also provide critical access, since CEOs often find a way to share flights with candidates, they note.

"What money buys you in politics these days is access, and that's the case regardless of the rule changes," said Meredith McGehee, policy director of the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center.

"For a busy presidential candidate, being able to fly on your own schedule and not have to stand in line to take off your shoes - it's an extreme personal convenience."

Adelson - a former City College kid - made his real money when the Chinese government allowed him to build a casino on the island of Macao in 2004. That launched him to the No. 3 slot on Forbes' list of America's richest men, with a fortune estimated at \$28 billion.

He has developed a solid relationship with Giuliani.

The two share many ideological views, most notably a vigorous commitment to maintaining the security of Israel. Last month, Adelson - who did not return calls for comment - held a Giuliani fund-raiser at his Venetian casino in Las Vegas.

High-rollers who agreed to raise \$25,000 for Giuliani's presidential bid got a special treat - cigars with the former mayor.

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## GULFSTREAM IS A POL'S DREAM

Presidential hopeful Rudy Giuliani's campaign finance filings show he has reimbursed more than a dozen corporations for the use of private jets this year. One of his favorites is the Gulfstream G-IV owned by Las Vegas Sands owner Sheldon Adelson.

Until recently, corporate planes were a bargain to presidential campaigns. Instead of paying the fair-market cost of renting the aircraft, candidates were required to reimburse companies only the equivalent of buying one first-class, commercial ticket for each passenger over the same route.

The rules changed Sept. 14, and now candidates must repay companies the fair-market rate for chartering a similar jet. Of the six reimbursements Giuliani made to Adelson for use of his Gulfstream, five were made under the old, less costly formula.

To see the savings under the old formula, the Daily News compared what Giuliani would have paid to charter a Gulfstream G-IV at fair-market value, versus the first-class reimbursement rate that was in effect until Sept. 14.

New York to Des Moines, round trip

Fair market cost of chartering Gulfstream G-IV: \$36,333

Cost of purchasing four, nonstop first-class tickets (one candidate and three staffers):

\$542 x 4 = \$2,168