

GOP Takes Heat For Inviting Tax Delinquent

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State Democrats are criticizing Senate Republicans for inviting political consultant Dick Morris to a fundraiser when he owes the state more than \$250,000 in back taxes.

State Democratic Party Chairwoman Nancy DiNardo called on Senate Minority Leader Louis DeLuca to apologize to taxpayers.

"Honoring one of Connecticut's top delinquent taxpayers and using him to raise money for a caucus while negotiating spending cuts and tax increases in a budget is not only a case of bad judgment, it illustrates a total lack of concern for Connecticut's hard working taxpayers," DiNardo said on Friday.

Morris is best known as President Clinton's chief strategist and adviser in the 1996 presidential campaign. Morris has worked on a number of other top races, including Republican campaigns.

He is president of Vote.com and appears as a guest commentator on Fox News and writes a weekly column for the New York Post.

Morris, who lives in Redding, ranks eighth among the state's delinquent taxpayers, according to the Department of Revenue Services. Morris owes the state \$250,498.31 in back income taxes, according to the agency's Web site.

Calls seeking comment were left at Morris' home and on his cell phone, and at the Post. In 2003, when his name appeared on the department's top-100 list of delinquent taxpayers, Morris denied that he owed "a significant amount in back taxes."

The fundraiser, a brunch, is scheduled for Sunday in Southbury.

DeLuca said Senate Republicans don't intend to apologize for inviting Morris. He said the GOP doesn't know the circumstances surrounding the back-taxes case.

"I guess the Democrats thought he was a good guy when he helped elect that immoral president," DeLuca said, referring to Clinton.

The Senate Republicans are holding a series of fundraisers across the state in hopes of building support for candidates. Morris is expected to sign copies of his latest book.

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