

STATE & LOCAL

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THE BATTALION

Thursday, September 9, 1993

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TREASURY PROBE Hutchison to appear before jury today

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison was to appear, under subpoena, before a grand jury Thursday, bringing to a boil a three-month investigation into alleged wrongdoing during her tenure as state treasurer.

Ten other people were subpoenaed by the grand jury in the past two days, including key aides to Hutchison and some of her top political fundraisers.

Hutchison, a Republican, calls the grand jury probe a political witch hunt by Travis County District Attorney Ronnie Earle, a Democrat.

But Earle, who has gained most of his notoriety prosecuting Democrats such as former Attorney General Jim Mattox and former Texas House Speaker Gib Lewis, stands by the inquiry.

Less than a week after Hutchison won election to Lloyd Bentsen's Senate seat June 5, Earle's office raided the Treasury and subpoenaed more than a dozen agency employees who worked under Hutchison.

The grand jury on June 10 began looking into allegations that state employees and equipment were used for personal and political purposes during Hutchison's 2 1/2-year term as state treasurer.

Texas law forbids public officials from using their office for non-state business. The crime is classified as a misdemeanor or a felony based on the extent of the abuse.

Earle said at the outset of the probe that he had received information some crucial evidence was being destroyed as part of a possible cover-up of wrongdoing at the agency.

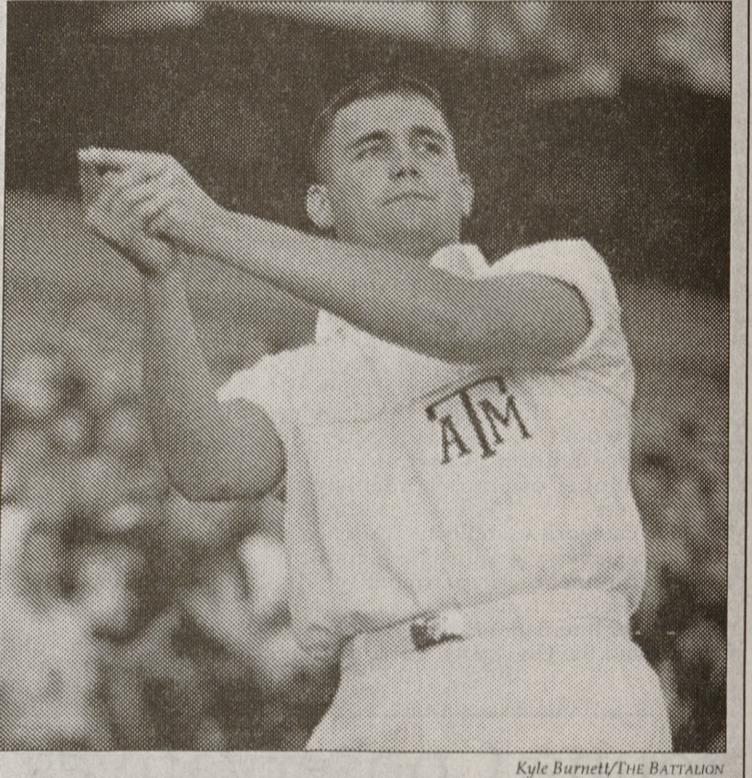
But he added at the time that he did not have "hard evidence that Kay Bailey Hutchison committed a crime."

Since then, at least two dozen former Treasury workers have appeared before the grand jury. They ranged from computer operators to personal assistants who have said that Hutchison was an obsessive boss who once hit a worker out frustration and made a habit out of ordering state employees to do personal errands for her.

Prosecutors have declined to say whether Hutchison is a target of their inquiry. But an Aug. 19 letter from Earle's office to the senator's attorneys suggested that she is.

MIDNIGHT YELL

For those students and faculty planning to travel to this weekend's Oklahoma University-Texas A&M football game, a midnight yell practice, with the A&M yell leaders, will be held Friday at Murphy's Bar in the Brick Town section of Oklahoma City.



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Senate approves funding for space station

The Associated Press

Subcommittee sets aside \$1.94 billion

WASHINGTON — The space station's march through the Senate began Wednesday on an upbeat note after the battered program barely squeezed through the House three months ago.

A Senate appropriations subcommittee earmarked \$1.94 billion for the orbiting laboratory, the full amount being sought by NASA

for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. Another \$154 million was included in the NASA spending package for station-related costs.

The allocations mirror the funds approved by the House in June, after the space station narrowly survived two attempts by critics to terminate funding.

But the Senate subcommittee decreed that \$946 million of the space

station appropriation cannot be spent until after Jan. 1, apparently to ensure that the planned station redesign meets with approval of its congressional overseers.

"I think this is a major step forward for the space program in a very difficult year," said Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee.

But it's only a first step.

The program still must survive the scrutiny of the full Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday and the Senate next week.

Longtime space station critic Dale Bumpers, D-Ark., is planning to introduce legislation to terminate the project.

"I expect it to be a tough, bare-knuckle debate," Gramm said, adding: "We're working very hard on it, and obviously I'm hopeful of being successful."

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AUGUST 30, 1993

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