

'Trust Fund Temple'? Attack ad takes a swing at the insurance commissioner

By Dillon Lowe



If you've driven down Corporate Boulevard lately, you may have noticed an attack ad targeting Louisiana Insurance Commissioner Tim Temple.

The ad, displayed on a Lamar Advertising billboard, depicts Temple smiling in front of a backdrop of \$100 bills alongside the text: "Can Louisiana trust 'Trust Fund Temple'?"

The ad also directs viewers to a URL: TrustFundTemple.com. That website accuses Temple of enjoying a "life of luxury" paid for by insurance companies. One page of the site—labeled "Tim's Toys"—purports to list the "luxury properties" owned by Temple in Louisiana and elsewhere. Whether or not Temple actually owns the properties in question has not been independently verified by *Daily Report*.

“Mansions, private planes, boats, cars—all thanks to insurance companies,” a statement on the website’s homepage reads. “Maybe that’s why ‘Trust Fund Temple’ refuses to lower our insurance rates.”

Trey Roberts, vice president and general manager of Lamar Baton Rouge, tells *Daily Report* that the ad was paid for by a group called [Enough Is Enough Louisiana](#), a nonprofit with a focus on insurance reform. All three of the group’s chief officers—Lee Mallett, Mary Patricia-Wray and Todd Hollenshead—[resigned earlier this week](#). In his resignation letter, Mallett wrote that the organization had been using his name in similar attack ads targeting state senators without his consent, causing confusion among lawmakers and impacting his relationships within the state.

When asked about the campaign, John Ford, deputy commissioner of public affairs for the Louisiana Department of Insurance, sent the following statement:

“I do have an idea of which special interest groups might be funding this campaign—and your readers will know which groups I mean. They know Commissioner Temple has worked with legislators to accurately identify excessive litigation and bodily injury claims as the primary cost drivers of our unaffordable auto rates, and they know he is supporting meaningful legal reform that would have a real impact on the cost of auto insurance in Louisiana. This billboard campaign came out of nowhere because the people who funded it are fearful we are close to actually addressing the system that is causing our auto insurance crisis.”

Though not explicitly stated, the implication is that Louisiana’s famously aggressive personal injury attorneys may have had a hand in organizing the campaign. In recent weeks, Temple has been outspoken about the outsized role he believes such attorneys play in the state’s auto insurance woes.

The attack ad comes at a time when Louisiana lawmakers are weighing a sweeping reform package aimed at bringing down Louisiana’s sky-high auto insurance rates. Temple and Gov. Jeff Landry have [publicly clashed over their respective ideas on how to lower rates](#), with Temple primarily targeting litigation reform with the backing of insurance companies and Landry pushing for what he calls a “balanced approach” that targets both the trial bar and insurers.

The full scope of the campaign—as in, how many ads have been bought and where they’re running—is currently unclear.

Editor's Note: *This article has been updated since its original publication.*

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