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Petition drive takes aim at excess pork - the political kind

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Lana Hoover of Fort Worth, with her dog, Rosie, gathers signatures outside the Amon G. Carter Jr. Exhibits Hall on Sunday for a petition to try to push for lobbying reform in Washington, D.C.

Protesters outside the Stock Show on Sunday had nothing against the swine inside. It was Washington pork they were after.

"Greed has become so pervasive that corruption is almost a matter of policy," said Geof Tait, a Fort Worth private investigator who organized the petition drive for MoveOn.org.

Of the 40 to 60 volunteers expected, eight showed up and collected 132 signatures in three hours "asking Congress to pass anti-corruption laws with teeth so that there are penalties," Tait said. Organizers planned to fax the petitions to Rep. Kay Granger, R-Fort Worth.

Recent changes in Medicare brought out Mary Cathcart of Arlington to collect signatures.

"There are so many people who can't get prescriptions because there are a variety of companies promoting prescription coverage," Cathcart said. "It's so confusing."

Other volunteers said they were motivated by the list of congressional members accused of unethical conduct.

The political action committee MoveOn.org, which was begun in 1998 by two California men, has more than 3 million Internet members across the country. Nationwide, they planned to hold 142 petition drives for "Stop Corruption Weekend of Action" on Saturday and Sunday.

In Cowtown, some people stopped to sign, but most were in a hurry to get to the show.

"We just really don't want to stop and take the time," said Frank Bell of Mansfield and his family as they hurried past the protesters.

Steve Peck of Glen Rose was happy to sign, though.

"I think just about every politician in Washington is there for another reason than what they were elected," Peck said. "They're out for themselves, not their constituents."

Barbara Reed of Arlington just laughed when asked to sign the petition.

"That's hilarious," she said. "Politicians have been corrupt since the beginning of time. They think they're going to stop it with petitions."

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