Justices Explain Links to Energy Company

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two Supreme Court justices, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, have clarified their relationship with Koch Industries, the energy company that has been criticized by liberal groups for its spending on election campaigns. The two said Thursday that they had spoken at dinners hosted by Charles Koch, a Kansas oil man who is one of Koch Industries’ two principal owners, and his wife. A court spokeswoman, Kathy Arberg, said that the Federalist Society, a conservative legal organization, paid the travel and housing expenses for both justices. Justice Scalia spoke on international law at a January 2007 dinner in the Palm Springs, Calif., area, while Justice Thomas discussed his memoir in 2008 at the same location. The advocacy group Common Cause filed a petition with the Justice Department on Wednesday asking it to decide whether the justices should have recused themselves from the landmark Citizens United case, in which the court last year lifted a ban on corporate spending on political campaigns. The petition said that if either justice appeared before Mr. Koch’s group from 2008 to 2010, when the court was considering aspects of the case, “it would certainly raise serious issues of the appearance of impropriety and bias.”