

ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT BEGINS.....☑...AT THE BALLOT BOX.

In any election, most citizens expect candidates and their campaign workers to conduct honest, fair and respectful campaigns that stick to the facts, focus on issues and explore relevant differences between candidates and positions.

This is one in a series on campaign ethics issues provided by the Torrance City Clerk to help residents develop practical skills to assess the ethics of a campaign and to encourage voters to hold candidates accountable at the ballot box for keeping campaign ethical.

It takes more than wishes to run a campaign.

Who is \$upporting the candidates?

Look closely at campaign matters and follow the money.

Honest candidates in any election, whether it is local, state or national, follow the letter and the spirit of the law. They make no promises to supporters that will compromise their ability to represent the public's best interests.

All campaign materials must be identified as to their source. If it is material from other committees, read the **small print** to find who is printing and distributing information about a candidate and make your own judgment about their motives and commitment to fair, accurate statements.

The Torrance City Council has enacted Campaign Finance legislation that limits various aspects of fundraising and spending for its candidates for public office. Any contribution from an individual, business or organization of \$100 or more to a candidate in Torrance becomes a public record. Donations are restricted to no more than \$1000 in any one election cycle.

For Torrance candidates the City Clerk is the filing officer who holds the required filing for candidates running for local office who are raising and spending more than \$1000 on their candidacy. Ballot Measure Committees also have similar filing requirements. Documents are public records and are available to the public during normal working hours in the City Clerk's office at 3031 Torrance Blvd or can be found online at www.TorranceCA.gov/elections.

Special interest groups may send out a campaign piece representing their own point of view separate from what candidates authorize. These are called "independent expenditures" and should be clearly examined as they represent a particular point of view. Information about those involved in the committees funding these pieces can be found by clicking on Campaign Finance on the California Secretary of State website, www.sos.ca.gov. Use Cal Access search to locate a specific committee.

Campaign pieces that recommend several candidates are called "slate" mailers and may be produced by a political party or organization that is supporting certain candidates. Other slate mailers are commercial enterprises where the candidates pay a fee to be included. Read the small print! Want to know more about slate mailers? **Continue on** ➡

Top Ten Slate Mailer Organizations

Each month the Fair Political Practices Commission, California's campaign finance watchdog, posts on its website a Top Ten list covering a variety of categories.

Previous lists can be found at www.fppc.ca.gov/index.php?id=253.

March 2010 Top Ten List

Slate Mailer Organizations are for-profit businesses that spend millions of dollars each election cycle encouraging people to vote for certain candidates and/or ballot measures. In many instances, committees representing candidates and ballot measures purchase space on a "slate mailer" as another way to influence voters. The more money a campaign spends on each slate mailing, usually equates to more room on the slate mailer profiling the candidate and/or ballot measure.

The list below identifies the Top Ten Slate Mailer Organizations that raised the most money during the 2007-08 election cycle.

Information compiled to create this list was obtained from public filings submitted by those slate mailer organizations registered with the Secretary of State.

1	CA Voter Guide (ID #595004)	\$ 3,879,821
2	COPS Voter Guide (ID #599014)	\$ 1,480,360
3	PORAC Official Law Enforcement Voter Guide (ID #594017)	\$ 1,110,100
4	Democratic Voters Choice (ID# 595002)	\$ 920,596
5	Save Proposition 13 Segregated Fund Account (ID# 598040)	\$ 846,435
6	Your Ballot Guide (ID# 588011)	\$ 786,442
7	Continuing the Republican Revolution (ID# 598041)	\$ 611,893
8	Your Transportation Improvements Voter Guide, a service of Professional Engineers in CA Government (ID# 1262847)	\$ 519,025
9	Citizens for Good Government (ID #599010)	\$ 444,750
10	Republican Woman's Voice (ID# 1293667)	\$ 424,191

Go to the Fair Political Practices Commission www.fppc.ca.gov to find more information (manuals, filing deadlines, reporting obligations, etc.) on the processes for the candidates under Candidates/Committees.