

Unprecedented special interests flooding our local elections

By Jan Cox-Golovich, Former Benicia City Council member

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An unprecedented \$100,000 of PAC money from Valero and a motley crew of pro-development special interests has flooded our local elections in an attempt to buy two council seats and smear the front runner. This makes a mockery of our local elections and puts our democracy at risk.

Here's what's at stake if they were to control our council through their surrogates:

- We would have NO opportunity for local oversight of our health and safety via an Industrial Safety Ordinance- protections that ALL the other refinery towns have except for us. (Recall the shooting flames, black smoke and toxic gas that contaminated our sky last year)
- There would be smooth sailing for whatever new schemes Valero or other polluters devise: i.e., refining dirty tar sands and/or Bakken crude or bringing back their explosive trains boondoggle.
- Seeno Developers (infamous for having been constantly fined, sued and been the subject of FBI investigations) have been lying in wait to rear their ugly heads again. They would come roaring back with their old and previously rejected proposals to slash down our rolling hills and build houses next to the refinery. Our highly-valued small-town atmosphere would vanish into your typical congested, traffic-choked suburban sprawl.
- AMPORTS, who leases City property for a \$1, would breathe easy knowing that they would remain the only port operators in AMERICA who don't contribute any revenue to the local public coffers.

Now that we have another highly intelligent, articulate candidate in Kari Birdseye, (who reads and digests information thoroughly, does her homework, digs deeps, asks probing questions, exposes misstatements, disinformation and fraudulent claims) comes alongwell, she presents a huge threat to them—and they can't have that.

And no matter what their two hand-picked candidates (Strawbridge and Largaespada) say, such as: we are independent, the money doesn't influence us; we are ignorant of what is going on—it's enough for the public to know this: Valero and company want them on the council bad enough to pour \$100,000 into this election and break local laws. They are convinced these two are a good investment.

Their campaigns are now tainted and if one of them should get on the council, their tenure will be forever tainted because every vote they make will be scrutinized and distrusted as being a vote for the special interests who paid for their seat.

Now \$100,000 pays for a lot more than just the sleazy phone calls we have been receiving from them. Get ready for some last-minute disgusting "hit-piece" mailers and ads.

Benicia citizens have seen these tactics before and have rejected them. It's gets tiring, but our vigilance is the only thing that can salvage another attempt to corrupt our democracy.

Jan Cox Golovich

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