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Weekly Lobbying Articles

September 28, 2017

Observer

September 28, 2017

Michigan Republicans Further Deregulate Campaign Finance

<http://observer.com/2017/09/michigan-republicans-further-deregulate-campaign-finance/>

A new law recently passed by the Michigan State Legislature and signed into law by Republican Gov. Rick Snyder sets a statewide precedent in scaling back campaign finance laws. The deregulation stems from the 2010 Citizens United Supreme Court decision, which opened the floodgates for corporations and wealthy donors to pour unlimited sums of money into elections. Michigan's new legislation allows candidates to raise money directly for Super PACs to be spent on themselves or to fuel opposition against their rivals. The law permits consultants, vendors and attorneys to simultaneously work for a PAC and a political campaign, blurring the line between public and private activity. Finally, previously, individual donors could donate a maximum of \$1,000 for a state House election, but the new legislation undermines those caps, which were enacted in the 1970s by Gov. William Milliken in response to Watergate.

The Intercept reported, "It's a brazen move for Snyder, who is term-limited out of office in 2018, to so fully embrace the post-Citizens United world dominated by big-money super PACs. Watchdogs warn that the law—which they have described as 'Citizens United on steroids'—effectively creates an end-run around the state's limits on campaign contributions and further obliterates the already-thin line that is supposed to maintain super PAC independence from candidates." Only two Republicans in the state Senate and one Republican in the state House voted with Democrats in opposition to the legislation. The passage of the law is a further setback in restoring democracy in the wake of *Citizens United*.

"Gov. Snyder rode into Lansing on the white horse of transparency but will leave cloaked in secrecy, driving a hearse carrying our democracy," said Lonnie Scott, executive director of Progress Michigan in a press release. "Today it has been made clear that Gov. Snyder is doing everything he can to cement his legacy as one of the least transparent and most spineless governors Michigan has ever had. He promised to clean up Michigan's campaign finance laws, but all he has done is soil them further with unlimited amounts corporate cash. Michigan ranks dead last in the U.S. for transparency and ethics, and if there's somehow a way to go lower on that list, the Snyder/Calley administration is doing their damndest to get us there."

In every election cycle since Citizens United, more money from corporations and wealthy donors has filled campaign coffers. An estimated \$6 billion was spent on the 2012 election, and that number jumped to \$6.8 billion in 2016. Michigan has experienced a similar increase in money spent on influencing politicians and elections in the state. According to Open Secrets, \$85.7 million was spent in Michigan during the 2015-2016 election cycle, compared to just over \$83 million spent in 2011-2012. In both election cycles, the majority of funds were spent by Republicans. Between January and July 2017,

lobbyists have spent \$21.8 million in Michigan, a slight increase from 2016, which saw a record amount of lobbyist spending. This year, lobbyists are closing in on the record spent on food and drinks for Michigan's elected officials, so far totaling just under \$550,000. Michigan's PACs have raised \$12.2 million in 2017, an 11 percent increase from the same point in the last election cycle, and this new law is likely to exponentially increase the amount of money funding PACs in the state.

Miami Herald
September 27, 2017

New, old political faces arrive, depart

<http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/editorials/article175814701.html>

The results of Tuesday's special election in Miami-Dade brings two new faces to the Florida Legislature — and reveals a hairline crack in the Republican stronghold on Tallahassee.

The battle for the state Senate seat in District 40 was handily won by Democrat Annette Taddeo, a perennial candidate who pulled off an impressive victory over State Rep. Jose Felix Diaz, a popular Republican who many thought had the edge in the race.

Although the Editorial Board favored Diaz for his experience as a State Representative and endorsed him, we congratulate Taddeo and welcome her to the state's political arena.

But Taddeo's victory was more than just a win for Florida Democrats.

Diaz, a former "The Apprentice" contestant whose ties to President Trump were often featured by Taddeo, out-spent her by nearly a million dollars, yet Taddeo won by the margin of 51 percent to 47 percent.

Needless to say, Florida Democrats are thrilled.

In a release sent after the race, they could not contain their joy: "The bottom line is Democrats are WINNING in places once thought impossible" — a clear jab at one of President Trump's favorite mantras.

Democrats smell blood in the water. Nationwide, they have significant races upcoming in Virginia, New Jersey, and Washington state.

So is this Florida victory an aberration or the beginning of a trend? We'll have to wait and see. Regardless, the Taddeo victory is a confidence-builder for the party.

Also winning Tuesday and joining Taddeo as a novice in Tallahassee is Republican Daniel Anthony Perez, 30, a first-time candidate who handily won the State Representative race in District 116, defeating Gabriela Mayaudon.

Perez will take over the seat Diaz left when he decided to run for the state Senate.

The political musical chairs began when former State Sen. Frank Artiles was forced to resign after insulting black colleagues in the legislature last year.

And also this week, a controversial Miami Beach commissioner announced Monday that he's calling it quits — for now. In July, he gave up his mayor bid.

Ending his re-election campaign is Miami Beach Commissioner Michael Grieco. He is undergoing a criminal inquiry over his ties to a political committee that raised \$200,000 in campaign cash from a group of moneyed Beach interests — city vendors, developers and lobbyists — all in possible violation of campaign finance laws. The Miami Herald exposed Grieco's ties to the People for Better Leaders political committee.

Grieco did not mention the investigation when he announced the suspension of his campaign and refused to answer questions.

In fact, when Herald reporter Joey Flechas — who exposed Grieco's ties to the committee — approached the dais during a recess this week, Charles Tear, the city's director of emergency management, stood in front of the reporter and said Grieco requested that no one be allowed to approach him the dais. A Miami Beach police officer then moved to stand directly in front of Grieco.

It's another indication that Grieco doesn't feel he has to answer to his constituents, much less reporters — and that he feels entitled, using a city-paid police officer to protect him while on the dais.

So goodbye to Grieco — and a warm welcome to Taddeo and Perez.

The Joplin Globe
September 27, 2017

Webb City political adviser fined by Missouri Ethics Commission for violating lobbying laws

http://www.joplinglobe.com/news/local_news/webb-city-political-adviser-fined-by-missouri-ethics-commission-for/article_127640f1-e9aa-59c9-9b39-cc7d275682b9.html

A political adviser from Webb City has been fined by the Missouri Ethics Commission after acknowledging that he violated state lobbying laws.

Paul Mouton, an independent consultant who worked to advance pro-business legislation with lawmakers during recent sessions of the General Assembly, including right-to-work and tort reform measures, did not register as a lobbyist or submit regular reports on the bills he supported, as required by state law.

Anyone who "acts for the purpose of attempting to influence the ... passage ... of any action on any bill" is considered a lobbyist and is required to register with the state, according to Missouri law.

"It's a transparency piece," said James Klahr, executive director of the Missouri Ethics Commission, about the law, saying it allows "people who may not be able to see what's happening at the capital to be able to get a general sense of what's going on there."

Mouton signed a consent order saying "there is probable cause to believe" that he violated the law by not registering. According to the order, "Respondent Mouton failed to register as a legislative lobbyist representing a principal, Mr. David Humphreys, for the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the General Assembly, and failed to file monthly reports of lobbyist activity."

The ethics panel concluded that he did not spend money as part of his unreported lobbying. It did not indicate whether he knew he broke the law.

In a statement, Mouton said he will continue to work as a lobbyist.

"Throughout my career I have been committed (to) following the letter and the spirit of the law," he wrote. "I look forward to continuing my work advocating for better policies and better government in the state of Missouri."

He was fined \$2,000 by the Missouri Ethics Commission, of which he will pay \$200 if he doesn't run afoul of lobbying laws again, and if he submits the four lobbying reports he was required to file over the last two years.

Draft versions of the overdue reports indicate that he worked on a "pro-business" agenda, including legislation related to union dues and class-action lawsuits.

A spokesman for Humphreys, president of TAMKO Building Products in Joplin, did not return a request for comment.

The ethics complaint was filed by Jim Hight, of Joplin, a former chairman of the Newton County Democratic Central Committee.

Politico
September 27, 2017

Lobbyists prepare for battle royal over tax breaks

<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/27/lobbyists-tax-break-battles-243237>

House Speaker Paul Ryan warned Republican lawmakers on Wednesday to steel themselves to hear from "10,000 lobbyists" set on defending prized tax breaks that could be on the chopping block.

Those lobbyists are getting ready, too.

The tax blueprint released by the "Big Six" Republican negotiators on Wednesday promised to hack the corporate rate down to 20 percent but included few details about which tax breaks would be eliminated to pay for their plan. So lobbyists are preparing for a flurry of business owners flying to Washington, TV ads, grass-roots campaigns and shoe-leather lobbying to defend their most cherished tax breaks.

"It will not take long for us to organize ourselves," said James Ballentine, the top lobbyist for the American Bankers Association, which applauded Republicans' statement on Wednesday but plans to swing into action if Congress goes after businesses' ability to deduct interest on loans and other tax provisions. "We will be ready and on standby, if we find that level of advocacy necessary."

A coalition concerned with the interest expense issue has already placed opinion pieces in local newspapers. Another group that wants to protect deductions for state and local taxes plans to mobilize teachers, firefighters and other constituents to contact lawmakers.

Republicans, under intense pressure to pass a tax bill after their failure to repeal Obamacare, released an outline Wednesday but are waiting as long as possible to divulge the full details of their tax plan in an effort to stave off the lobbying hurricane. Some lobbyists think lawmakers won't have the stomach to eliminate enough special-interest tax breaks to pay for dramatic rate cuts.

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“I can’t even imagine Republicans doing full-fledged tax reform that steps on toes,” said one veteran tax lobbyist.

Still, many tax breaks could be at risk. Cutting the corporate tax rate to 20 percent — from the current rate of 35 percent — and repealing the alternative minimum tax will cost \$1.9 trillion over the next decade, according to an estimate released Wednesday by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Lawmakers will have to make up revenue somewhere if they want to avoid blowing an enormous hole in the deficit.

Most industries have at least one cherished tax provision they’re preparing to defend. Earlier this year, when a proposal known as the border-adjustment tax threatened to raise taxes on retailers, the industry ran millions of dollars’ worth of TV ads to try to convince consumers the tax would hurt them by raising prices. The campaign worked, killing the border-adjustment tax before it could get off the ground.

Some issues are harder to explain to the public.

“No one’s going to be holding up signs picketing for interest deductibility,” said Mac O’Brien, a spokesman for the BUILD Coalition, an umbrella group fighting changes to the way businesses deduct interest on their loans, which Republicans didn’t fully address on Wednesday. “It’s a little bit of a nuanced issue.”

Instead, the coalition has targeted Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.), a member of the Senate Finance Committee who’s facing a tough reelection fight next year, with op-eds in Nevada newspapers from local businessmen. The coalition is also pressing former businessmen such as Sens. Johnny Isakson and David Perdue, both Georgia Republicans.

The Advertising Coalition, meanwhile, is preparing to defend companies’ ability to deduct advertising spending on their taxes — a sacred provision for broadcasters, newspapers and other businesses that depend on ad revenue. If the provision appears under threat, Jim Davidson, the coalition’s executive director, said, “we’ll accelerate that and make sure that we reach every state and congressional district that members of the tax-writing committees represent.”

Republicans did signal on Wednesday that they would go after state and local tax deductions, despite opposition from House Republicans in New York, New Jersey and other blue state whose residents face the highest state and local taxes. That alarmed Americans Against Double Taxation, which formed last week to preserve the deductions.

Andrew Koneschusky, a spokesman for the coalition, wouldn’t say exactly how the group will fight the proposal. But he said the coalition’s member organizations — including the National Governors Association, the National Association of Realtors and the American Federation of Teachers — expect to press members of Congress to preserve the break.

“All of the organizations that are part of the coalition have ground troops,” Koneschusky said, from governors to teachers to firefighters.

Not every industry is preparing to go to war.

Retailers say that after they won the border-adjustment tax battle, there’s little lawmakers could propose that would scare them.

“We’re a lot less likely to be manning the barricades” than other groups, said David French, the National Retail Federation’s top lobbyist. “Our members have told us there aren’t really provisions in the tax code they want to protect. They want us to get the lowest possible rates.”

The National Association of Home Builders, on the other hand, was ready to do battle either way. They drew up ads and op-eds both supporting and opposing tax reform while waiting for Wednesday's outline.

"I don't believe in waiting and seeing," Jerry Howard, the association's chief executive, said in an interview last week. "We have everything in the can already."

On Wednesday, Howard came out in support of Republicans' plan despite uncertainty about what will happen to the mortgage interest deduction. The pro-reform print ad campaign will start inside the Beltway as early as next week, according to the association, with TV ads to follow.

Other traditional defenders of the mortgage interest deduction — seen for decades as an untouchable tax break — declined to join them.

"We're trying not to overreact to a press release that they throw out at the very beginning of a very long process," Jamie Gregory, National Association of Realtors vice president, said of the homebuilders' move. "They're making a strategic play here to be on the positive side of the table, whereas I think we're going to make a strategic decision that it's time to start speaking out."

Politico
September 20, 2017

Akin Gump signs seven

<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/politico-influence/2017/09/20/akin-gump-signs-seven-222391>

AKIN GUMP SIGNS SEVEN: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld has added seven clients, the most notable of which might be **Whirlpool** and a new coalition working to influence trade policy. **Justin McCarthy** will lobby for Whirlpool on tax reform, trade policy and NAFTA. (**CGCN Group** also lobbies for Whirlpool; the firm parted ways with **Peck Madigan Jones** last year.) **Brian Pomper, Josh Teitelbaum, Steve Kho** and McCarthy will lobby for **American Creativity, Technology & Innovation Organizations Network for Trade, or ACTION for Trade**, which describes its mission as ensuring that "U.S. trade policy protects creativity, advances innovation, and prevents foreign countries from stealing intangible assets developed by American workers." Its members include the **Authors Guild**, the **Biotechnology Innovation Organization**, the **International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition**, the **Motion Picture Association of America**, **Oracle**, **PhRMA**, **Qualcomm** and the **Recording Industry Association of America**.

— Akin Gump also signed **CPV Valley LLC**, a power company; the **Large American S-ESOP Coalition**, a coalition of S corporations with employee stock ownership plans; **LG&E and KU Energy**, a gas utility; the **New Venture Fund**, a nonprofit; and **Rotech Healthcare**, a medical equipment firm.

— **Two more notable filings:** **Ernst & Young** will lobby for **Valero** on tax reform. And **Sanofi** has added **Capitol Hill Strategies** after recently parting ways with **Capitol Counsel**. The pharmaceutical company's other lobbying firms include **American Capitol Group; BGR Group; Foley Hoag; Knight Capitol Consultants; Parry, Romani, DeConcini & Symms; Ricchetti Incorporated; Tarplin Downs & Young;** and **TwentyFirst Century Group**.

BRACEWELL ADDS ENERGY LOBBYIST: **Bracewell** has hired **Anna Burhop** away from the **American Chemistry Council**, where she was a director of regulatory and technical affairs. She'll be a principal at

Bracewell, lobbying on energy and environmental issues. Burhop is also a former staffer on the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee.

Good afternoon, and welcome to PI. Tips: tmeyer@politico.com. Twitter: [@theodoricmeyer](https://twitter.com/theodoricmeyer).

LOBBYISTS AREN'T EAGER TO DONATE TO LEGAL DEFENSE FUNDS: “Republican lobbyists say they are wary of contributing to the legal defense funds of Trump administration officials who are under scrutiny in the Russia investigation — even anonymously,” **The Hill’s Megan Wilson** reports. “Officials in the Trump administration have yet to establish any such accounts, but a federal ethics agency recently gave them the green light, as Politico first reported last week. ... The Hill emailed 30 Republican lobbyists, almost all of them donors to President **[Donald] Trump** in 2016, to ask whether they would give money to a legal defense fund for someone in the administration; 11 responded. Most asked to remain anonymous.”

— “Five lobbyists said that it depends on who in the White House was seeking donations, while five replied with an unequivocal ‘no.’ ‘Anybody who was stupid to run with this crowd can afford their own lawyers. I don’t have any sympathy for these folks, and some of them are my friends,’ said one advocate.”

FORMER PAUL STAFFER SIGNS POT CLIENT: **Liberty Government Affairs**, the new firm started by **Brian Darling**, a former aide to Sen. **Rand Paul** (R-Ky.), and **Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough** have signed **Weedmaps**, a startup that does pretty much what its name implies. It’s a **Yelp**-like website and app that lets medical marijuana users review local dispensaries, doctors and delivery services. **David Quam**, a lobbyist at Nelson Mullins, said their current focus is on bolstering support for an amendment by Reps. **Dana Rohrabacher** (R-Calif.) and **Earl Blumenauer** (D-Ore.) to block Department of Justice efforts to prosecute individuals who legally use medical marijuana and the states that allow it.

— Though that amendment has been successfully attached as a rider to appropriations bills since 2014, “maintaining the status quo that’s been in place is critical to respect state authority,” Quam said, especially in light of Attorney General **Jeff Sessions** moving to crack down on legal weed.

EPA NOMINEE IS A FRIEND OF THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY: **The New York Times’ Sheila Kaplan** and **Eric Lipton** have a deep-dive on the “scientist nominated to head the federal government’s chemical regulatory program,” who “has spent much of his career helping businesses fight restrictions on the use of potentially toxic compounds in consumer goods. That record is expected to figure prominently in a Senate confirmation hearing for the scientist, **Michael L. Dourson**, who critics say is too closely tied to the chemical industry to be its chief regulator. The source of the concern is a consulting group that Mr. Dourson founded in 1995, which has been paid by chemical companies for research and reports that frequently downplayed the health risks posed by their compounds.”

IF YOU MISSED IT: “The **Republican National Committee** is using a pool of money stockpiled for election recounts and other legal matters to pay for President Trump’s ballooning lawyer fees related to the multiple Russia investigations, directing more than \$427,000 so far to lawyers representing him and his eldest son, party officials confirmed Tuesday,” **The Washington Post’s Matea Gold** reports. “The RNC will report that last month it paid \$100,000 to Trump’s personal attorney **John Dowd**, and \$131,250 to **Jay Sekulow**, another member of his legal team, in a Federal Election Commission report set to be filed Wednesday. The party is also covering the mounting legal costs for the president’s eldest son, **Donald Trump Jr.**, spending nearly \$200,000 this month on lawyers who helped him prepare for his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee.”

**** A message from National Clean Energy Week:** National Clean Energy Week supports abundant American-made energy through new methods of market development, policy change, and technological

innovation. Join us in support of solutions that address our economic and energy needs in the 21st century: <https://nationalcleanenergyweek.org> **

JOBS REPORT:

- **Joel Bailey** has left the **National Restaurant Association**, where he was a lobbyist, to become chief of staff to Rep. **Jimmy Panetta** (D-Calif.).
- **Casey Clark** has joined the **American Gaming Association** as vice president for strategic communications. He previously spent a decade working for **FTI Consulting**.
- **Lance Trover**, who stepped down as Illinois Gov. **Bruce Rauner's** deputy chief of staff this summer, has joined **Brad Tusk's** firm, **Tusk Strategies**, as its first Republican, **Crain's Chicago Business** reports. Trover is also a former aide to former Sen. **Mark Kirk** (R-Ill.) and worked for the **NRSC**.
- **LendUp** has promoted **Jotaka Eaddy** to vice president of policy, strategic engagement and impact. She was previously LendUp's head of government affairs.
- **Sharon West** has joined **the American Clinical Laboratory Association** as vice president of legal and regulatory affairs. She was previously director of economic and regulatory affairs for the **College of American Pathologists**.
- "A former lobbyist who represented clients before the Commodity Futures Trading Commission is joining the agency as a division director," **POLITICO's Patrick TempleWest** reports. "**Matthew Kulkin**, most recently a partner at law firm **Steptoe & Johnson**, has been named director of the division of Swap Dealer and Intermediary Oversight."

NEW JOINT FUNDRAISERS:

None

NEW PACs:

Congressional Conservatives (PAC)

Florida Turbine Technologies Political Action Committee (FTT PAC) (PAC)

Homeless Rights and the Law (PAC)

Keep Texas Red (Super PAC)

Shine PAC (PAC)

SOF-ROC Save Our Freedom-Respect Our Constitution (Super PAC)

NEW LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS:

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: CPV Valley LLC

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Large American S-ESOP Coalition

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: LG&E and KU Energy, LLC

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: New Venture Fund

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Rotech Healthcare, Inc.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: The American Creativity, Technology & Innovation Organizations Network for Trade

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld: Whirlpool Corporation

American Defense International, Inc.: Quantum ICT Research Union
Capitol Hill Strategies, LLC: Sanofi US Services Inc.
Ernst & Young LLP (Washington Council Ernst & Young): Valero Energy Corporation
Franklin Square Group, LLC: Opendoor Labs, Inc.
Jennie Aylward: American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Inc
Liberty Government Affairs: WeedMaps
Mercury: Plaquemines Parish Government Mercury: Plaquemines Port Harbor And Terminal District
Mercury: Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough: WeedMaps
The Glover Park Group LLC: BWAY Corporation
The Nimitz Group LLC: Boulder Crest Retreat
Turnberry Solutions, LLC: Elio Motors
NEW LOBBYING TERMINATIONS:
Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP: Cure SMA

**Voice of OC
September 20, 2017**

Anaheim's Lobbyist Sunshine Ordinance Will Be Largely Self-Enforced

<https://voiceofoc.org/2017/09/anaheims-lobbyist-sunshine-ordinance-will-be-largely-self-enforced/>

New restrictions on lobbyists now are in effect in Anaheim, although enforcement of the law – known as the sunshine ordinance – will be largely self-reported.

“We’re not going to go out and start looking [for violations],” said city spokesman Mike Lyster. “But just the fact that this city has this ordinance in the books says a lot. It sets a high expectation.”

The city attorney will not be proactively questioning whether certain city employees and contractors are in compliance with the law, said Lyster. Instead, council members or city commissioners can request the city clerk to determine whether someone is a lobbyist and needs to register.

So far, only one lobbyist, George Urch on behalf of the Honda Center, has filed a registration form. Lobbyists are required to register within 15 days after any lobbying activity. The first quarterly report isn’t due until January 2018.

The sunshine ordinance, passed by the City Council in July, went into effect last week and includes a “revolving door” ban barring elected officials and employees from lobbying the city for two years after they leave their jobs, the toughest restriction on government lobbying in Orange County.

It also prohibits the city from hiring people who simultaneously work at lobbying firms, and requires lobbyists – defined as people paid at least \$500 to influence legislation or administrative actions – to register with the city and file quarterly reports disclosing their clients and campaign contributions made to council members.

At a city council meeting in July, Councilman Steve Faessel questioned whether the ordinance's prohibition on hiring employees of lobbying firms, proposed by Councilman Jose Moreno, was targeting part-time aides employed by himself and Councilwomen Kris Murray and Lucille Kring.

Faessel's former aide, Crystal Norman, who worked for the public affairs firm FSB Core Strategies, voluntarily resigned three weeks ago, although Faessel said it was because she received an offer for a full-time position at the firm, not because of the sunshine ordinance.

Jeff Flint, the company's CEO, is a registered lobbyist with the county of Orange and has represented the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce.

"Regardless of the sunshine ordinance and what my feelings happened to be about it, I didn't think that she would have been affected by it," Faessel said of Norman. "She personally is not a lobbyist, and whether the firm she was working for was considered a lobbyist has yet to be determined."

Councilwoman Denise Barnes' aide, Matthew Holder, is a former lobbyist who still is listed in the county registry. Holder said the county registry is out of date, he has not paid any fees and no longer lobbies the county.

Other council members have well-connected part-time aides who, while not registered lobbyists, work on behalf of public agencies and private companies.

Murray's aides – Arianna Barrios and Justin Glover — come from the public relations firm Communications LAB, which also works as a consultant for her political campaign. The company's clients include Poseidon Water, The Orange County Transportation Authority, and Southern California Edison, according to an economic disclosure form for Barrios filed in March 2017.

Kring's aide, Steve Lodge, was a public affairs consultant for Hill International, a city construction contractor, before he became a part-time council aide. Lodge has since severed ties with the company.

Aides for Councilmen Jose Moreno and James Vanderbilt previously also worked or volunteered for their campaigns. There's no prohibition in the sunshine ordinance on council members hiring campaign staff, although state law prohibits public employees from doing political work while on the clock.

Mayor Tom Tait is the only member of the council with a full-time employee, his Chief of Staff Mishal Montgomery.

"Where we're at now is each council member does believe all their aides comply," said Lyster. "If there were to be any additional inquiry, we would leave it to a council member to bring it up and go through that process."

Lyster said if members of the public want to report a violation of the sunshine ordinance, they would need to bring the issue to the attention of a council member, city commissioner or hearing officer.

Orlando Political Observer
September 20, 2017

GOP Gubernatorial Candidate Jack Latvala Vows Not to Accept Money from Electric Utilities

<http://orlando-politics.com/2017/09/20/state-senator-jack-latvala-vows-not-to-accept-money-from-electric-utilities/>

| In an editorial piece that appeared in the Tampa Bay Times and written by Sen. Jack Latvala, the GOP Gubernatorial candidate vows to not accept any money from electric utilities.

He states, "I will lead by example and henceforth refuse electric utility contributions to my campaign and political committee."

Latvala acknowledged he has taken money from energy companies in the past. Florida wields many powerful lobbyists and millions in campaign contributions. Latvala admitted that cutting off their support could hurt his campaign "a little".

According to the Tampa Bay Times, Latvala stated that "power companies should be diverting the money they pour into influencing politicians into something a little more useful." He further stated, "I think that money ought to be spent on improving the power grid." He went on to state, "We really need to start emphasizing putting more of our utilities underground and strengthening the grid."

Sen. Latvala was asked about whether legislation emphasizing putting more utilities underground as well as strengthening the grid would be feasible. His response was "It's a little too early to tell what has a realistic chance of passing."

More than 6.5 million Floridians went without power after Hurricane Irma moved through the peninsula last week.