



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
428 J Street • Suite 620 • Sacramento, CA 95814-2329
(916) 322-5660 • Fax (916) 322-0886

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT:
Jay Wierenga, FPPC
(916) 322-7761
jwierenga@fppc.ca.gov

FPPC unveils new system to search and view Behested Payments

As part of continuing efforts to improve transparency through technology, FPPC Chair Jodi Remke and the Commission today unveiled a new online disclosure system to make it easier to search and view behested payments. The improved site provides the public with information in a more user-friendly, intuitive manner, easily showing which public officials are requesting money for their favorite charities and other causes.

Among the Chair's top priorities since taking office is to help the public track money in politics by providing better access to information. "We are always striving to improve our technology to increase transparency," said FPPC Chair Jodi Remke. "This is yet another tool to provide the public information about their elected officials. It shows who is asking for money and from whom, how much, and where it's going. An informed public is vital to maintain government accountability."

Under California's disclosure laws, a public official who fundraises or otherwise solicits payments from one individual or organization to be given to another individual or organization may be required to report the payment. Generally, a payment is considered "behested" and subject to reporting if it is used for legislative, governmental or charitable purposes, and it does not otherwise meet the definition of a campaign contribution or gift. Unlike gifts and campaign contributions, there are no limits on behested payments. However, the law requires the reporting of behested payments within 30 days if they total \$5,000 or more per calendar year from a single source.

The new site provides better visualization of the data to provide context and perspective. It allows the public to easily customize a search based on their public official, or a company that gives money, or a specified group that receives money. It replaces a basic, Excel spreadsheet type of report.

Following a complete overhaul of the agency's website, and implementation of e-filing for Form 700s and the top 10 contributors list, the behested payment site is the latest achievement in Chair Remke's focus on improving efficiency and transparency through technology. The FPPC is an independent, non-partisan commission that regulates, interprets and enforces the Political Reform Act, which covers campaign finance, conflicts of interest, and state lobbying activity.

<http://www.fppc.ca.gov/transparency/behested-payments.html>

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