INSIDE: Candidate & Ballot Analysis

The true ‘independents’

Green Party candidates statewide offer clear choice at ballot for frustrated CA voters

By Cres Vellucci

There’s no doubt – the Green Party candidates for local, state and congressional offices this November ARE the “independent candidates” that, according to polls, voters have been clamoring to vote into office.

In all, 34 candidates are running for office under the Green Party banner on Nov. 2, including seven for U.S. Senate and five Greens for the House of Representatives. Three Greens are running for Mayor, five more for city councils or board of supervisors, four for school board and four more for rent boards and other local offices.

Greens really are the “independents” on the ballot. They are not beholden to big corporate special interests, like Democrats and Republicans are…Greens are “independent” of that money. Laura Wells, who was the largest-ever Green vote getter when she previously ran for state Controller, is focusing on the positive, unlike her gubernatorial opponents.

“Wealthy interests have rigged the game to enrich themselves while bankrupting the rest of us,” said Wells, a financial analyst.

“Titanic” parties are working for election and winning a seat in the US Senate; Cynthia Ponzi (41 AD) is running in the Senate; Jane Rands Santiago (51 AD) said he’s running in the Senate;Charles “Kit” Crittenden (www.votehamburg5.org) is running for supervisor in Mendocino County. Both races are key to Green Party presence and power in the state.

In Gayle’s case (www.mayorgayle.net), she could use volunteers to help gain another four years to push her progressive agenda. Tackling, and winning a $144 million agreement, over Chevron has created some enemies in the corporate community, who are taking aim at McLaughlin. She has a number of other accomplishments, including helping Richmond to a balanced budget (one of the few cities in the state to say so) and noting that Richmond is ranked No. 1 in solar watts per capita in the Bay Area – all part of the Green Party agenda.

“We cannot wait forever. If change is not coming from D.C., or Sacramento, we must, as Mahatma Gandhi said: ‘Be the change you want to see,’” she said. Hamburg (www.votehamburg5.org) is also in a fight. Although the race is supposed to be non-partisan, the local Democratic Party machine said it would be willing to back Hamburg only if he would register as a Democrat. Dan refused, instead turned their offer on its head by recruiting many Democrats and independents to work on his campaign.

“I will continue (a) progressive tradition,” said Hamburg, who is promising to keep Mendocino the No. 1 County for “off-the-grid” homes, and nationwide leader in solar, wind and non-fossilized energy production. He is a strong supporter of a ban on all federal oil and gas lease sales, and attempts by the U.S. Navy to use the coast for weapons testing.
“California has been a golden state of opportunities in education, health care, environment, and jobs. But something has gone terribly wrong. Wealthy interests have rigged the game to enrich themselves and keep the rest of us from passing real solutions. The two ‘Titanic parties’ are mired in big-money influence. We’re building an indepen-dent movement to make ends meet in a climate of prosperity for the rich and the rest of us is growing.

To get things moving, we need an alternative system of government. We need to create a transparent, accountable, and representative system that is consistent with California’s values and the rights of all its residents. Our campaign will show how we are building a movement to create a new system of government. We will create a stronger, more democratic, and more equitable society for all Californians.”
Ross Frankel has been a public school elementary teacher, and worked with almost a dozen political, environmental, and socially progressive campaigns such as the Big Green Initiative and No on Proposition 8. "Something has gone wrong," he proclaims. "As my fellow Green Party Candidate for Governor Laura Wells has stated, the 'disparsity of wealth and income is growing and unregulated.'"

"I would support the investing in renewable energy sources rather than oil and gas. California is the only one of the 22 major oil-producing states not to levy an oil severance tax," he said.

"Such a tax could be a major source of revenue in this recession and used to promote renewable energy by state funding of enterprises developing solar, wind, and power," said Crittenden. He also would insist corporations should be required to pay their fair share of taxes could subsidize crucial state services.

"This simple act would also help prevent the accumulation of massive concentrations of wealth which enable rich corporations and individuals to dominate government and undermine democracy," he said.

Crittenden said he supports single-payer health care because it would promote social justice. "Non-violence and respect for diversity would be advanced by investing in organizations that promote peace and justice...these values also dictate divestment from nations and groups that practice intolerance and violence. Police programs teaching respect for all races, ethnicities, and sexual preferences could be a major factor in reducing police brutality," he noted.

"Of particular concern to me as a longtime CSU professor is adequately funding education," he said. "A democratic citizenry must be informed, and schooling teaches respect for all traditions, democratic values, and the capacity to think critically.

"Supporting prisons instead of education is exactly backwards: enabling citizens to contribute to society, instead of punishing them for violations against it, would have the priority in a democracy," he said. Author of "Language, Reality and Mind: A Defense of Everyday Thought," Crittenden is writing about democratic political theory, integrating responsible citizenship and activism into a free, peaceful, and environmentally sensitive society.

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Green Party analysis of Nov. 2 Ballot propositions

EDITOR’S NOTE: The following synopsis of analysis of the propositions on the November ballot are NOT the official Green Party of California’s recommendations, other than Prop. 19, which GPCA voted to support last May. The final GPC recommendations were made after press time for GREEN FOCUS, and may be found at www.cagreen.org.

prop 19 YES

LEGALIZE MARIJUANA. Submitted by Joan Strasser: This proposition is very explicit in stating how marijuana will be legalized for personal use, cultivation and purchase. Less explicit in stating how it will be legalized for commercial production, taxation and purchase by wholesalers and retailers. We are among those who see it as a beginning, however imperfect, however risky, of a long overdue correction of years of unjust prohibition of a drug far less harmful than alcohol or nicotine.

Particularly pernicious are present California laws. Arrest rates for marijuana possession are increasing in California. More than 60,000 arrests in 2008 are triple the number of arrests in 1990. The criminal conviction that seems like a “fiasco” would be consistent with that insidiously undemocratic process.

This especially impacts the African-American community, as the arrest rate for young black men for small amounts of marijuana is three times the rate for young white men in many of California’s largest counties. Blacks make up 7 percent of California’s largest counties. The arrest rate is 8.64%, but according to Proposition 64, the official corporate tax rate is 9.3%. This means state revenue with its ex-

prop 20 CONSENSUS

PROP 20. CONGREGATIONAL REDISTRICTING (from Legislature to Citizens Commission, which under Prop. 11 has authority to draw state districts). PROP. 27. REPEAL OF CITIZEN REDISTRICTING COMMISSION (returns control to draw state legislature and other districts to Legislature from of Citizen Commission – repealing Prop. 11).

Submitted by Jim Stauffer and Tim Smith (YES on Prop. 20 and NO on Prop. 27) and Mike Rubin (NO on Prop. 20 and YES on Prop. 27).

There is no final consensus from Green Party analysts about these two propositions.

Jim Stauffer writes that while the Green Party continues to believe Proportional Representation (PR), where only one person represents an entire district, is preferred, it has so far been a “fruitless battle to achieve “fairness.”

“I believe the Green Party needs to consider (more) than its own self-interest... Prop. 20 will be an incremental improvement in an antiquated and inadequate electoral system,” he said.

Likewise, Stauffer argues a NO vote for Prop. 27. “Neighborhoods and communities of interest are not as well protected” under Prop. 27, he says, noting that the Legislature cannot be trusted to draw its own lines.

Tim Smith also suggests a YES vote on Prop 20 because “it may not be perfect because of perceived deficiencies, but after 200 years of gerrymandering, it’s time to focus on reforming if not eliminating this insidiously undemocratic practice.”

And, Smith says Prop. 27, is meant to “confuse and confound the voting public,” and should get a NO vote.

However, Mike Rubin reminds Green voters that the party rejected Prop. 11, which created the Citizen Commission in 2008, and that a NO on Prop. 20 and YES on Prop. 27 would be consistent with that determination.

“Creating a redistricting process with unelected, unknown, faceless people chosen by a Kafka-esque process is moving away from accountability,” the Green Party wrote in 2008.

“The Green Party continues to favor (PR) as a real method for more choices and more participation,” said Rubin, calling Prop. 11 (Citizen Commission) a “fiasco” that would worsen if Prop. 20 passes. He added that Prop. 27 deserves a YES recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION: Yes and NO: analysis

prop 21 YES

ESTABLISHES $18 Annual Vehicle License Surcharge to Fund State Parks/ Wildlife Programs. Submitted by Lindsay Vareck: The Green Party doesn’t usually support flat type taxes since they tend to affect the poor disproportionally. However, this tax is modest and on cars, which are a major source of environment therefore this will lead to have reservations: Greens dislike special dedicated “carve out” taxes.

RECOMMENDATION: YES with reservations

prop 22 NO

LOCAL GOVERNMENT. Prohibits state from taking funds or borrowing from transportation, redevelopment or local government projects. Submitted by Bert Heuer: For Greens and Progressives this proposition appears to be a good thing: local levels of government are presumably more responsive to local issues than the state, which under Prop. 11 has authority to draw state districts. And there is no doubt that the state government has been somewhat high-handed recently in its approach to struggling cities and counties.

But, each election cycle leaves our state “lawmakers” with less room to manage the state’s affairs, more grassroots control of the purse. And there is no doubt that the state government has been somewhat high-handed recently in its approach to struggling cities and counties.

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The official corporate tax rate is 8.64%, but according to the California Budget Project the average rate paid by corporations in 2006 (the most recent year available) was only 5.2% due to loopholes and accelerated write-offs. The actual rate paid by corporations has been declining steadily since 1987. Prop 24 would reverse that.

RECOMMENDATION: YES

Submitted by Ben Genzel: Prop 23 does not merely suspend AB23, it essentially kills it. With unemployment in California at around the 12% level, it is very unlikely for it to get down to 5.5% for the foreseeable future.

By linking the reduction of greenhouse gasses with unemployment, the supporters of Prop 23 are relying on scaring people who are already in a vulnerable position or are sympathetic with the plight of the unemployed.

What can we live if we live in an unhealthy environment and continue on the road to global warming and its catastrophic impact? It is imperative that we move from a fossil fuel economy to clean, green one and that is what AB23 mandates.

Currently, the bulk, $1.4 million, of the funding for Prop 23 comes from a state fund with another $700K from in-state, $300K of that coming from Occidental Petroleum.

RECOMMENDATION: NO

prop 25 YES

STATE BUDGET: Lowers legislative vote for adopting state budget from 2/3 to simple majority.

Submitted by Bill Balderston: This measure is also rooted in the state budget process fiasco, but is at best a half-way measure. Unlike the proposed California Democracy Act (which did not make the ballot), Prop 25 ONLY removes the two-thirds requirement for passage of the state budget without addressing the supermajority for revenues. If Prop. 25 passes, we’re not sure if a movement to overturn the 2/3 requirement for raising revenues will actually be able to develop, and since that monetary revenue hurdle has arguably been the biggest single factor in destroying California’s public sphere over the past 30 years, we’re lukewarm in the extreme regarding our degree of support for Prop. 25.

RECOMMENDATION: YES with strong reservations

prop 26 NO

TAXES. Increases to 2/3 from simple majority, vote required for the Legislature to adopt state levies and charges, with limited exceptions. Requires 2/3 vote of the public for local levies and charges, with limited exceptions.

Submitted by Bill Balderston: If Prop 25 is only a half-way measure, Prop 26 would be a big step backwards, extending the two-thirds requirement to all government fees and other income measures not currently required to pass. This clearly is an attempt by the right populist, Jarvisite forces (the president of the CA Chamber of Commerce is a proponent) to hit back at Props 24 and 25 and continue the anti-tax momentum, with no discussion on upward or downward redistribution of resources. Likely, all unions and community-based organizations will oppose this regressive item. The Green Party does not at all agree with proponents of this measure, that a minority of just 34% should be allowed to have veto power over the very strong majority of 66%.

RECOMMENDATION: NO
3 Greens are Redistricting Commission semi-finalists

By Mike Feinstein

Three Greens are among the 120 semi-finalists—culled from 30,000 people originally considered—to be members of a Citizens Redistricting Commission, created in 2008 by California voters when they approved Prop. 11.

The commission will redraw new district lines for California’s State Legislative and Board of Equalization districts. It will consist of 14 members: five Democrats, five Republicans and four who are registered neither.

All 120 semi-finalists are being interviewed this fall at open public meetings. Of the 120, 40 were required to be Democrat, 40 Republican and 40 registered neither. It is from this latter group that Greens are being considered.

TERESA ESPANA

E s p a ñ a, of Fresno, is an adjunct faculty member in art history, appreciation and education at State Center Community College District, working at the Fresno City College, Madera and Clovis campuses and teaching on-line. She is a member of the city of Fresno’s Historical Preservation Commission and former department chief at Fresno Metropolitan Museum of Art and Science. España has been registered Green since 1992 when a graduate student at the UC Santa Barbara, where she earned a Masters in History of Art and Architecture. Before that she received a Bachelors of Arts in Political Science and Art from CSU Fresno.

STUART FLASHMAN

Flashman is an Oak-land attorney who specializes in environmental, land use and elections law. In his solo practice he represents private individuals, and community, environmental and other public interest groups during administrative pro-
cesses and in litigation.

Flashman currently serves on the Rockbridge Community Planning Council in Oakland. Previously he served as a member of Board of Directors of the East Bay Municipal Utility District and as past president of the Board, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District and as past president of the Board, a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of California Water Agencies and a member of the Emeryville City Council. Flashman has a B.A. and Sc.M. (biology) degrees from Brown University and a Ph.D. in biochemistry & molecular biology from Harvard.

VYLMA ORTIZ

An attorney in California since 1997, Ortiz, of Berkeley, began her career as a deputy public defender in Santa Clara and San Francisco Counties.

She has served as California director of YouthBuild USA’s Criminal Justice Advocacy Project, assisting low-income and at-risk youth in changing their lives through learning construction and other life skills.

She was Director of the East Bay Community Foundation’s Disproportionate Confinement Initiative to assist Alameda and Contra Costa County’s juvenile system stakeholders in addressing disproportionality found within their system.

She also served on the steering committee of the Califor-nia Coalition for Civil Rights.

Fluent in Spanish and the mother to two young boys, Ortiz has a B.A. in Political Science/International Relations from the UC Santa Barbara and a Juris Doctor from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law.

Final Selection Process

The Applicant Review Panel established by Prop.11 must narrow the applicant pool to 60: 20 Democrats, 20 Republicans and 20 registered neither. At that point, the Majority and Minority Leaders in the California Senate and Assembly may each remove two applicants from each pool.

This means that there may be as many as eight removed from each of the three pools, leaving a minimum of at least 12 names in each of the three pools. From these there will be a random drawing by no later than November 20 to select the first eight members of the Commission, who will select the final six members of the commission from among those applicants who remain in the Applicant Pool, by no later than December 31.

For approval of any Redistric-ting proposal it would then take at least three votes from the largest and second-largest parties’ members and three from the “other” pool.

Greens on redistricting

The Green Party of California originally opposed Prop. 1, believing there are advantages in taking redistricting away from politicians that benefit from it. However, the party felt drawing electoral districts is a profoundly political act and there could be a loss of accountability for the final product when voters would be ‘vote out’ legislators who crafted it.

There was the concern that under Prop.11, no member from any of California’s other major political parties would be on the Commission in the end, and, that the four non-Democrat/non-Republicans would all be awarded to ‘de-cline-to-state’ voters, under-stating the role of the state’s smaller, independent parties in the democratic process.

Depts. GOP game Prop. 11?

This was especially possible because Democrat and Republican legislators could simply choose to eliminate all applicants other than from their parties.

There was concern the com-mission would be responsible for redrawing the state legisla-tive districts, but state legis-la-ture would still be responsible for drawing US Congressional districts.

But perhaps the biggest con-cern of the Green Party was that the real problem with repre-sentation is not how districts are drawn, but the use of single-member, winner-take-all legislative districts in the first place, and that ’reforms’ that would only tinker with the current system would be dis-tractions to real reform.

Instead of redistricting, the Green Party supports multi-member districts with propor-tional representation.

That being said, the three Greens still in contention for the democratic process.

(The author is a former Green Party Mayor/City Councilmember of Santa Monica)
Eric Petersen’s involvement in the Green Party began with the Nader campaign in 2000, and that battle – says the member of Veterans for Peace - showed him the world would be a much different (and better) place if the Green Party presidential candidate had won.

“I am still convinced that if Nader had won we would now have national health care and would never have been even close to Afghanistan or Iraq.”

Eric notes in his district, the incumbent sometimes votes progressive, but is “tare less than a ball of fire.”

“You never hear about him in any sort of leadership role in Congress, and he mostly stays away from his constituents. He doesn’t listen to the people.

Petersen says that won’t happen on his watch should he win the election in November in the 17th Congressional District.

“We need real leadership in this district, and I’m ready to provide it.”

My intent is to bring some life back to the 17th District.

“I am in favor of leaving Iraq and Afghanistan as soon as possible, health care for all, reasonable immigration policies, active oversight of the Executive Branch (one of the jobs of Congress), and generally the Green Party agenda,” said Petersen.

Eric previously served on the Salinas Traffic and Transportation Commission, beginning in November 1998. He was chair three terms. He also was on the Transportation Agency for Monterey County Pedestrian-Bicycle Facilities Advisory Committee (since 2002), the Salinas Police-Community Advisory Committee (November 1996 to January 2008 and again from September 2009 to the present), the ad hoc Salinas Pedestrian-Bicycle Advisory Committee (January 1996 to the present).

He is a Life Member of the Sierra Club and Veterans for Peace. Eric spent 25 years with National Treasury Employees Union, and is currently a Retired Member.

Ben Emery is running for Congress (17th District) against an entrenched right-wing Tom McClintock (GOP) because he wants to give voters a real choice, and because, he says, our current system and government are broken.

“Both parties have been corrupted and captured by legislators in the public’s interest. We have been split by partisan slogans and rhetoric but need to unite against corruption and unethical policies. We need people with the courage to stand up to big money and stand for the people with honesty and integrity,” charges Emery.

“So many Americans are disillusioned with the two major parties and feel they don’t have a choice,” he added.

“An active healthy community is what we can achieve by belonging and I try to contribute as much as I can to the community in which I live,” said Emery, a youth basketball coach, in his district.

Emery notes one of the biggest issues in the 2010 elections is the funding of campaigns, citing the decision earlier this year when the courts decided corporations can spend unlimited money in campaigns, marginalizing the “average Joe.”

Among the policies Emery would support if elected are: public financing of campaigns, progressive campaign spending caps, instant runoff voting, a restructuring of tax policies on the top 1 percent, break up companies that are too big to fail by enforcing Sherman Antitrust laws, promoting strong local governments and governmental agencies, protecting small business (small business’s create 60 percent of American Jobs), infrastructure and development of Green technology, solvency of Medicare and Social Security, affordable and affordable Health Insurance/Care and supporting efforts for the U.S. to build peace, not war.
Cynthia Santiago, 25, is a young law student and Green Party member since she first registered to vote. Santiago has a strong background in raising youth activism through mentoring and leadership programs, prisoner education and resource programs, and environmental justice for low income communities. With this election, she has a chance to show younger people that getting involved in Green politics is a natural extension of their activism. ‘I’ve been a Green ever since I first registered to vote, and was a Green when elected Associated Student Body President at Santa Monica High School in 2002. Soon afterwards, I was included in a Los Angeles Weekly cover story on young greens,’ she said.

Santiago sees a rare opening for the Green Party to take for the second time a state assembly seat. She says the circumstances are very similar to those when California Greens won their only state assembly race back in March 1999.

“My race offers a fantastic opportunity to build the Green Party,” she said. “This is only the male Democratic incumbent and myself running. [We can] compete head-to-head with the Democrat, with a very different demographic. Santiago has a strong background in raising youth activism through mentoring and leadership programs, prisoner education and resource programs, and environmental justice for low income communities. With this election, she has a chance to show younger people that getting involved in Green politics is a natural extension of their activism. ‘I’ve been a Green ever since I first registered to vote, and was a Green when elected Associated Student Body President at Santa Monica High School in 2002. Soon afterwards, I was included in a Los Angeles Weekly cover story on young greens,’ she said.

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It’s EASY to be Green. Register a friend or family member TODAY!

[ Tim Smith, longtime Green Party organizer, believes voters should be registered Green in much higher numbers than they are currently. His outline below explains how and why this should be done. INSIDE this issue is a voter registration card to help voters get started ]

By Tim Smith (rioryon@aol.com)

Let’s build a solid Green Base. The foundation for any viable political party consists of the constituent voters who are willing to register as members of that party, primarily because they agree with the values promoted and applied to public policy by that party’s candidates.

At the core of that foundation are the volunteers and activists who run for office, others who support those candidates, and all who recruit more members.

After the original Green Party “founding” registration drive in 1991-92 in California and until 2003, GPCA registrations rose steadily from about 80,000 to a peak of just under 170,000 registered Greens. Since 2003-04, those registration figures have steadily declined, primarily because the Democrats successfully attacked the Greens.

There are, no doubt, a variety of causes for the decline, but one other reason is certainly the decline in the “tabling culture” that used to be quite prevalent among many Green locals — that is, active, local recruitment practices necessary to grow the party, and involve more Green activists and candidates in the political process.

At the GPCA General Assembly (GA) in Santa Clara last spring, the delegates discussed and debated a plan to re-invigorate, or “jump start”, a new Green Party recruitment process. The Green Party should begin that process now.

Merced County Experience: When we began registering voters in Merced, in the 2nd week of March, there were 261 Registered Greens in Merced County. A group of us were there during initiative qualification work for 7 - 8 weeks, finishing in the first week of May.

The Merced County ROV’s report of registration on the “15 day close” (May 24th) was 724 Registered Greens (NEARLY TRIPLING the previous number of Greens in the county.) The above numbers compare to a very static level of registered voters in Merced for other parties during that same period - the Dems grew only 8 voters; the Repubs declined 3 voters; Decline to State dropped 10 voters; Libertarians dropped 1 voter; American Independent (so-called) Party gained 20 voters; and P&F gained 1 voter.

In addition to the raw registration numbers we also collected about 25 to 30 names with contact info of newly registered Greens who expressed an interest in organizing a local, or at least attending a GP meeting, in Merced county.

The bottom line is that Green values are alive and well in the heartland of California’s “right side” of the state, and hopefully we can soon translate those values into a vibrant political force in Merced county.

Personal Tips and Ideas: Registering voters with a desired party is not a science per se, but does require certain key ingredients, such as a friendly, enthusiastic attitude and approach; an ability to listen to the registrant’s major interests and concerns; a knowledge of current political conditions vis a vis the GP’s 10 Key Values and how those values translate into public policy. (I try to always have a copy of the 10 KVs handy to give out as necessary.) For instance, to someone former registered Republican, I emphasize Sustainability as Community Based Economics as small government and local control.)

One constant I always emphasize that registering to vote is another way of ACTUALLY VOTING; in this case not for a candidate, but for a set of values the voter wants the candidate(s) to implement, ie Peace; Jobs and Better Wages; Equal Rights; Protecting the Environment.

Since a majority of voters agree with those values, and since a majority of voters are “dissatisfied” with the Democrats’ and the Republicans’ willingness/ability to implement those values, I keep coming back to those values encouraging the voter to “send a message” to your government with your Green registration.

It also helps to have a working knowledge of what Greens have accomplished to reach those goals and values. For Peace, I point to Joska Fischer, former German Green Foreign Minister, who denied Bush’s request that Germany become involved in Iraq;

For Jobs and Better Wages, I point to the 7-year Green majority in Sebastopol, which passed a Living Wage Ordinance when no one else in Sonoma county would, including the Democrats, and that led to a LWO being passed in Petaluma and the town of Sonoma, PLUS the Sebastopol Greens balanced the city budget, so that now Sebastopol is one of the few cities in the nation that is solvent!

For Equal Rights, what party, other than the Greens, can boast a better platform for justice on Gay Rights? And of course, everyone, including corporate America, is now trying to jump on the “Green” bandwagon when it comes to energy independence and Environmental Protection. But we were here first, and are the most steadfast.

Register Green today. And if you are already registered Green, contact friends, relatives and neighbors about doing the same.

☐ YES! I want to help Green candidates. Enclosed is a contribution for:
☐ $500  ☐ $250  ☐ $100  ☐ $50  ☐ Other ______ (please make checks payable to GPCA, PO Box 485, San Francisco, CA 94104)

☐ YES! I’d like to become a sustainer of the Green Party of California.
☐ I will contribute $____ per month. (please include credit card information below)

☐ YES! I would like to volunteer. Please pass my information on to local organizers!

The law requires we use our best efforts to collect and report the name, street address, occupation and name of employer of contributors. Contributions of $100 or more must be returned if we do not have the above information on file. Contributions are not tax deductible. Other restrictions on the size and source of contributions may apply. Thank you for your cooperation. R 2010 fall