



POLITICAL RADAR

Denounce*

September 18th, 2014

By *Derrick DePledge*

Share 1

Common Cause Hawaii and Public Citizen Hawaii have asked candidates for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House to take the **"People's Pledge"** and denounce independent political advertising by mainland groups.

The candidates could agree to make donations from campaign funds to charities selected by their opponents to atone for -- and potentially discourage -- the independent spending. In 2012, Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat who is now a U.S. senator, and then-U.S. Sen. Scott Brown, a Republican, agreed to a **similar pledge** during a Senate campaign in Massachusetts that had attracted national interest from super PACs and independent groups.

Good-government groups have celebrated such tactics as a voluntary response to *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the landmark ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2010 that opened the door for unlimited political spending by corporations and labor unions as long as the groups do not coordinate with candidates.

But there is a perception in Hawaii that good-government groups are aligned with progressives -- and the announcement from Common Cause and Public Citizen about the "People's Pledge" re-inforced that perception.

The groups, as their only example, single out a **television advertisement** this week from the Republican Governors Association that attempts to tie state Sen. David Ige to unpopular Gov. Neil Abercrombie, who Ige drubbed in the Democratic primary. The independent ad is intended to help former Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona, the Republican.

Yet Common Cause and Public Citizen have not asked the candidates for governor to take the "People's Pledge," citing conflicts between state and federal campaign-finance laws.

The groups also did not urge federal candidates in Hawaii to take the pledge



▶ SEARCH THIS BLOG

▶ RSS FEED



Political Radar

▶ POLITICAL RADAR ARCHIVES

- ▶ January 2015
- ▶ December 2014
- ▶ November 2014
- ▶ October 2014
- ▶ September 2014
- ▶ August 2014
- ▶ July 2014
- ▶ June 2014
- ▶ May 2014
- ▶ April 2014
- ▶ March 2014
- ▶ February 2014
- ▶ January 2014
- ▶ December 2013
- ▶ November 2013
- ▶ October 2013
- ▶ September 2013
- ▶ August 2013
- ▶ July 2013
- ▶ June 2013
- ▶ May 2013
- ▶ April 2013
- ▶ March 2013
- ▶ February 2013

▶ POLITICAL RADAR CATEGORIES

- ▶ Uncategorized (780)

during the primary. In the Democratic primary between U.S. Sen. Brian Schatz and U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, for example, liberal mainland groups such as the League of Conservation Voters and EMILY's List sponsored independent ads for the candidates.

Several mainland progressive groups, including MoveOn.org, the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, and Democracy for America, also did outreach in Hawaii on behalf of Schatz that attacked Hanabusa as a corporate-friendly threat to Social Security and other entitlement programs.

Warren herself sent out a **fundraising appeal** for Schatz to members of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee -- including some in Hawaii -- with Social Security as the theme.

Hanabusa complained that Schatz and his progressive allies unfairly distorted her record on Social Security and were trying to scare seniors.

Yet there was no denunciation by Common Cause Hawaii or other local good-government groups about the independent spending, which largely benefited Schatz, a progressive, who narrowly defeated Hanabusa.

Common Cause, however, swiftly **condemned** the RGA ad after it first aired this week.

#ICYMI Outside org have invated #Hawaii's airwaves attempting to influence our elect. #democracyundertheinfluence <http://t.co/9bje5K0luA>

— Common Cause Hawaii (@CommonCauseHI) September 17, 2014

"It's really responding to what we saw happen in the primary," said Carmille Lim, the executive director of Common Cause Hawaii. "We would have liked to launch something like this sooner, where it could have nipped things at the bud.

"But this is what we can do to raise awareness for any outside group trying to influence our election."

Posted in [Uncategorized](#) | [6 Comments](#) »

6 Responses to "Denounce*"

1. Ted Baker:

September 18th, 2014 at 6:46 pm

The Common Cause call for denunciation is sort of like trying to haul up the draw bridge over the moat once its apparently preferred candidates have crossed.

If Common Cause is not being duplicitous, it is being inept. It should have been obvious early on -- and soon after the Warren/Brown no-outside-money pledge in 2012 -- that outside groups would get involved in the

federal races in Hawaii. Very weak explanation by Common Cause, in any event.

Thank for holding feet to the public fire, Derrick.

2. **Bart Dame:**

September 19th, 2014 at 10:51 am

This attack on Common Cause is nonsense. Common Cause has been one of the most consistent advocates for campaign finance reform for many, many years, going back to its founding. Here in Hawaii, they were one of the bulwarks in the effort to pass what became the public financing pilot program for Big Island council races.

I was approached by them on this new proposal about a month ago. They are run on a shoestring budget and have been expanding their involvement on a broader range of activities over the past year. But still on the same, tiny budget.

Things like the revelations contained in the PRP emails caused them to think again about what can be done to minimize the distorting effect of vast sums of corporate money while sensible people pray for the Citizens United ruling of the rightwing Supreme Court is overturned by a constitutional amendment--admittedly a long shot. So what can be done now?

To claim they are being dishonest for not getting around to this before the primary is assuming a bias which is not in evidence.

In Washington, it the Republicans who have been the strongest proponents of allowing unlimited corporate funding to flood into elections. Is a non-partisan group like CC supposed to pretend both parties are equally guilty in order to satisfy a superficial standard for non-partisanship? In Hawaii, where the legislature has been dominated by Democrats, you have been sleeping if you have been unaware of the clashes the polite women of CC have had over the years with the key legislators who have killed their bills year after year.

BTW, this "progressive" is not working on their push, as I have some disagreements with it. I have found CC to be scrupulously honest in their efforts to police both the major parties. In fact, they sometimes frustrate me as a Democrat. But thank God they don't always listen to me!

3. **Barbara Polk:**

September 19th, 2014 at 4:32 pm

I wonder who has the bias here? DePledge omitted from this article the part of the Common Cause press release that recognized Republican Charles Djou:

"So far, only Charles Djou, Republican candidate for U.S House District 1, has met with us and has expressed interest in negotiating a pledge with his opponent. . . . We have not had responses from Mark Takai (U.S. House) . . ."

Unfortunately, DePledge's article doesn't make clear that State law limits the amount of money candidates can give to charities during their campaigns to prevent the appearance of attempting to buy votes. Although the donations under the People's Pledge would not be useful in buying votes, we realized that we can't include gubernatorial candidates as we had originally intended, since such donations would break the law.

Common Cause Hawaii has been asked in the past by candidates of both major parties and various factions to denounce ads which attacked them. However, we have declined to do so to remain non-partisan. Now that we have a project, begun only since the primary, that has the potential to limit those ads, we will be publicizing all ads by outside individuals or groups, whether they attack or support a candidate. We encourage individuals to report such ads on our website: hi.commoncause.org.

Barbara Polk, Interim Chair
Common Cause Hawaii

4. **Carmille Lim:**

September 19th, 2014 at 5:45 pm

Hi Derrick-- I appreciate the feature and your coverage of our independent expenditure work over the past few years. But, it looks like you forgot to include these portions of our interview/press release:

1. We didn't have the resources to do this campaign during the primaries.
2. RGA's independent ad struck first since we launched the campaign two weeks ago-- that's why we noted them.
3. We recognized Charles Djou, Republican candidate for CD1, for his expressed interest in negotiating a pledge with his opponent.

Just a few details.

Thank you,
Carmille Lim
Common Cause Hawaii

5. **ohiaforest3400:**

September 20th, 2014 at 1:35 pm

At the very least, Dame, Polk, and Lim have made a case that Common Cause is in a period of transition as it tries to regain the institutional

knowledge, skill, and resources it had in the past. Their shortcomings were also apparent when making some uninformed assertions about Capitol TV coverage of the special session on marriage equality. Now that we have their attention, hopefully, the arc continues to bend toward realization of its former status.

6. **Ted Baker:**

September 20th, 2014 at 1:48 pm

Ohia is dead! Long live Ohia!

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

Submit Comment

[News](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars for Sale](#) | [Homes for Sale](#) | [Apartments for Sale](#) | [Real Estate](#)

MidWeek

PULSE

HI LUXURY

Hawaii

101
THANKS TO US

Star  Advertiser

Copyright © 2016 staradvertiser.com. All rights reserved.

500 Ala Moana Boulevard. #7-210, Honolulu, HI 96813 Telephone (808) 529-4747