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POLITICS

Hawaii Candidates for Congress Seek More Money as Election Nears

Mark Takai and Charles Djou ramp up fundraising efforts ahead of deadline for quarterly finance report.

SEPTEMBER 30, 2014 • By Nathan Eagle   

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Republican Charles Djou and Democrat Mark Takai are making last-minute pitches for more money as their tight congressional race enters its final 35 days.

They have until Oct. 15 to submit their quarterly campaign finance reports to the Federal Elections Commission, but Tuesday marked the end of the fundraising period.

Both candidates vying to represent urban Oahu in Congress for the next two years want to make a big showing when the reports become public next month. Not only is it important in order to keep TV ads on air and mailers going to people's homes, but the dollar figures will demonstrate the strength of their campaigns.

PF Bentley/Civil Beat



Charles Djou and Mark Takai shake hands at end of a candidates forum, Sept. 23, 2014.

Takai and Djou have sent a flurry of emails to campaign supporters over the past several days touting their past accomplishments, making broad promises, insinuating negative aspects about their opponent and asking for more cash.

On Tuesday, they each urged their supporters to donate \$25, \$50, \$100 or even more before the midnight deadline.

“I need help to show strength at the end of the quarter,” Takai wrote. “Your support now could very well keep mainland Republicans from becoming involved in our local decisions.”

“We’re facing a well-funded opponent, who has the backing of the old boy network and special interests in Washington,” Djou wrote. “Based on their track record, we’ll likely be fighting misleading ads from our opponent’s allies in these final weeks of the campaign.”

Djou had [\\$439,707 on hand as of July 20](#), almost three times more than Takai.

Djou only spent \$10,480 from July 1 to July 20, easily winning the Aug. 9 Republican primary. Takai, however, spent \$223,513 during the same period, fighting to win a hotly contested Democratic primary.

Takai's campaign has recognized the sizable lead Djou has in campaign money.

Takai's campaign finance director, Robert Olker, sent an email to supporters Monday about some "good news and bad news."

The good news, he said, is the campaign is about to close its most successful fundraising quarter so far. The bad news, he said, is that Djou still has a 3-to-1 cash advantage.

"Even though we have raised more than him, he still leads us in cash on hand," Olker wrote.

Djou hasn't let his big financial lead become an excuse to ease up on fundraising efforts.

Djou sent an email to supporters Sunday asking them for more money. He underscored the importance of having a high amount in the next quarterly report because "pundits here and on the mainland will be scrutinizing this report very closely to assess the viability of our campaign."

The email said the Djou campaign needed to raise an additional \$10,000 in individual contributions by Tuesday.

"Unlike our opponent, we won't have a mainland PAC willing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on our race," Djou wrote.

VoteVets.org, a progressive political action committee, spent \$175,000 on TV ads during the primary to support Takai, who, like Djou, is a military veteran. The PAC similarly poured \$300,000 into Democrat Tulsi Gabbard's successful bid for Congress in 2012.

Other PACs have supported Republican candidates for Congress in the past, but this year political analysts have said the focus for conservatives is on winning the Senate, making it hard for House candidates like Djou to attract outside dollars.

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Ben Wagner

I chipped in 25 dollars to the Takai Campaign. Running for office is expensive anymore... it's a shame.

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Ron Yamada

I agree. It takes a lot of money these days.

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