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Hawaii News

Lobbyists' contributions OK, state campaign panel decides

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The Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission last week dismissed a complaint alleging that state Sen. Rosalyn Baker received contributions that were over the limit from a prominent Honolulu lobbying firm in the last election period.

Leonard Horowitz, a longtime opponent of vaccinations, argued that Baker received

donations of more than \$6,000 from lobbyists John Radcliffe and George "Red" Morris of Capital Consultants of Hawaii. Under the state campaign spending law, Senate candidates can accept an aggregate contribution of up to \$4,000 from a single source per election cycle.

Horowitz alleged that Baker, chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health, promoted measures that would have made vaccinations mandatory for health care workers and children entering the seventh grade because of the money she was receiving from Capital Consultants of Hawaii, which lobbies for pharmaceutical company Pfizer Inc.

According to a spreadsheet done by the state's Campaign Spending Commission staff that totaled up the contributions that Baker received, Radcliffe and Morris each donated \$2,000 while Capital Consultants of Hawaii gave \$250 for the 2012-2014 election period.

Because Radcliffe and Morris both work for Capital Consultants of Hawaii, Horowitz assumed that their total combined monetary donations along with what the lobbying firm contributed would have to be under the \$4,000 limit. However, the donations from Radcliffe and Morris were drawn from their personal checking accounts, and their contributions should not be combined as an aggregate amount.

The commission's staff-written recommendation to dismiss the complaint also said that half of the \$250 that Capital Consultants of Hawaii donated was applied to each Radcliffe and Morris because they are both equal partners in the lobbying firm, leaving their donations well under the \$4,000 cap.

Senate Bill 2316, which would have made one dosage of the human papillomavirus vaccine mandatory for all children before entering the seventh grade, was deferred in Baker's committee when the measure was heard earlier this year. Baker told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser that the state will do an "education push" instead of mandating the vaccinations.

The vaccination bill that would have required annual influenza vaccinations for health care workers, SB 2394, was passed by the Senate but died in the House during this year's legislative session.