

[Job Link Now](#) | [HNN808](#) | [Healthy You](#) | [Perfect Home](#) | [Tributes](#) | [Career Opportunities](#)



79°
Scattered Clouds
Kahului

[FULL FORECAST](#)

Search

State investigates group behind new Caldwell attack ads

Published: Thursday, October 20th 2016, 6:22 pm HST

Updated: Thursday, October 20th 2016, 10:42 pm HST

By Rick Daysog, Reporter [CONNECT](#)

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - The state Campaign Spending Commission is taking a close look at an anti-rail political action committee that's planning to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars criticizing Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell.

The PAC -- Save Our City LLC -- lists no contributions from donors and no expenditures even though its already spent thousands on television and radio ads and on political signs.

"They're a smear if you ask me, we're disappointed in them," said attorney Lex Smith, chairman of Caldwell's re-election committee. "We tried to see who's behind them and we can't."

The committee is headed by local small businesswoman Sarah Houghtailing, who owns TJ's Sports Bar and Grill downtown. She declined to identify her backers but said that all of the ads are truthful.

"What's the definition of smear. Getting the truth out there? If that's a smear I guess it is," Houghtailing said. "These are all facts. It's not like I'm pulling these out of the sky."

State law requires PACs to file what's known as an electioneering communications report within 24 hours of spending more than \$2,000. Sources said Save Our City has spent at least \$5,000 at one television station.

Some people call these committees ghost PACs because the public doesn't see who's behind them and how much they're giving until days before the election.

"There's just no transparency, the public doesn't know where this money is coming from," said University of Hawaii political science Professor Colin Moore.

"When you have a group that pretends to be a grassroots organization or a genuine political movement that might be funded by a handful of wealthy people, really the public doesn't get the right impression."

Save Our City isn't the only PAC spending big money on the mayor's race.

Workers for a Better Hawaii, led by the Hawaii Government Employees Association and the state AFL-CIO, is spending nearly \$300,000 on behalf of Caldwell.

"But unlike Save Our City, the pro-union PAC has made the appropriate disclosures on who's contributing and how much it is spending," Smith said. "There's pure transparency about who they are," he said.

Copyright 2016 [Hawaii News Now](#). All rights reserved.

Can't Find Something? SEARCH FOR IT HERE

SEARCH



Hawaii News Now

420 Waiakamilo Road, Suite 205
Honolulu, HI 96817
Main (808) 847-3246
News (808) 847-1112

KHNL

[FCC Public File](#)
KHNLpublicfile@hawaiinewsnow.com
[EEO Contact \(808\) 847-3246](#)
[EEO Report](#)
[Closed Captioning](#)

KGMB

[FCC Public File](#)
KGMBpublicfile@hawaiinewsnow.com
[EEO Contact \(808\) 847-3246](#)
[EEO Report](#)
[Closed Captioning](#)

[NEWS](#)

[WEATHER](#)

[SPORTS](#)

[VIDEO](#)

[SUNRISE](#)

[WHAT'S ON](#)

[COMMUNITY](#)

[TRAFFIC](#)

[ABOUT US](#)

[HAWAII NEWS NOW](#)

frankly All content © Copyright 2000 - 2016 Raycom Media. All Rights Reserved. For more information on this site, please read our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Terms of Service](#) and [Ad Choices](#)