

# Walnut council race includes three PACs and lots of cash

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By [Steve Scauzillo](#), San Gabriel Valley Tribune

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WALNUT >> The upcoming [election of three city council members](#) is being influenced by three political action committees formed exclusively to support or oppose candidates running in Tuesday's election, according to the latest campaign filings.

The use of independent expenditure committees are viewed as a spillover from the ongoing presidential campaigns where such committees are spending money on political mailers and advertising without coordinating activities with the candidates. The organizers of these PACs are empowered by the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission that honored political contributions as free speech and allowed unlimited election spending.

According to a document filed March 31 with the Walnut City Clerk's Office, the Truth & Dignity Municipal Leadership PAC spent \$1,313.12 on a political mailer in support of challenger Betty Tang. This is the first time this PAC has existed in Walnut.

Most likely, the committee is a reaction to two other committees formed this year to oppose Tang: Citizens to Protect Walnut Committee and Citizens for Family Values to Oppose Betty Tang for Walnut City Council 2016.

The "family values" PAC added \$4,449 in contributions from Feb. 28 through March 26, according to the recent filing with the City Clerk. The PAC has raised a total of \$5,048 this year, with expenditures mostly on political mailers: including \$2,236.81 for an English mail piece and a mail piece in Chinese. The mailers were produced by the Chinese American Advertising & Direct Mail LLC in Monterey Park and funneled through the U.S. Post Office on Lemon Avenue in Walnut, the document showed

Dana Hopkins, treasurer, who is listed as a certified public accountant from Riverside on the campaign document, did not return a phone call on Tuesday. Hopkins also is listed as the treasurer for Citizens to Protect Walnut, which has spent \$820 in 2015, according to a document filed on Feb. 1, 2016.

Contributors and their donation amounts to the "family values" PAC include: Patricia Anis of Diamond Bar, an administrative assistant for the California 48th District Agricultural

Association (\$750); Martin Arano of San Dimas, a handyman (\$750); Gang Chen of Chino Hills, self-employed as Eden Electric (\$750); Yan Lin of El Monte, a pharmacist with Walgreens (\$750); Jaime R. Rodriguez of La Puente, a human resources manager with Hitchcock Automotive Resources (\$749); Walnut City Council member Mary Su (from her City Council 2014 fund, \$700).

Since Walnut limits campaign contributions to \$1,000 per individual, many will use PACs to get around that limit since PACs are an independent expenditure, said politics watcher and open government advocate Gil Aguirre.

“How can you have influence and bypass many of the political campaign limits out there? This seems to be the technique chosen,” he said.

[The candidates](#) and their most recent financial filings (through March 31) are as follows:

- Eric Ching, 49, incumbent, raised \$34,972.60 (including a loan of \$7,171.60) and spent \$10,231.94.
- Bella Cristobal, 66, challenger, raised \$28,169.60 (including a \$5,000 loan from herself) and spent \$22,917.55. Cristobal returned a \$1,000 donation from David Hall, Mount San Antonio College trustee.
- Dino Pollalis, 53, challenger, raised \$12,100 all in loans from himself; spent \$10,918.56.
- Andrew Rodriguez, 23, challenger, raised \$9,822 (including a \$6,080 loan from himself) and spent \$9,160. Rodriguez returned a \$500 donation from Jay Chen, Mt. SAC trustee.
- Betty Tang, 49, challenger, started with \$61,680.32 of cash on hand; raised \$11,986 and spent \$41,798.
- Nancy Tragarz, 53, incumbent, raised \$7,128.77 and spent \$4,370.70.