

# Fresno Co. supe hopeful Yep, looking for viability, gives \$100k to his campaign

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Gary Yep

In the District 1 Fresno County supervisor race to replace the retiring Phil Larson, Kerman dairyman Brian Pacheco is the clear leader in the fundraising battle.

Through the end of last year, he had raised more than \$265,000 and had more than \$220,000 in his campaign account.

At this stage in a race, the person leading that race is usually perceived as the front-runner to win the actual election.

On top of that, everyone expects Fresno City Council Member Blong Xiong, who is also seeking the seat, to get a huge cash infusion from the Service Employees International Union. Whether that actually happens is unknown, but that doesn't stop people from thinking it.

Now, Gary Yep — another hopeful — wants into the frontrunner discussion. There's one sure way to do that, and this week the Kerman mayor did it — putting \$100,000 of his own money into his campaign.

The money is listed as being from Yep's business, Valley Food Center. Yep said at this point it is a campaign loan.

“I believe in myself and I believe I can win the race, so I’m betting on myself,” Yep said. Yep got into the race late. His campaign finance report through the end of last year showed only a \$2,000 loan from himself to his campaign.

This latest cash infusion, Yep said, serves to “let people know I’m in it to win it. I’ve got momentum. It levels the playing field is what it does.”

Yep feels he is viable because he’s the only Republican in the race. Pacheco has received several high-profile Republican endorsements — including from Larson — but he’s a Democrat. So is Xiong.

There are a total of five people seeking to replace Larson. Besides Yep, Xiong and Pacheco, they are Mendota pastor John Flores and teacher/construction carpenter Frank Maldonado.