

# Three candidates lead in campaign cash for District 1 race

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<http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=news/politics&id=9488594>FRESNO, California (KFSN) -- The race for one Fresno City Council seat has generated a lot of candidates, and they're trying to raise a lot of money.

While there are four city council seats up for grabs in upcoming election, only one, the District 1 seat does not have a current council member seeking reelection. The seven candidates are all relatively unknown, so getting their name out there is costing some cash.

The latest fundraising figures show three of the seven candidates for the district one seat on the Fresno City Council are outpacing the rest.

Council member Blong Xiong has served his two term limit and he knows how much it cost him to run. "For the total race the June primary and the final it was 120 thousand plus."

The seven candidates hoping to win the \$70 thousand a year job are Lawrence Cano, Cary Catalano, Mark J. Castro, Esmerelda Soria, Rebecca Rangel, Rama Dawar, and Jackson Shepherd.

Leading in the fundraising race so far is Esmerelda Soria. She's raised nearly \$54 thousand so far.

Second is business owner Rama Dawar with more than \$49 thousand.

Third is Cary Catalano, with almost \$39 thousand. Catalano also loaned his campaign an additional \$24 thousand, giving him a total of nearly \$63 thousand.

While it's a nonpartisan race, and all candidates receive money from diverse sources there are signs of party politics in the Soria and Catalano campaigns.

Soria picked up more than \$4 thousand from a group called the Friends of Henry R. Perea, the county's only democrat on the board of supervisors, and a potential candidate for Fresno mayor. Catalano received \$41 hundred from the Friends of Fresno's Republican Mayor, Ashley Swearengin.

Fresno State Political Science Professor Tom Holyoke lives in District 1 and says who donates what can tell you something.

Holyoke said, "A person who gives a few thousand dollars is expecting to get something from them, that doesn't mean they are buying votes it means they are contributing to elect somebody who they believe will share their values, or be willing to do things the contributor do something they want done."

In addition, Soria has received hefty donations from city employee unions, including \$2 thousand from Local 39 the Stationary Engineers Union which includes the city garbage collectors who's jobs Mayor Swearengin tried unsuccessfully to turn over to private garbage company, Mid Valley Disposal. MID Valley gave \$25 hundred to Catalano's campaign.

Both Holyoke and Xiong agree money is a key to funding an organization, even if it's made up of volunteers, and Xiong adds no matter how much money a candidate has, the real work is making a personal connection with the voters.

Xiong said, "Our residents want to see candidates working hard and one of that is that they have to knock on doors and talk to people."

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