

# Unions pouring in money to help East Bay Democrat Tim Sbranti

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Teachers unions, service employees and other labor groups are pouring cash — \$335,000 to date — into independent expenditure efforts backing Dublin Mayor Tim Sbranti in his primary race for an East Bay Assembly seat against fellow Democrat Steve Glazer, spending statements show.

Glazer, an Orinda city councilman and longtime adviser to California Gov. Jerry Brown, has thrown down with unions in his campaign, and his latest pitch in a campaign brochure explains it all: “Steve Glazer stood up against the BART strike. He’ll fight for us in the state Assembly.”

And now Glazer, in an editorial board meeting at The Chronicle on Wednesday, said unions are targeting him with false “push poll” attacks made this week in phone calls to 16th Assembly District voters.

“We need a person who represents our district — who we can trust stands for us not his big- moneyed clients,” the calls say. Callers are told that “for years, Glazer has worked for developers and companies like Chevron, PG&E and Monsanto.”

Glazer told the editorial board that he’s never worked for any of the companies. He did say, however, that campaign finance records show Sbranti has received a \$1,500 contribution from PG&E and three contributions totaling \$1,800 from Chevron.

Glazer said he has received a \$1,000 contribution from Monsanto.



Michelle Henry, spokeswoman for Sbranti’s campaign, said she was unaware of the polling by union-backed independent expenditure committees and could not comment on their activities. By law, such committees cannot coordinate their actions with a candidate’s campaign.

We also sought a comment from the [California Teachers Association](#), which is helping to fund the poll, and will post when we receive a response.

A disclaimer at the end of the calls notes that the two-question poll is “paid for Californians for Economic Prosperity to Support Tim Sbranti for Assembly 2014, sponsored by the California Teachers Association and the California State Council of Service Employees. Major funding by the California Teachers Association Independent Expenditure Committee and California State Council of Service Employees Political Committee.”

Sbranti, until recently, chaired the teachers union’s political involvement committee.

Glazer’s stand against BART strikes, a popular one in his commuter-heavy district, is only part of the the reason he’s angered labor activists in the Democratic ranks.

The [California Labor Federation](#) put him on a “do not patronize” list in 2012 after he worked as Democratic strategist for JobsPAC, the California Chamber of Commerce’s political action committee. To the displeasure of Assembly Speaker John Perez, D-Los Angeles, the group worked to elect moderate Democrats over more liberal incumbents. Democratic grassroots and labor activists at last month’s state party convention in Los Angeles voted overwhelmingly to endorse Sbranti.

Glazer’s campaign has highlighted a bellwether race between labor and business interests in the [16th Assembly District](#), which stretches from Orinda to south of Livermore.

The district tilts to the left, but not overwhelmingly so — Democrats outnumber Republicans by 40 to 34 percent, with 22 percent of voters declining to state a preference.

The seat is now held by Democrat Joan Buchanan, who will be termed out next year. Also running are Republican attorney [Catharine Baker](#) and Danville Mayor [Newell Arnerich](#), a Democrat.

The race has spotlighted key changes in the state’s political landscape — including legislative districts newly redrawn by an impartial citizens commission rather than Democratic or Republican leaders, and a primary system under which the leading two vote-getters advance to the general election, regardless of party.

Glazer said labor’s efforts to attack him as a “business Democrat” illustrate the “narrow view” of special interests in the state — even in his own party.

“I have a long record of being a progressive Democrat in many things,” Glazer told the editorial board. “If it means that I’m sensitive to economic development, over-regulation and job creation, then that’s a badge of honor...and I have a proven record of taking on special interests.”