

# Incumbent Republican Berryhill faces Fresno Democrat for state Senate seat

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<http://www.fresnobee.com/2014/04/29/3901671/incumbent-republican-berryhill.html>

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Republican state Sen. Tom Berryhill has the advantages of name recognition, experience and money as he faces Democratic underdog Paulina Miranda, a Fresno businesswoman, in his re-election bid to represent a GOP-leaning district that includes parts of Fresno, Madera and Tulare counties.

But he has one thing a candidate does not want. The California Fair Political Practices Commission ruled last week that Berryhill had engaged in a “serious and deliberate” violation of campaign finance rules when he funneled \$40,000 from his campaign to his brother’s campaign for state Assembly in 2008.

It is not clear how the FPPC ruling will affect the race between Berryhill and Miranda. Neither responded to requests for interviews.

The two will face each other in California’s June 3 primary. Because they are the only candidates on the ballot, they will face each other again in the Nov. 4 general election.

Berryhill, R-Twain Harte, represents all of Tuolumne and Mariposa counties and parts of Madera, Fresno, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties in the 14<sup>th</sup> Senate District. But because of redistricting – the once-a-decade process of redrawing political boundaries based on the results of the federal Census – the district will be renamed the 8<sup>th</sup> and its boundaries will include Amador, Calaveras and Mono and Tulare counties as well as part of Sacramento County.

The district is a Republican stronghold. As of Dec. 31, Republicans made up 43.8% of its registered voters compared with the Democrats’ 33.9%, according to the Around The Capitol website.

Berryhill comes from a political family. He and his brother, Bill, have served in the Assembly. Tom Berryhill was elected to the state Senate in 2010. Their late father, Clare, served in the state Assembly and Senate and as California secretary of food and agriculture.

As of the mid-March reporting deadline, Berryhill had \$133,422 on hand for his campaign, according to the secretary of state. Miranda had not reported any campaign contributions.

According to his campaign website, Berryhill says he stands with former President Ronald Reagan in the belief that families benefit from less taxes and government bureaucracy.

Berryhill states on his website that as a fourth generation farmer he supports protecting prime farmland, private property rights and the environment and supports the state having enough water storage. He also pledges his support for the Second Amendment.

The FPPC last week approved a \$40,000 penalty against Berryhill and the Republican central committees in San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties. Authorities say Tom Berryhill circumvented the \$3,600 limit on donations to legislative candidates by giving \$20,000 each to the central committees, which then each gave \$20,000 to Bill Berryhill's Assembly campaign.

"This was cheating on the election, plain and simple," said FPPC enforcement chief Gary Winuk in a Los Angeles Times story last week. "The state has campaign-contribution limits, and the Berryhills intentionally violated those limits and gave themselves an unfair advantage in an election."

Tom Berryhill's attorney criticized the decision and said his client will decide whether to appeal to the Superior Court in the coming weeks, according to the Times story. "We believe the FPPC applied the wrong legal standard to this, and we are evaluating our legal options," attorney Charles H. Bell Jr. told the Times. "We continue to deny that there was any earmarking of the funds."

Berryhill has received financial help in his fight with the FPPC. He has received 10 contributions of at least \$2,000 each to his legal defense fund from Aug. 1 through Feb. 11, according to the secretary of state. The

contributions totaled \$58,600 and included \$25,000 from Sierra Pacific Industries, \$7,500 from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and \$2,000 from the campaign of state Sen. Anthony Cannella, R-Ceres.

Miranda was a candidate for trustee for the State Center Community College District in November 2012 and a candidate in the special election for state Senate District 16 in May 2013. She did not win either race. She's active in the Democratic Party.

She was born in Mexico and earned a bachelor's degree from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, according to her website. In answers to a questionnaire submitted to The Modesto Bee's editorial board, Miranda said her priorities include supporting the high-speed rail project, which would link the Bay Area with Southern California via the San Joaquin Valley, and modernizing the state's water infrastructure, which is crucial for the Valley because of its agriculture-based economy.

Miranda wrote that she supports more help for single mothers raising children in poverty. She said 22% of California's children live in poverty.

"The women in California are not receiving the same salaries as the men in the same positions," she wrote. "We need to have pay equity. To decrease the poverty of the children in California we need to invest in protect(ing) pregnant women, paid leave, help with good child care, (and) have scholarships for low-income women."

## **Tom Berryhill**

**Age:** 60

**Residence:** Twain Harte

**Occupation:** Farmer

**Education:** Attended California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

**Public office:** Elected to state Assembly in 2006; state Senate in 2010

**Family:** Married, two daughters.

**Web:** [www.tomberryhill.com](http://www.tomberryhill.com)

**Paulina Miranda**

**Age:** 58

**Residence:** Fresno

**Occupation:** Businesswoman

**Education:** Bachelor's degree from National Autonomous University of Mexico

**Public office:** Candidate for trustee for the State Central Community College District in November 2012 and a candidate in the special election for state Senate District 16 in May. Lost both races.

**Family:** Married, three daughters.

**Online:** [www.paulinamiranda2014.org](http://www.paulinamiranda2014.org)