

Chronicle recommends Steve Glazer for Assembly

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Orinda City Council member and banBARTstrikes.com organizer Steve Glazer campaigns to ban transit strikes in California by riding to all 44 BART stops on Monday, October 14, 2013 in Monday Oct. 14, 2013 in Orinda, Calif. Photo: Mike Kepka, The Chronicle

Steve Glazer obviously upset Sacramento's status quo. Organized labor groups already have spent nearly \$1 million to deny the Orinda councilman election to the state Assembly seat that reaches from east of the Berkeley Hills to the Tri-Valley. Their smear campaign against him has been as disingenuous as it is disgusting.

To a fair-minded voter, the unions' vehemence might seem oddly out of scale in view of the the relatively minor policy differences between Glazer and labor's favorite in the race, Dublin Mayor **Tim Sbranti**, a longtime teacher and coach who once oversaw the **California Teachers Association's** political action committee.

There's no doubt that Sbranti would fit in just fine with the Democratic majority at the [State Capitol](#). He's engaging, studied and resolutely party line.

Glazer is more the maverick who is willing to declare his independence when he sees the party veering from the public interest. One high-profile example was his campaign to prohibit BART strikes on the argument that mass transit is an essential public service and a matter of health and safety. Another is his stated willingness to reform the California Environmental Quality Act to curb abuses that have nothing to do with protecting natural resources: such as labor unions using its legal tools to extract concessions or businesses trying to stymie competition.

Glazer also has refused to answer any questionnaires from groups that do not make their answers public. One of the dirty secrets of California politics is that special interests use these questionnaires to extract private pledges from candidates as a condition of endorsements and campaign contributions.

While Glazer won't play that game, Sbranti declined our request to see the questionnaires he has filled out.

Labor has made Glazer's defeat one of its 2014 priorities. It has flooded the district with volunteers and a social media campaign that has attempted to use his work as a consultant to a state [Chamber of Commerce](#) political action committee to link him, however flimsily, to Big Oil, Big Pharma, Big Tobacco and other poll-tested villains.

It doesn't wash.

In truth, Sbranti has received direct contributions from some of the very sources (Chevron, PG&E, home builders) that are being used against Glazer, who has served as an adviser to Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) at various points over more than three decades. The records of both [Democrats](#) make plain that neither is going to pawn off big business.

[Catharine Baker](#), a Republican attorney, appears to have a solid chance of making the November runoff against one of the Democrats. She is clearly more deferential to business and further to the right than Glazer or Sbranti on guns, education reforms and social issues.

The third Democrat in the race, Danville Councilman [Newell Arnerich](#), has been largely overshadowed in the proxy war over Glazer and Sbranti. Arnerich has an

appealing grassroots pitch, but he lacks his fellow Democrats' experience in statewide politics.

Sacramento needs more strong, independent voices to challenge the dogma of the status quo. Glazer is our choice in the June 3 primary.