

GOP to Pacheco: Don't abuse our elephant

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Republican Party leaders in Fresno County are steaming over a campaign mailer that bears the party's familiar elephant logo -- mainly because the candidate who sent it is a Democrat.

[Brian Pacheco](#) of Kerman is running for the District 1 seat on the Fresno County Board of Supervisors to represent the western reaches of the county. His latest direct-mail literature, which landed in mailboxes on Friday — including that of his opponent, [Gary Yep](#) — touts endorsements by several current and former Republican officeholders, and includes an elephant that looks remarkably like the party's patriotic pachyderm..

But Dallas Thiesen, campaign manager for Yep, and other Republicans have a problem with that. In a statement delivered from the steps of the Fresno County Clerk's Office in downtown Fresno on Friday afternoon, the [California Republican Assembly's](#) Central Valley chairman Tim Thiesen and former [Fresno County Republican Party](#) chairman Don Watnick accused Pacheco's campaign of a "shameful and deceitful attempt to brand himself as the Republican-endorsed candidate" in the nonpartisan supervisor's race.

"Democrat Brian Pacheco is clearly attempting to mislead voters," Tim Thiesen said.

Thiesen said the elephant is copyrighted by the Republican Party, "and reserved for use only when a candidate is officially endorsed by the Republican Party" or by organizations that are chartered within the party. That Republicans who endorse Pacheco appear on the flyer, he added, is irrelevant: "This issue is not about who has endorsed him or who has not endorsed him. It's about copyright infringement."

Andre Levesque, a spokesman for the Pacheco campaign, said that Thiesen and Watnick "are just plain wrong."

Levesque said the elephant on the flyer is not copyrighted or trademarked because, unlike the Republican party's official three-star elephant, "ours has two stars." He denied that the critter is an attempt to mislead voters, but said it calls attention to the endorsements by individual Republicans: former Rep. George Radanovich, current District 1 Supervisor Phil Larson and Assembly Member Jim Patterson.

"Nowhere on the piece does it say that Mr. Pacheco is a Republican or that he is endorsed by the Republican Party," Levesque added. Thiesen's complaints "are not going to change the fact that Brian has the endorsement of many conservative community leaders."

Tim Thiesen was noncommittal about what the state Republican Party might do about Pacheco's "abuse" of its elephant. "There will be things to come, but right now I'm not at liberty to speak," he said. "Party leadership will be addressing this."

"We're going to be pursuing it under copyright laws," Thiesen added. "We've had cases like this before and we have prevailed."