

FPPC warns Catalano campaign on radio spots, Reel Pride flyer

By John
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Cary Catalano

The state's political watchdog sent a warning letter to unsuccessful District 1 Fresno City Council candidate Cary Catalano for failing to report expenditures and in-kind contributions on his campaign-finance statements.

Such warning letters are sent by the Fair Political Practices Commission when candidates or elected officials violate state campaign-finance laws, but such letters are for lesser offenses. The agency issues fines for more egregious campaign law violations.

In Catalano's case, the FPPC found that he didn't immediately report an ad his campaign placed in the Fresno Reel Pride Festival flyer and did not timely report the value of radio advertisements donated by KJWL (FM 99.3) and KFPT (AM 790).

The radio ads totaled \$5,700, and the Reel Pride ad \$600.

"There was no intent, and we demonstrated that to the FPPC," Catalano said. "It was a timing issue."

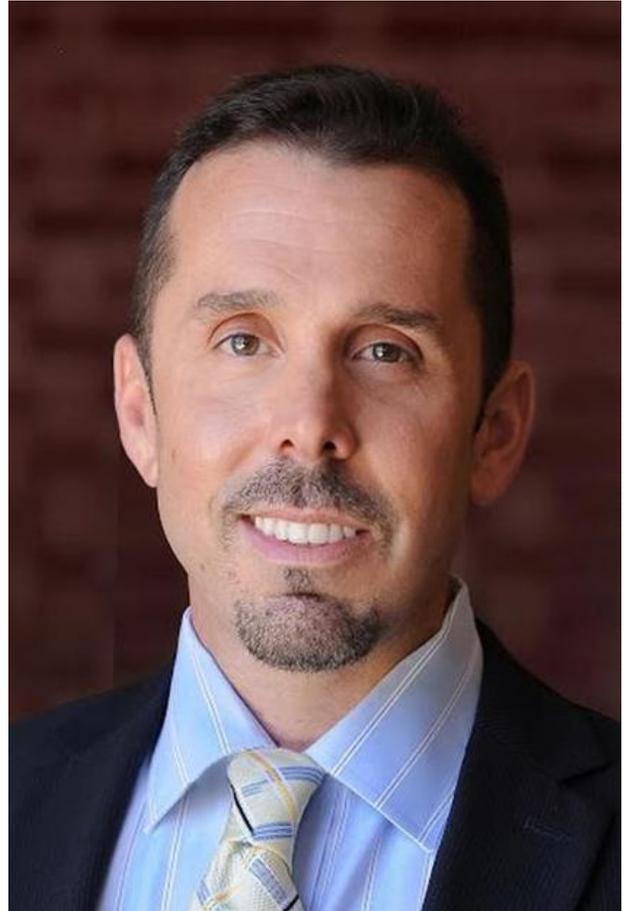
He said the campaign wasn't immediately invoiced by the Fresno Reel Pride Festival. As soon as the campaign was invoiced, that bill was paid, he said. Before that, he said the campaign never knew the ad's exact cost, and therefore couldn't report it on the campaign-finance statements.

As for the radio spots, Catalano said there was no guarantee they would run or, if they did, how many times the ads would air. It was only later that a value could be determined, and when it was, the campaign listed it on the next campaign-finance report.

Catalano said the complaint disappointed him because he "felt it was political in nature." It was initially filed with the FPPC in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

In the election, Catalano lost to Esmeralda Soria, who took her seat in January, replacing the termed-out Blong Xiong. Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin in turn appointed Catalano to the city Planning Commission.

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