

## New campaign account doesn't always mean new run for office

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On March 12, Assembly Member Henry T. Perea formed a fundraising committee for a 2018 state Insurance Commissioner run.

So, that means he's in, right? Well, maybe yes. But, probably no.

Only time will tell.

Perea looks to be following the lead of other politicians by forming a campaign committee for some future race — whether they intend to run for that seat or not.

State Sen. Anthony Cannella has a 2018 account for lieutenant governor. Fellow state Sen. Tom Berryhill has two 2018 accounts — one for lieutenant governor and another for state Board of Equalization. He can't do both. A few Sacramento politicians have even opened accounts for 2020.

What do Perea, Cannella and Berryhill have in common — besides representing districts that cover the central San Joaquin Valley? They're all facing term limits. Perea's is at the end of next year and Berryhill and Cannella face a similar end of the road in 2018.

By opening new accounts, the three can take the campaign money in their current warchests, which are already stale because they're all in their final terms, and “park” the cash for the future. But there is no requirement that when they open an account for a certain office, that they run for that office.

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Allan Hoffenblum, longtime Republican strategist and author of the California Target Book

“It's very common,” said Allan Hoffenblum, a longtime Republican strategist and author of the California Target Book, which tracks the state's elections. “You can't park your money unless you have a viable committee for a future election.”

Perea is being coy about his future plans, but he's got nearly \$1 million in his Assembly account. That's a lot of cash. He can transfer that money to the Insurance Commissioner account if he wants and then run for that office. He could also create a new account in the future, say for some office in 2020 or later, and move the money to that new account. He could keep doing this indefinitely.

Rep. Jeff Denham, a Turlock Republican who used to serve in the state Senate, opened and then closed lieutenant governor accounts for 2010 and 2014. He currently has a lieutenant governor account for 2018.

Denham looks like he's settled in Congress, but he still has \$145,000 in state money sitting around. He can't use it for his federal congressional campaign, and he obviously hasn't decided what to do with it. So he keeps forming campaign committees for future races, even though he has no intention of running.

There are options. Denham — or Perea, Cannella or Berryhill — could donate their money to charities or causes, or to other candidates. Denham appears to still be considering his options.

On the opposite side of the coin is former Assembly Member Connie Conway.

The Tulare Republican has opened a 2018 state Senate account, and she's made no secret that she intends to run for state Sen. Jean Fuller's seat. Fuller, a Bakersfield Republican, is termed out in 2018.

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