

22 of 31 DOCUMENTS

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## Are political contributions tainted?

**BYLINE:** Ryan Orr, Daily Press, Victorville, Calif.

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Sep. 6--SAN BERNARDINO -- The indictments of Hesperia City Councilman Tad Honeycutt and C. Steven Cox relating to the failed California Charter Academy raises the question of whether or not contributions from their corporation should be returned.

"Historically, if contributions are found to be tainted, they have turned those funds over to charitable contributions," said Assemblyman Anthony Adams, R-Hesperia, who served for a brief period on one of the CCA boards. "I think it's always a good practice."

According to a state audit on the school after it closed, San Bernardino County Assessor Bill Postmus, who served on a CCA board from 1999 through 2000, accepted \$25,450 in political contributions for his county supervisor campaign from Cox and his company, Educational Administrative Services Corp.

"Although I have not read the formal indictments against Steven and Tad, I believe that we need to let justice ultimately prevail here," Postmus said. "If there were to be convictions, I would definitely donate any contributions from CCA or any of its entities to a charity somewhere in the county."

Victorville City Councilwoman JoAnn Almond served on all four CCA boards from their inception until their closure, the audit stated.

Almond accepted a \$250 political contribution from EASC while serving on the CCA boards. She also sold her family business to EASC for \$160,000, the audit stated.

Almond did not return calls Wednesday.

The audit also alleges that former Assemblyman Keith Olberg's office, while he was running for secretary of state, was paid for by the CCA.

A donor to Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign turned himself into California law enforcement Friday after evading a prison sentence or 15 years for grand theft, prompting Clinton to give back \$23 million in direct contributions.

But Norman Hsu failed to appear for a bail hearing Wednesday and a judge issued a new warrant for his arrest.

His usual savings amounts to the Senate campaigns of Barack Obama of Illinois and Joe Biden of Delaware. They have also given the money to charity since the scandal broke.

"Certainly the standard reaction is to return the donations or to give the money to charity," said Doug Johnson, a fellow at the **Rose Institute** for State and Local Government. "The result of that is that it tends to make the questions go away."

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