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Classy Event Raises Funds for Opinion Survey

By *Joe Schneider*

Pollsters have completed a survey designed to help determine whether San Diego voters are ready for a ballot initiative that would allow candidates to run for office without accepting donations from special interests.

A full report and analysis of the poll, which was commissioned by Neighborhoods for Clean Election, will be discussed at a meeting of the Steering Committee on Jan. 10.

Political consultant Larry Remer said the poll was essential for gauging public sentiment on the Clean Elections issue and planning the campaign that lies ahead.

The newly formed organization started from scratch and raised money for the scientific poll at a fundraiser held Nov. 28 at the Mission Hills home of Janed Casady.

After I tallied all the donations and figured out the costs, we netted over \$10,000," said Clean Elections campaign coordinator John Hartley, who added that an anonymous donor also made a significant contribution.

The organization's mission was praised by Lori Saldaña, a current California Assembly member, and Howard Wayne, a former California Assembly member.

Both agreed that special interests have gained too much influence in government and citizens need unfettered public officials who will work for the public's interest.

Tito Zevallos, co-chair of San Diego Alliance for Clean Elections, said the recent scandals at City Hall have amplified citizens' demands for elections reform.

Co-chairs of the event included Michael Shames, executive director, Utility Consumer Action Network (UCAN); Richard Miller, chair, San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club; Ann Hoiberg, president, International Human Rights Day (San Diego); Hugh Boyle, former president, San Diego Teachers Association; Jimmy Carter, San Diego restaurateur; Martin Eder, executive director, Activist San Diego; Bob Fellmeth, Price Professor of Public Interest Law, University of San Diego Law School; John McNab, public land activist, San Diego Coastal Alliance; Tom Mullaney, Friends of San Diego; and Mel Shapiro, City Hall watchdog.

The Clean Elections Initiative is designed to reduce the influence of special interest money in local campaigns by providing public funding for candidates who agree to "Run Clean."

The organization is a coalition of neighborhood groups and leaders from every corner of San Diego — Rancho Bernardo to San Ysidro, from Pacific Beach to Encanto. Membership includes Republicans, Democrats, independents and a wide spectrum of ethnic and age groups.

Under the Clean Elections Initiative a candidate for mayor, city attorney or council may choose to run as a Clean Candidate.

A Clean Candidate must pledge to raise no funds from special interests or anyone else and in return would be eligible for campaign funding from the Clean Elections Fund.

Clean Candidates will be designated as such on the ballot and in the voter pamphlet.

The cost of this program to the people of San Diego will be approximately \$4 per resident per year.

Clean Elections measures are already in force in Arizona, Maine and in several cities across the country.