

May 21, 2019

Board of Directors of the Truckee Tahoe Airport District  
c/o Lauren C. Tapia, H.R. Manager and District Clerk  
10356 Truckee Airport Road  
Truckee, CA 96161

sent via email

Re: April 24,2019 Board meeting, action item 17 (tab 15), Campaign Contribution Disclosures

Dear Directors:

I am concerned that District counsel's Draft Policy Instruction 119 (Further Transparency Regarding Contributions to Board Members and Promoting Harmonious Board Relations) allows Board members to vote on items in which they have a financial interest. Merely disclosing such a conflict does not promote public trust, harmonious Board relations or proper decision making. This type of culture can lead to pay-to-play activities.

Wikipedia describes pay-to-play as follows:

*In politics, pay-to-play refers to a system, akin to payola in the music industry, by which one pays (or must pay) money to become a player.*

*Typically, the payer (an individual, business, or organization) makes campaign contributions to public officials, party officials, or parties themselves, and receives political or pecuniary benefit such as no-bid government contracts, influence over legislation,[6][7] political appointments or nominations,[8] [9] special access[10] or other favors. The contributions, less frequently, may be to nonprofit or institutional entities,[11] or may take the form of some benefit to a third party, such as a family member of a governmental official.*

A simple solution is to require Board members to recuse themselves from participating in a Board decision if a party to that decision has made valuable contributions or gifts to the associated board member, board member's family or campaign. A dollar threshold of \$250, or whatever the Board decides, should be part of any new policy. Many districts in California have a policy that requires board members to recuse themselves in these circumstances.

It is not clear to me what wholesome, District purpose is served by allowing a Board member to vote on an item in which he/she has a personal financial interest. I urge the Board to adopt a policy that requires recusal in the event a Board member has a personal financial interest in a decision in front of the Board. Such a policy will promote public trust, harmonious relations among Board members and appropriate decision making.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Tim Ryan  
12305 Rainbow Drive  
Truckee, CA 96161