

AD WATCH

Gaines flier wrongly links Pugno to junkets

Assemblywoman Beth Gaines ripped opponent Andy Pugno in a flier as the former leader of a nonprofit group that serves as a conduit for legislative junkets to Hawaii.

Pugno "ran an organization that circumvented nonprofit laws to allow special interests to pay for legislative junkets in Hawaii - all tax deductible," the flier said.

Gaines also characterized Pugno as a trial lawyer whose campaign is funded by trial lawyers, and as someone who "files lawsuits for a living" and thereby is "working against small business."

Gaines, Pugno and Democrat Regy Bronner are running in the right-leaning 6th Assembly District, based in Placer County but stretching into Orangevale, Fair Oaks, Folsom and El Dorado Hills.

Calling herself a "small

HOW TRUE IS IT?

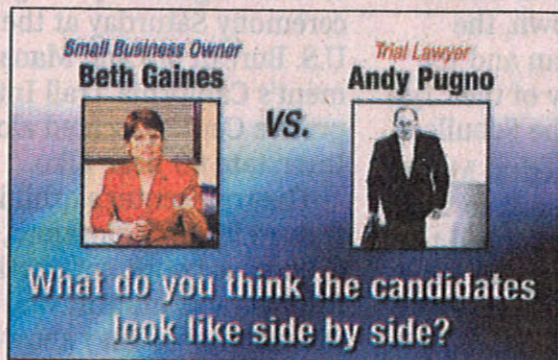
True
Somewhat misleading
Mostly misleading
Outright lie

business owner" and Pugno a "trial lawyer," Gaines' flier said she is the one who shares voters' values.

The following is an analysis by The Bee's Jim Sanders:

The heart of the ad, its lightning rod, is the contention that Pugno served as a conduit for legislative junkets. The claim is not true.

Pugno's Folsom law firm has the same address and suite number as the Pacific Policy Research Foundation, which is led by a former lawmaker and solicits money from interest groups to hold an annual public policy conference in Hawaii for legisla-



tors. But there is a simple explanation for the identical addresses.

Tom Tenge, executive vice president of Business Central, which manages the large office building on Parkshore Drive in Folsom, said dozens of its tenants list Suite 100 as their address because mail is centrally sorted there. A Google search turns up numerous firms with that suite number.

Former Assemblyman Tom Bordonaro Jr., who has led the Pacific Policy Research Foundation since its

inception in 2005, said that Pugno never has been associated with the group in any way.

The ad is correct that Gaines is a "small business owner" and she lists that as her ballot designation, rather than legislator. Gaines and her husband, state Sen. Ted Gaines, launched a small Placer County insurance firm months ago. Pugno's ballot title also is "small business owner," referring to his three-person law firm.

Pugno was the author and

Beth Gaines' flier mistakenly says 6th Assembly District rival Andy Pugno ran a nonprofit that facilitated legislative junkets to Hawaii.

chief counsel for Proposition 8, a voter-approved ban on gay marriage. He was part of a legal team that defended it in federal court.

Pugno's law firm advertises that it provides representation in areas ranging from wills to probate to "trust and estate litigation." But Pugno said he never personally has tried a case or filed suit against a business.

The ad is incorrect that trial lawyers are funding Pugno's campaign. He has received donations from many others, including attorneys, but by far his largest donor is himself: He loaned his campaign about \$90,000 of the roughly \$280,000 it had collected this year through May 19.

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