

Tale of two counties' doesn't have a neat plot line

Sunday, June 6, 2010

The Washington Post

The editorial described unions' campaign contributions as a corrupting, make-or-break influence on spending decisions -- money that no council or school board member should accept. Public employee unions donated about \$12,000 to my last campaign, and some of my council colleagues probably received more. But if The Post thinks \$12,000 buys untoward influence and a blind eye to wasteful spending, why was the editorial silent about a far bigger source of money -- developers' contributions? Developers give hundreds of thousands of dollars to candidates; for some, that one industry accounts for half or more of contributions.

The editorial reiterated past Post criticism of candidates who are endorsed by the [Montgomery County Education Association](#) and then give money to the MCEA. The money pays for campaign mailings and nothing else -- and again The Post seems to have another set of standards for developers. In 2002, a political action committee created and funded by developers -- and named Citizens for Quality Living to make it seem like a grass-roots effort -- used the tactic to great effect by requiring contributions from its favored candidates, the "End Gridlock" slate, to pay for mailings.

I've displeased the unions more than once, but I like to think that having a working relationship with labor is a good thing -- just as I've developed a working relationship with the development community. We all have to live and work here, and I put a premium on being able to keep doors open.

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