

Candidate's cash draws interest

Montgomery County panel to investigate source of \$10,000

By Robert Ruth
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Although state Sen. David Goodman repeatedly has said he didn't heed two consultants' advice that he launder campaign money, a \$10,000 donation late last year is drawing scrutiny.

The money was received by Citizens to Elect David Goodman from the Ohio Republican Party's state candidate fund on Dec. 29. The same day, the state candidate fund received a \$10,000 donation from the Montgomery County Republican Party, according to campaign-finance reports filed with the secretary of state's office.

Goodman, of Bexley; state Sen. Jeff Jacobson, of Vandalia; and Chris McNulty, executive director of the Ohio Republican Party, said the Montgomery County party didn't use the state candidate fund to launder money into Goodman's campaign. Jacobson was chairman of the Montgomery County party at the time of the donations.

The identical contributions on the same day were a coincidence, the Republicans said.

However, Franklin County Commissioner Mary Jo Kilroy, a

Democrat whom Goodman is seeking to unseat this year, said yesterday, "It is extremely suspicious."

She noted that two of Goodman's former campaign consultants, Kyle S. Sisk and Brett T. Buerck, proposed laundering money in strategy memos they wrote last September.

One of the memos to Goodman said, "You need to have access to the Montgomery County Republican Party State Candidate Fund." The memo also suggested he ask Jacobson for substantial donations for his county commission race.

The Dispatch obtained copies of the memos this year.

Dennis A. Lieberman, a member of the Montgomery County Board of Elections, said he expects his agency to inquire about the Dec. 29 contributions. Lieberman also is chairman of the Montgomery County Democratic Party.

His county's elections board is investigating allegations that the county Republican Party illegally spent contributions.

"That sounds like something we'd be interested in," Lieberman said, after being informed by *The Dispatch* of the \$10,000 transfers. "We definitely will take a look at it."

Goodman fired Sisk and Buerck in May after state and federal agencies launched investigations into their fund-raising tactics.

Asked this week about the Dec. 29 transactions, Goodman said he asked Jacobson for financial assistance last year but never discussed laundering Montgomery County money through the state GOP.

"You can't do that because it's completely up to the chairman of the Ohio Republican Party and not Jeff Jacobson," Goodman said, referring to Robert T. Bennett, chairman of the state GOP.

"I have never had a conversation with Chairman Bennett about any of this, about my campaign contributions."

Jacobson said he told Goodman last year that he would support his candidacy for county commissioner, but he warned Goodman he could not donate to his campaign because the Bexley Republican was seeking a local, not a state, office.

However, he pledged to encourage others to donate, Jacobson said.

Asked whether Montgomery County's \$10,000 donation to the Ohio GOP was intended to wind up in Goodman's campaign, Jacobson said, "Whatever happens to the money . . . is up to the chairman (Bennett) and whatever he chooses to do with it."

Asked whether he discussed with Bennett how the \$10,000 should be spent, Jacobson said, "I don't believe I had any discussions with anybody at the



State Sen. David Goodman says a contribution he received was not laundered through the state GOP.

ORP (Ohio Republican Party)."

McNulty said the state GOP routinely receives and spends money. "There are any number of transactions with Montgomery County and other county parties, especially the big ones. That is not unusual."

State Republican officials also routinely talk with the party faithful about how campaign contributions should be spent, he said. "We take recommendations from all kinds of people," McNulty said. "That's perfectly legal."

As for how the \$10,000 from Montgomery County should be spent, "I don't recall any specific conversation about that," he said.

Kilroy remained skeptical. The news media have reported numerous instances of Republicans across the state attempting to hide the sources of campaign donations by laundering them through various committees, she said.

"This is a byproduct of arrogance and one-party rule," she said. "They get away with it because it's difficult to prove intent. But in this case you have the memos from Sisk and Buerck. It's written evidence."

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