Statement from Deirdre Martin's Campaign on the Hatch Act Situation

Deirdre Martin and her campaign are united in our belief that it is unfortunate that Mary Ann Nihart was disqualified from the city council election on the basis of the Hatch Act. Mary Ann Nihart works for the Veteran's Administration and as a Federal Employee is not allowed to run in a partisan race. Local city council races only become partisan when candidates are endorsed by a party.

It has been a long standing tradition in Pacifica for candidates to be endorsed by parties. Mary Ann Nihart herself was endorsed by the Democratic Party when she ran in 2008. At that time she was not a federal employee, so there was no issue. Sue Digre was endorsed by the party in 2012.

With this election cycle, Mary Ann Nihart received many high profile endorsements. Deirdre Martin was also interested in having high profile endorsements, and she sought and received them from the Sierra Club as well as from the San Mateo County Democratic Party.

Mary Ann Nihart has known for years that this was an issue. Recently we learned that in the 2012 election, Mary Ann Nihart asked other candidates to not pursue the Democratic Party endorsement. This time, for reasons unknown to us, she did not do that. Mary Ann Nihart did not contact us and never asked us to not pursue the endorsement, nor were we even remotely aware of any Hatch Act implications related to Mary Ann Nihart's employment.

Deirdre Martin's campaign first heard that there was an issue with the Hatch Act after our mailers, which included the Democratic Party endorsement, were printed and in the mail. At that time Mary Ann Nihart said to Deirdre Martin that this situation had nothing to do with her, and that we should continue to campaign, as this situation should not be our concern.

It is very disappointing that some people have chosen to blame Deirdre Martin for this situation, and that Mary Ann Nihart herself has not chosen to distance herself from those accusations. We have run a civil, collegial, and positive campaign from the outset and will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Kaufman, Deirdre for Council Campaign Manager