

Financial disclosure reports

Cannon challenger stops soliciting cash

David Leavitt gives himself \$141,000 to battle well-financed incumbent

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WASHINGTON - With the state convention less than a month away, congressional challenger David Leavitt has suspended his fundraising efforts.

Instead he has taken out his checkbook.

Leavitt, who is trying to unseat Rep. Chris Cannon, loaned his campaign \$131,000 in the first three months of 2008 and contributed an additional \$10,000, according to campaign disclosure reports filed late Tuesday.

"I just don't have the time to go out and beat the pavement," said Leavitt, a former Juab County attorney. "We are now into a delegate fight."

The convention is May 10 and will pit Leavitt, Cannon and Jason Chaffetz, the former chief of staff to Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr., against one another for the 3rd District nomination.

If one of them gets 60 percent of the delegate votes, he will earn the nomination outright. If not, the top two will go to a primary.

Leavitt's personal loan combined with the \$54,000 he received in contributions, gives him the most available funds for the convention race.

He has about \$94,000 left in his account.

Cannon, a six-term incumbent, raised \$181,000 last quarter, mostly from corporate political action committees.

He has about \$66,000 in available funds after he pays his outstanding expenses.

Chaffetz raised \$25,000 and has \$43,000 left. He has contributed to his own campaign with in-kind donations worth \$3,000, but has not given himself a loan nor gone in the red.

"I'm so proud of the fact that I'm running a debt-free campaign," Chaffetz said. "How you run your campaign is very indicative of how you are going to be in office."

Chaffetz also criticized Cannon for relying so heavily on out-of-state special-interest contributions.

Joe Hunter, Cannon's chief of staff, defended the congressman's fundraising. "Chris has historically never been terribly aggressive about hitting up people in Utah for money," he said. "It is certainly not an indication of a lack of support."

Like Leavitt, Cannon has loaned his campaign money in past years.

"I'm not sure that says anything about how one runs a campaign or how one governs, what it does indicate is Chris' commitment to serving," Hunter said.

Leavitt explains his use of personal funds as a necessity when running against a long-term incumbent.

"Special-interest money will be at his beck and call," he said. "The only way to offset that is really for me to put money in myself."

Leavitt has campaign offices in Provo, West Jordan and Nephi, and he has a staff of 22 people, 15 of whom are college interns.

All of which are part of what he said is a detailed financial plan he has for the convention race and a potential primary fight. If necessary, he is ready to give his campaign more of his own money.

Chaffetz calls that "absurd."

"How sad to think that you have to be able to go into debt to run a campaign," he said.

Leavitt isn't the only challenger in Utah relying heavily on personal wealth. Homebuilder Bill Dew ponied up \$250,000 of his own money last quarter as he seeks the Republican nomination in the 2nd Congressional District, now represented by Democrat Rep. Jim Matheson.

Other than his own money, Dew has received only \$40 in contributions.

Dew said he is using his own money to show the public "that I'm a serious contender against Jim Matheson." He said he would start fundraising if he gains the Republican nomination. He must best former U.S. Rep. Merrill Cook at the convention or in a primary to do so.

Cook raised \$21,000 so far, \$5,000 of which is his own money. Cook has regularly spent tens of thousands of his own money in his many races for public office, for a total of several million.

The Republican challengers have a long way to go to catch up to Matheson, who raised \$218,000 last quarter and has more than \$1 million at his disposal.

In the 1st District race, Rep. Rob Bishop raised only \$7,850 last quarter, while donating almost the same amount to Utah Republican groups.

His Democratic challenger, Morgan Bowen, did not file a disclosure form because he did not raise at least \$5,000.

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Also running, but not raising enough money to meet the disclosure requirements were:

* **1st Congressional District:** Democrat Morgan Bowen, Republican Alan Hansen, Libertarian Joseph Geddes Buchman, and Constitution Party hopeful Kirk D. Pearson.

* **2nd Congressional District:** Republicans Donald Ferguson, Kenneth Gray, Chris Jacobs and Brian Jenkins; Libertarian Mathew Arndt; and Constitution Party hopeful Dennis Ray Emery.

* **3rd Congressional District:** Republicans Stone Fonua and Joe "NPC" Ferguson; Constitution Party candidate Jim Noorlander.

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