
LOS ANGELES CITY ETHICS COMMISSION

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City Ethics Commission Levies \$7,637 Fine for Campaign Finance Violations

At a public meeting today, the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission voted three to one to impose a \$7,637 fine on the Westin Bonaventure Hotel, located in downtown Los Angeles, and Peter Zen for violating City of Los Angeles contribution limits during the 2001 general City election. Zen is a partial owner of the hotel with and president of the FIT Investment Corporation that operates it.

According to the [settlement agreement](#) approved by the Commission, the Bonaventure exceeded the contribution limit when it provided then-mayoral candidate James Hahn a discount valued at \$6,000 for political phone banking services. Hahn volunteers made more than 10,000 phone calls from the hotel in the month leading up to the June 2001 runoff election. The Bonaventure had already made the legal maximum \$1,000 contribution to the Hahn campaign. Additionally, Zen hosted and paid for a campaign fundraiser at the hotel for the Hahn runoff campaign, the cost of which exceeded the \$1,000 limit by \$1,637.

“Discounts on goods and services provided to political campaigns are subject to contribution limits if they exceed discounts available to the general public,” said Deena Ghaly, the Commission’s Director of Enforcement. “Contribution limits help ensure that no one person has undue influence in the City’s election process.”

The levied fine is paid to the City of Los Angeles General Fund. The stipulated settlement approved by the Commission resolves all factual and legal issues without holding an administrative hearing.

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