



Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER

To: Interested Parties
From: Ballot Initiative Strategy Center
Date: Tuesday, September, 23, 2008
Re: Ward Connerly Fact Sheet

WARD CONNERLY FACT SHEET

Ward Connerly, a long time California lobbyist and right-wing activist, targeted five states- Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma- with his divisive and misleadingly named “civil rights” initiative. The effort is in reality an attempt to roll back and outlaw equal opportunity programs that have helped ensure everyone gets a fair shake.

As the Omaha World Herald pointed out in an editorial, Connerly’s initiative “Doesn’t eliminate discrimination, it enables discrimination.” (*Omaha World Herald editorial, ‘Kill this Petition,’ June 5, 2008*)

Profiteer

Connerly pays himself more than seven million dollars out of non-profit slush funds

Based on available information from the 990 forms filed by Connerly with the IRS, between 1997 and 2006, Connerly has lined his own pockets with over \$7.6 million from his two tax exempt, non-profit organizations; American Civil Rights Institute (ACRI), 501(c) 3, and American Civil Rights Coalition (ACRC), 501(c) 4.

This includes over \$500,000 in salary from 2004 to mid-2006 and \$2.2 million in payments that Connerly paid himself just for “speaking fees and interviews.”

Timeline

1996	Connerly leads effort to ban equal opportunity programs in California
1997-1998	Connerly pays himself \$230,000
1998	Connerly leads effort to ban equal opportunity programs in Washington
1998-1999	Connerly pays himself \$216,000
1999-2000	Connerly pays himself \$390,000
2000-2001	Connerly pays himself \$1,014,000
2001-2002	Connerly pays himself \$910,000
2002-2003	Connerly pays himself \$1,138,000
2003-2004	Connerly pays himself \$1,047,000
2004-2005	Connerly pays himself \$1,174,000 (\$217,000 salary plus \$957,000 for speaking fees, expenses & advisory)
2005-2006	Connerly pays himself \$1,574,000 (\$300,000 salary plus \$1,274,000 for speaking fees, expenses and interviews)
2006	Connerly leads effort to ban equal opportunity programs in Michigan
2006-2007	Unknown how much Connerly has paid himself [990s not released yet]
2007-present	Unknown how much Connerly has paid himself [990s not released yet]
2007-present	Connerly spends over \$2.8 million on five campaigns to re-write state constitutions and outlaw equal opportunity programs.

[Salary figures compiled by Rep. Conyers from available IRS forms 990]

Connerly's excessive compensation levels from his tax-exempt, non-profit organizations have raised questions in Congress about their propriety.

“When he’s asked if reports that he makes as much as \$400,000 per year are accurate, he flashes a quick smile and says ambiguously, “I hope it’s more than that.” As it turns out, it’s much more. In 2003, he earned more than \$1 million in compensation—the same year he was fined \$95,000 by the California Fair Political Practices Commission for not disclosing who funded a proposed California ballot initiative.” -Connerly interview with [Good Magazine](#), August 2008.

Even conservatives are on to Connerly's profiteering. The most recent issue of [The American Conservative](#) revealed:

In 1998, 22 percent of his nonprofits' revenue was paid to Connerly in salary or to his firm. By 2001, Connerly's salary and the fees charged by Connerly and Associates ate up 49 percent of the nonprofits' combined revenue. Most of the money paid to the firm was listed on tax forms as "speaking fees." In 2006, when Connerly took up a concrete goal in political activism—ending Michigan's affirmative-action policies—the cut of nonprofit revenue paid to him and his firm rose to 66 percent of total receipts, nearly \$1.6 million.

As *The American Conservative* writes, “An IRS spokesman said that he could not comment on a case under investigation.”

Hypocrite

Connerly used his race to land no bid contracts worth over a million dollars

From 1989 to 1994 Connerly used his own race to land no bid contracts worth over a million dollars. Connerly repeatedly enlisted as a minority contractor with the California Energy Commission -- securing contracts for his Sacramento lobbying firm without having competitive bidding. By certifying with the commission's special race-based program, Connerly helped guarantee his firm three separate contracts -- one for \$1.1 million in 1989, a second for \$105,227 in 1992, and another for \$35,000 in 1994, according to the records. The contracts were filed under the name of California Building Officials, an association that lists Connerly as its sole agent. (*"Affirmative Action Critic Used His Minority Status: UC Regent Got No-Bid State Contracts,"* [San Francisco Chronicle, May 8, 1995.](#)

Lobbyist

Connerly lies about his role as a lobbyist for contacting special interests

Connerly has become a multi-million front man for contractors who stand to make a lot of money if they can eliminate the competition by outlawing equal opportunity programs that have helped minorities and women get a fair shake.

Connerly is a long time lobbyist for the contracting industry but he continues to deny ever lobbying for contractors in California. In fact [Connerly lies about it on camera](#) in a recent interview on the PBS NOW program.

Connerly got his start as an influence peddler and political operative with the California Builders Council, now the California Building Industry Association. Connerly also provided staff services and “policy analysis” in the 1970s to California Building Officials, an industry group. Connerly & Associates continued to lobby for the group until April 2006, according to California state records.

One of Connerly’s most important supporters has been [Johnny Zamrzla](#), president and chief executive officer of the Western Pacific Roofing Corporation and a former president of the Chicago-based National Roofing Contractors Association.

Zamrzla serves as Connerly’s American Civil Rights Institute (ACRI) board chair. He has also been identified by Connerly as one of “the directors of the American Civil Rights Coalition.”

[Connerly has also lobbied](#) for the Roofing Contractors Association of California (RCAC), of which Zamrzla was a three term president and is a current board member. State records show that Connerly [lobbied](#) for RCAC from at least 1999-2006.

Carpetbagger

Connerly’s out-of-state campaign has been marked by deception and fraud

Ward Connerly’s campaign to re-write constitutions in Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma is an out of state effort based in California. In fact 97% of the contributions to his state-based efforts come from out-of-state. Connerly’s has spent over \$2.8 million on his campaign in the five states but 95% of the expenditures have gone to out-of-state interests, with the majority of his funding going to the Georgia based, [National Ballot Access](#).

PBS’s NOW program exposed Connerly fraudulent initiatives. [Watch one women explain her feelings about being lied to by Connerly’s campaign.](#)

As the Lincoln Journal Star editorialized on Connerly’s effort, “It’s a Trick.” (*Lincoln Star Journal, June 10, 2008*)

Oklahoma: Connerly and his signature gathering firm, National Ballot Access, failed to receive enough citizen support to get his divisive initiative on the ballot. When Connerly turned his signatures the Oklahoma Secretary of State referred a report on Connerly’s petitions to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court [citing numerous problems](#) with the signatures including; circulators who signed the petition multiple times, numerous duplicates, and ninety-two people who gave different versions of the same address.

In an [unprecedented move](#), Connerly requested to have his initiative withdrawn in an acknowledgement that fraud and irregularities plagued the petitions he submitted to the state.

Missouri: Connerly faced charges of using [deceptive tactics](#) and [desperately recruited people from out-of-state](#) to help him gather signatures, including a [racist group from California](#). It has also been reported that that one of [Connerly's paid signature gathers](#) was picked up by police because he was wanted in three states for voter fraud related charges.

At the end of the day, the so-called "Civil Rights Initiative," failed to gain enough valid signatures to make the ballot in Missouri.

Arizona: Connerly turned in enough signatures to qualify for the ballot but he faced yet more charges of fraud and deception by [local groups of citizens](#) organized to oppose the measure.

Connerly spent nearly \$1 million in out-of-state funding to re-write the Arizona constitution. He faced charges by a local coalition of opponents to the measure, including the Arizona Chamber of Commerce that those hired to gather signatures have [misled voters](#) by not informing them that the initiative would eliminate equal opportunity programs.

Connerly refused to list the names of his paid circulators on his Web site and he has failed to conduct criminal background checks on them to prevent those convicted of identity theft, sexual assault or other crimes from gaining the personal information of Arizona voters.

Some of the equal opportunity programs that Connerly's initiative would have outlawed include:

Governor's Commission to Prevent Violence against Women would be eliminated because this program focuses on protecting women.

City of Phoenix Teen Parents Program that helps teen mothers learn skills so they can get off welfare and provide for their children.

Arizona State University Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program that supports university women as they pursue careers in science and engineering.

In addition, the [initiative would have banned](#) an Arizona State University's Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program, in which nearly every East Valley Arizona school district participates. The program recruits seventh-grade Hispanic girls who don't have college graduates in their families. The girls and their mothers participate once a month in a class at ASU where they learn study skills, test preparation and how to write personal statements and apply for financial aid. In the 2006-07 school year, nearly 200 girls from East Valley schools participated.

In the end, Connerly had over 130,000 signatures thrown out by the Secretary of State. The widespread irregularities found by state and local officials in the signatures Connerly turned in forced his initiative to be [stripped from the ballot](#).

On top of the signatures that were thrown out, an additional [100,000 fraudulent or suspicious signatures](#) turned in by Connerly to Arizona's secretary of state are the subject of a lawsuit.

Colorado: The [New York Times detailed](#) the deception being used by Connerly to collect signatures. Connerly's paid staff targeted people at Obama rallies and a Martin Luther King Day parade, telling them that his initiative would "end discrimination" when in fact it will end affirmative action and outlaw equal opportunity programs.

Connerly is now facing a [legal challenge](#) in Colorado where half the signatures he turned in (70,000) are the subject of a lawsuit. Over 56,000 signatures failed to match any registered voter, even using the broadest screen possible to combat any data entry errors. Colorado law requires circulators to be Colorado residents, and swear that they reside at the address given on the petition form; however numerous circulators used old, invalid, or even false addresses, bringing into question nearly 7,000 signatures. The *Associated Press* has reported that "Connerly said about half the signature gatherers hired for his initiative were out-of-state workers who travel across the country working on ballot proposals."

Nebraska: [Connerly has faced charges](#) that petition collectors collected signatures illegally-filling out information for people signing petitions, misleading voters by not reading a required statement, and leaving signature sheets unattended.

On June 6, the *Omaha-World Herald* wrote in an editorial titled, '[Kill This Petition](#)', writing "Certainly the notion of eliminating 'all gender and race discrimination in Nebraska' is quite desirable. But that is not what this effort is about."

The editorial exposed the deceptive tactics Connerly and his paid-petition gatherers have been using across the country and concluded, "Don't buy this garbage. Don't sign the petition."

On June 10, [Lincoln Journal Star](#), wrote in an editorial, "Workers circulating petitions to end affirmative action in Nebraska have dishonored the citizen initiative process by using misleading tactics." The paper also said, "the people collecting the signatures on petitions are using deception to meet their goals."

Connerly's signature gathering firm, National Ballot Access, has a long history of allegedly engaging in initiative fraud in Nebraska.

In 1996, the head of National Ballot Access, Edie Baggett notarized 35,000 signatures that were later called into question for a Nebraska gambling initiative headed up by Let the People Vote Committee. Casino foes alleged that Baggett had never become a Nebraska resident and therefore couldn't notarize the petitions legally. In addition, it was claimed that Baggett's notary stamp was used illegally by several other people to notarize petitions. Officials with Let the People Vote have denied that, saying that Ms. Baggett signed her name several different ways. (*"Casino Opponents Question Signatures" Omaha World-Herald. October 17, 2006.*)

And in 2006, Baggett was hired to circulate the Taxpayer Bill of Rights initiative (TABOR). During TABOR's circulation, the Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale was actually approached by a circulator seeking his signature while walking in downtown Omaha. When pressed, the circulator admitted he was only 15 years old. Gale also stated that he witnessed circulators failing to read the object statement to potential signers, a legal requirement which

ensures that voters know what they're signing. ("*Rush for names leads to petition circulators' shortcuts.*" (Omaha World-Herald, June 26, 2006.)

Connerly's initiative he has faced the same charges of "[illegal petitioning](#)" that he has faced in every other state this year.

A [legal challenge](#) has now been filed against Connerly's campaign in Nebraska. The lawsuit challenges the fraudulent and illegal actions of paid petition circulators and notaries public employed by Connerly. The lawsuit challenges at least 40,228 signatures submitted to the Secretary of State by Connerly because of the pattern of fraud and illegality.

Michigan (2006): The Michigan Civil Rights Commission released a report that presented "[evidence of shameful acts of deception and misrepresentation](#)" by paid agents of Connerly. The report included the testimony of over 500 people on the issue of how signatures were gathered to put the Connerly's Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCRI) on the November 2006 ballot.

A court ruling found that "the MCRI engaged in systematic voter fraud by telling voters that they were signing a petition supporting affirmative action."

The court also wrote, "All Michigan voters, whether supporters or opponents of affirmative action, should be concerned by the actions taken by MCRI in its attempt to place the proposed amendment on the November 2006 ballot. In particular, opponents of affirmative action should be concerned by what the MCRI has done while purporting to act in their name. If the proposal eventually passes, it will be stained by well-documented acts of fraud and deception that the defendants, as a matter of fact, have not credibly denied."

Extremist

Connerly has welcomed support from neo-Nazi groups

Connerly is the right-wing's face of the effort to outlaw equal opportunity programs, but who's behind his effort?

His efforts have the support of the controversial group *United for a Sovereign America*, whose members are affiliated with neo-Nazi groups. In 2006, [Connerly said "God bless" the KKK](#) for their support of his divisive initiative in Michigan.

David Duke has even highlighted Connerly's efforts and success on his [website](#). Connerly's victory in Michigan had the support from John Raterink, the director of a white supremacist group, who is pictured shaking hands with Connerly on Duke's website.

This year in Missouri, Connerly [desperately recruited people from out-of-state](#) to help him gather signatures, including a [racist group from California](#).