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## DeSaulnier Condemns Super PACs at Orinda Town Hall

By Nick Marnell



From left, Mark DeSaulnier jokes with his fall intern Anthony Ray and Supervisor Candace Andersen's Orinda liaison Jill Ray at the Aug. 6 Orinda Town Hall meeting. Photo Provided

negotiations, voting should be based upon whatever is best for the common good.

"Compromise is more reflective of the total population," he said.

One of the questions from the Orinda audience concerned the Citizens United Supreme Court decision. The 2010 ruling said that political advertising is protected under the First Amendment, allowing corporations and unions to spend an unlimited amount of money calling for the election or defeat of individual political candidates, as long as the spending is done independently of the candidate or party. As a result, cash has poured into special political action committees, labeled Super PACs.

"It was a horrible decision," DeSaulnier said, explaining that it is now impossible to identify who is actually paying for much of the political advertising. Though Hillary Clinton said in her acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention that she would press for a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United ruling, DeSaulnier said that there is no such movement in the legislature.

"Congress doesn't want to change it," he said.

According to the Federal Election Commission, DeSaulnier's campaign received more than \$237,000 in contributions from traditional political action committees, which accounted for over 51 percent of his total fundraising through June. Petersen's total campaign contributions barely exceeded \$3,000.

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Add U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier to the list of those bewildered by the vicious personal attacks that have defined the 2016 presidential election campaign.

"It's unlike any election that I have ever seen," he told an audience of around 100 at his Aug. 6 Orinda town hall meeting. DeSaulnier, a Democrat from California's 11th Congressional district, is running for reelection against Republican Roger Petersen in November.

The congressman, whose district includes Lamorinda, chastised the recalcitrant House members who are preventing the passage of a federal budget. "We're stuck. They won't spend any money," he said.

DeSaulnier said that he does not believe in the "all or nothing" approach to government; rather, he favors negotiation and compromise. And after the

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