



Replay



1 of 2



Greg Zempel

2

Madsen, the court's chief justice, wrote the court's majority opinion that said charter schools aren't eligible for public funding because their board members are appointed rather than elected by voters.

State lawmakers passed a [bill this year that aims to keep charter schools open](#), but the statewide teachers union [has promised to challenge the new law in court](#) as well.

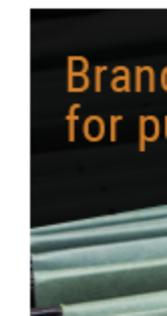
In the past 10 days, Stand for Children's political action committee has spent about \$86,000 on digital ad buys and another \$30,000 on phone calls supporting Zempel, according to the state Public Disclosure Commission, which tracks campaign spending.

The education reform group recently endorsed Zempel over Madsen in part because of its concerns over last year's charter school decision, spokeswoman Deborah Jaquith said.

"We have become concerned that recent decisions by the Court have reflected political beliefs rather than impartial judgment, most notably in their charter school decision," Jaquith wrote in an email.

Yet the pro-charter group's ads, which are appearing online, don't mention the charter school case. One ad promotes Zempel as someone with "common sense," "civility" and "sound reasoning," while another proclaims him "ready to make a difference."

The PAC's expenditures on Zempel's behalf dwarf what either he or Madsen have raised on

Donald Tr
Fresno

campaign fundraising. Tuesday's primary election will decide which two of the candidates will advance to the November general election.

She said she had no comment on the outside spending in her race, except that it's an important part of having a court that is elected rather than appointed.

"We have an elected system, and people are permitted by law to make independent expenditures," she said.

Her phone call to Zempel wasn't immediately returned Thursday.

Zempel is the only Washington candidate who Stand for Children's statewide PAC has spent much money on this year.

The group has spent \$20,000 on ads supporting the re-election of House Majority Leader Adam Smith, D-Covington, but it has yet to invest heavily in other races, outside of the \$5,000 maximum it can contribute directly to candidates' campaigns.

That could soon change, as the PAC has a hefty war chest that it might unleash after next year's primary.

Most of the group's funding this year has come from a single source: Connie Ballmer, a wealthy philanthropist and wife of former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, who donated \$100,000.

The PAC's other two main donors are Reed Hastings, the founder and CEO of Netflix; and Amazon Inc., which is owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen.

Ballmer's company and Ballmer were among the biggest financial supporters of Initiative 1240, a ballot measure voters approved to allow charter schools in Washington.

Earlier this year, about 1,100 students attended the state's eight charter schools, three of which are in Tacoma. Three more charter schools — two in Seattle and one in Walla Walla

Branden Durst's family doesn't trust him. **Neither should you.**

LEARN WHY BEFORE YOU VOTE

Paid for by Voters for Washington Children
Top Five Contributors: WA Charters Action

MORE ELECTIONS 2016

Charter-school backers spending \$116,000 to try to unseat state Supreme Court justice

Older Washington delegate: Don't let seniors' contributions

Republican and Democratic leaders to withhold intelligence briefings from Clinton and Trump

Trump's Reddit 'Ask Me Anything' has no actual answers

Washington state delegates mostly conservative