

Mark Gordon responds

Republican candidate for the U.S. House Mark Gordon has been receiving criticism from around the state for his many donations to Democratic candidates running against Republican incumbents and he responded to one of the first articles about his odd behavior which appeared in the Cheyenne Herald issue of April 15, 2008.

Gordon pointed out to the Herald that the Federal Election Commission had missed one of his contributions to a Republican - a \$1,000 contribution to Mike Enzi, when he first ran for the U.S. Senate in 1996. Mark Gordon also made a \$1,000 contribution to Kathy Karpan, the Democratic candidate in the same election, who was vying for the same seat. To prove his assertion, he sent copies of the Enzi check face and endorsement side.

In Gordon's April 30th letter to the Herald editor, he charges that there were "errors and misrepresentations," then the best he can do is point out that the FEC did not list a contribution he made to Mike Enzi in 1996. I'm pretty thorough but I don't feel I'm responsible to check with every Republican candidate in races Gordon contributed to the Democrat.

In his letter, he had the audacity to write, "I want to find constructive ways to bring the party back to its core principals (sic): smaller government closer to the people it serves, fiscal discipline, being a good neighbor and encouraging responsibility and opportunity in peoples' (sic) personal and business lives."

And he decided the best course back to those core Republican principles was by contributing to the Democratic opponent time after time?

He went on: "If elected, I will work to represent Wyoming's people who care about hunting, fishing, and enjoying the mountains every bit as much as they care about their economic well being and the future of this great state."

Any further questions about why he contributed repeatedly to the Sierra Club?

While many people in Wyoming probably care deeply about hunting, fishing and the mountains, a candidate for public office better care about residents "well being and the future of this great state."

"I firmly believe that the future of our country will be best found when we return to the fundamental Republican principles of belief in the individual, fiscal conservatism, limited government that is closest to the people while maintaining a defense second to none."

That is why, presumably, he gave \$2,000.00 to the John Kerry for President campaign and none to the Republican President, George W. Bush - so he could return to those "fundamental Republican principles." Kerry would have led us right down that path. Come on, Mark.

You gave to John Kerry and a number of Democratic candidates in Wyoming because your core beliefs are closest to those of the Democrats, not Republicans.

Mark Gordon's quest for a return to the fundamental Republican principles would somehow have been best served by the election of Democrats Bob Shuster, Ted Ladd or Gary Trauner to the U.S. House instead of Republican Barbara Cubin?

And Mark Gordon was so determined to fight for the return to fundamental Republican principles that he sent \$2,500.00 to the National Democratic Party in 2004, at the same time he gave John Kerry \$2,000.00 toward defeating President Bush. How would the Democratic Party have waged the war toward "belief in the individual, fiscal conservatism, limited government that is closest to the people while maintaining a defense second to none?" They wouldn't. And didn't.

It is an insult to Wyoming Republicans that this candidate thinks they'll buy his story about contributing to Democrats to make a point with Republicans. His ploy almost worked in the 2006 general election, when his \$1,000.00 to Gary Trauner and nothing to Barbara Cubin may have helped make the race a squeaker.

Does anyone reading this believe that the so-called "lifelong Republican" sent a thousand dollar check to Gary Trauner, then went into the voting booth and pulled the lever for Barbara Cubin? Of course not. He voted for Gary Trauner. And you can be registered as a Republican and vote for a Democrat in the general election without leaving a paper trail.

But county clerks have to maintain voter registration records and the truth will come out. Either way, it makes no sense for a true Republican to have made repeated and substantial campaign contributions to Utah Democrat Wayne Owens first, then Wyoming Democrats Bob Shuster, Mike Sullivan, Kathy Karpan, Ted Ladd and Gary Trauner, as well as John Kerry - each of whom lost to a Republican, only two of whom received contributions from Mark Gordon. They were Craig Thomas and Mike Enzi and they each received contributions in the same race Mark Gordon also gave to their Democratic opponent.

It might be understandable to give to a candidate of the "other" party once or twice in a lifetime. Perhaps a personal friend was the candidate in the other party and you wanted to help an old friend. Or, possibly the candidate from your party made a decision or took a stand with which you could not abide. But, to give so often to so many candidates from the other party, you are of that other party. No ifs, ands or buts about it.

To correct any other omissions, I have sent a letter to Gordon asking him to review contributions he has made and advise me if I, or the FEC, missed any other contributions to Republican candidates. I will post my letter on the Herald website.

Full disclosure: I am campaign manager for the Winney for Congress '08 campaign. Bill Winney is a candidate for the same seat sought by Mark Gordon and they will be on the ballot in the Republican primary on August 19, 2008.

Cheyenne Regional Medical Center billed for services they did not provide, admitted it and tried to collect.

After a teenage boy was run down by a police officer in a borrowed police squad car, the boy's injuries were surprisingly minor. The vehicle used by the police officer was not assigned to him and was a 1999 Ford Crown Victoria. Heavy.

As previous stories here have indicated, the vehicle was traveling at about 30 mph at or just before impact - having turned into a cul-de-sac from a perpendicular street. The boy was struck with the left front corner of the squad car, thrown onto the windshield and he rolled off to the passenger side of the police vehicle. An ambulance was immediately summoned.

The police version of events was that the teenager, who was drunk, attempted to "jump" the oncoming vehicle. An expert for the plaintiffs (the boy's family) in a lawsuit filed in federal district court, would have testified that was unlikely.

Whatever the exact sequence of events, the City and the police officer settled the civil lawsuit against them and paid the plaintiffs a substantial amount of money.

Naturally, in such a settlement, defendants who pay for such a settlement, in this case with public funds, your money, do not admit responsibility or liability.

A dispute continues between the parents of the minor boy and Cheyenne Regional Medical Center (then UMC) over charges for his care in the couple hours he was in the emergency room.

The family had Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance and most of the charges related to the boy's care that night were covered and quickly paid.

CRMC (it was UMC before the name change), has become notorious for the heavy-handed manner in which they pursue collection of amounts they claim are due for medical services. Rather than work with those who have been patients through internal collection efforts, the hospital "factors" or sells the accounts receivable quickly and to foreign, third-party out-of-town firms who take collection actions.

And then the hospital wonders why so many from Cheyenne go to Colorado hospitals, clinics and physicians for care.

It is not only quality of care or level of medical expertise that concern locals, they have heard the stories of brutal collection against people who used to be able to make reasonable arrangements directly with the hospital to pay what are often exorbitant hospital charges.

In this case, the teenager spent less than three hours in the emergency room and was never admitted to the hospital. And, his father steadfastly maintains, was never seen by a "trauma" unit.

The first billing for services was almost \$10,000.00 and didn't include ambulance, radiology or ER doctor charges. The ultimate billing exceeded \$15,000.00. The billing was submitted to BC/BS and they paid the legitimate charges except for the father's deductible. BC/BS deducted a charge of \$5,040.00 for "Trauma Response Level II" services.

CRMC was asked to provide a breakdown of the billing for \$5,040.00 and could not do so. But, after "auditing" the boy's account, they found another \$1,013.53 to add to the bill and did so. Hospital personnel told the boy's father that he was responsible for the "discovered" charges and he soon received a letter in which he was told his account would be sent to collection. The father promptly called CRMC and told them they had not submitted a claim to BC/BS, which they then did and were quickly paid the new \$1,013.53. But, first CRMC threatened outside collection efforts - **BEFORE THEY HAD MADE AN INSURANCE CLAIM OR BEEN DENIED PAYMENT ON SUCH A CLAIM!**

After repeatedly demanding itemization for the Trauma Response unit charges and never provided such, and after being threatened by a Longmont collection agency, the father once again wrote the hospital, now the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center. He contended that no trauma team was present during the two plus hours his son was in ER and that his son's injuries did not rise to the definition of "trauma" anyway - which is "high probability of severe injury." The father reminded the hospital that his son "did not even have a cut big enough to be stitched."

He again asked for a breakdown of the charges. Again, it was not provided. During the period of the dispute, interest charges continued to accrue.

In a letter from UMC to the father's attorney at the time, it was admitted that this "account is not the only one that is in dispute between United Medical Center and Blue Cross." So, while admitting a feud between those two entities, UMC turned over this victim's unprovable charges to collection? Nice touch. Also, the woman writing the letter on UMC letterhead: "I understand that (father) does not feel that he should have to pay for a charge without having a complete breakdown for that charge and ... he needs to get that information from the Trauma Coordinator Terry Dimon." What? The hospital bills charges for nonexistent services, sends the disputed billing to collection, then tells the patient to take it up with a third party?

Also, "We are willing ... to have the courts make the final determination as we have had our charges upheld by those courts in the past." Oh, my God! Now the courts are in cahoots with a hospital that billed for undelivered services? Let's hope not.