Deceased family member of Rep. Peters listed as campaign donor

By Lauryn Schroeder

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The deceased father-in-law of Rep. Scott Peters, D-San Diego, was listed as a campaign contributor for $8,000 in donations given as long as 18 months after his death.

The Peters campaign says the contributions were listed in error, and should have been attributed to another family member.

The father-in-law, La Jolla industrialist Vincent Gorguze, died in October 2013 at 97. According to Federal Election Commission records, he gave these contributions:

- $5,400 to Rep. Patrick Murphy, a Democrat from Florida, in April 2015.
- $2,600 to the re-election campaign of Rep. Loretta Sanchez, a Democrat from Orange County, in December 2013.

The listings in campaign finance records may be nothing more than an unfortunate oddity.
But if anyone intentionally gave money in the name of another person, that could run afoul of FEC prohibitions. Also, no person can give more than $2,700 to a particular candidate’s campaign committee, per election, so the actual donor for each contributions matters.

The same day Vincent Gorguze was listed as giving $2,600 to Sanchez, records show a contribution of $2,400 from his daughter, Lynn Gorguze, who is Peters’ wife. Both contributions were attributed by the Sanchez campaign to her 2014 primary election.

Luis Vizcaino, a senior adviser for the Sanchez campaign, initially told U-T Watchdog that the December 2013 contribution attributed to Vincent Gorguze was in fact from Lynn Gorguze, and an amendment would be filed reflecting the change.

The U-T then pointed out to Vizcaino the already-reported Lynn Gorguze contribution — so attributing the additional amount to her would exceed the limit for the primary campaign. Vizcaino then said the contributions were from Gloria Gorguze, the industrialist’s widow.

The Florida contributions came about 16 months later. According to the Peters campaign, those donations also were mistakenly listed in Vincent’s name — and should have been attributed to his widow.

“Donors can’t control how a campaign receiving a contribution reports that contribution,” Peters spokeswoman MaryAnne Pintar said. “It is incumbent upon that receiving campaign to report contributions correctly. These errors were not on the part of the Peters family.”

Pintar said Lynn Gorguze manages the family trust and writes checks from it with the consent of her mother, 87.

FEC documents show Peters and his immediate family have made nearly 400 political contributions since 2000.

Peters, who is currently seeking re-election, took 58 percent of the votes in Tuesday’s primary and will go on to face Republican challenger Denise Gitsham in November.