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 From the Los Angeles Times

## O.C. supervisor reimburses campaign for 'study' expenses

Chris Norby's personal stay at a hotel was listed as involving research on the homeless. He admits the error.

By Tami Abdollah  
 Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

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Orange County Supervisor Chris Norby acknowledged Friday that he spent campaign funds to pay for a one-week stay at a Fullerton hotel last August because of marital problems, an expense labeled a "study of homeless and motel families" on financial disclosure forms.

"I'm surprised it was on the campaign [account]; it should not have been," Norby said. "And I'm going to reimburse the campaign because I was there for personal stay."

Rumors have abounded about the colorful supervisor of the 4th District for the last several months as his marriage to his third wife, Marsha, came to an end. He spent a few days sleeping in his office, then one well-remarked-upon episode in a park, before checking into the Fullerton A Inn. He paid \$340 for the room at the bed and breakfast, according to his disclosure forms.

"Ever heard of the term the doghouse?" Norby said. "I mean, sometimes people need to reassess and look at things a different way. So that was a resident motel; they charge by the week."

He stayed from Aug. 1 to Aug. 7. On Aug. 6, Norby, whose personal life had already generated a fair amount of gossip, took a rest on a bed of grass in front of the Old Orange County Courthouse in Santa Ana and was roused by deputies. Rumors circulated that he had spent the night in a park because he had no place else to go.

Marsha Norby, who said she never told her husband to leave, expressed surprise Friday at his use of campaign funds for the hotel stay. "For as much as I've been through, he's not one to mismanage funds and do something inappropriate," she said.

About an hour after he talked to The Times, Norby delivered a check to his treasurer, Betty Presley, to reimburse the campaign.

"It was a mistake, but it was hardly a junket to Paris," he said.

"But it was personal, and the campaign should not have been involved in it.

"I take full responsibility for this snafu, and [the campaign] has been reimbursed," Norby said. "People make mistakes and these things happen, and it's been taken care of."

But local government watchdog Shirley Grindle said Norby's misuse of campaign funds showed "incredibly poor judgment."

"He even tried to cover this up by claiming it was studying homeless people," Grindle said. "I mean it's only \$340; he should have never tried this."

Norby said that though the use of the funds was "mostly personal" he had also learned a lot about the homeless and motel families during his "informal study."

Norby has been a supervisor for five years and will finish his term in 2010. Previously, he was on the Fullerton City Council for 18 years.

Of his fellow supervisors, only Janet Nguyen could be reached for comment late Friday.

"This is the first time I've heard of this," she said. "I'm glad that he's decided to return the funds, but that's between him and his campaign treasurer."

This is not the first time Norby has run into trouble for violating campaign laws. In the fall of 2005 he and his campaign's then-treasurer, Michael DiCostanzo, were fined \$10,000 for violating four counts of the government code.

His most recent disclosure forms for the last half of 2007, however, were still missing information. His treasurer, Presley, said the "oversight" would be fixed and an amended disclosure filed.

[tami.abdollah@latimes.com](mailto:tami.abdollah@latimes.com)

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