



'Ramtha' channeler JZ Knight channels \$54,000 into Olympia elections

By JOHN RYAN (/PEOPLE/JOHN-RYAN) • OCT 19, 2016

Controversial "spirit channeler" JZ Knight of Yelm has channeled another \$54,000 into Washington state Politics. Knight claims to channel a 35,000-year-old warrior-spirit named Ramtha and charges believers up to \$5,000 to spend a day with "Ramtha the Enlightened One" at her school in Yelm.

Knight gave \$54,000 last week to a newly founded political committee in the Olympia area called People for Thurston County. The group's only other donor, of \$4,000, is the Thurston-Lewis-Mason Central Labor Council, according to reports filed with the Washington Public Disclosure Commission. So far, People for Thurston County has reported spending \$12,700 on mailers in support of Democratic Thurston County Council candidates Jim Cooper and Kelsey Hulse.

In 2012, Knight was videotaped telling one of her classes at Ramtha's School of Enlightenment that Mexicans are "poison" and making derogatory remarks against gays, Jews and Catholics.

Those remarks led Washington Democrats to renounce a \$70,000 donation from Knight that year and give it to charity.

"That was a while ago, and certainly I don't share those sentiments in any way," People for Thurston County chair Jay Manning said. "I've worked with and across the table from JZ Knight in several situations, and I think her concern for environmental values and appropriate level of land-use planning and critical-area ordinance protections – [we] definitely share values on those issues."

In July, Thurston County Democrats kept a \$50,000 gift from Knight despite calls to renounce it from Latino activists and from Republicans. (That's even though the GOP's presidential nominee, Donald Trump, said last year (<http://www.newsday.com/news/nation/donald-trump-speech-debates-and-campaign-quotes-1.11206532>) of Mexican immigrants, "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists.")

Nina Martinez of the Latino Civic Alliance, which called for Thurston County Democrats to return Knight's money this summer, could not be reached for comment by KUOW's deadline.

Manning, who was chief of staff under former Gov. Chris Gregoire, said his political committee was formed by "a group of people who live here in Thurston County who share concerns about environmental protection, land-use issues, about jobs and transitioning from fossils to clean energy." Manning said Knight is not one of People for Thurston County's founders.

Knight gave what is by far People for Thurston County's largest donation three days after it registered as a political committee with the Public Disclosure Commission.