



This political mailer, distributed by the Kansas Values Institute, has created controversy in the Kansas Republican Party. The above graphic is the back of the mailer which shows names of candidates in Republican primaries alongside that of Kansas Treasurer Ron Estes and Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt. Estes stated he was never contacted and disapproved of the use of his name. The chairman of the KVI, Dan Watkins, was listed as one of Barack Obama's lead advisers in Kansas. The graphic to the left is the front of the mailer. Courtesy graphic

L&T staff report

A group calling itself the Kansas Values Institute has been sending out flyers with Kansas House of Representatives candidates alongside endorsements for Kansas Treasurer Ron Estes and Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt, but according to Schmidt, he never approved the use of his name on the advertisements.

“It has come to my attention that a group calling itself the Kansas Values Institute has used my name in mailers that support one primary opponent over another,” Estes said on a Facebook posting. “I was never contacted by this group about their endorsement, and I disapprove of my name being used, without my knowledge, in political tactics to garner support for one Republican primary opponent over another.”

The Kansas Republican Party National Committeewoman Helen Van Etten took the complaint a step further, accusing the group of leaning to the Democratic Party and attempting to influence the Republican primary.

“As Republicans across the state head to the polls, I believe it is critical they know that members of Obama’s campaign team are spending scores of thousands of dollars to play in our Republican primaries,” Van Etten said.

Dan Watkins is listed as the chair of the Kansas Values Institute, a Topeka-based group, and according to an Oct. 21, 2009, article in the Lawrence Journal-World was the senior adviser for the Obama campaign in Kansas. The Kansas City Star referred to Watkins in a Jan. 14, 2003, article as “the wonder boy of Kansas Democratic politics in the 1970s.”

One of the pieces of literature the Kansas Values Institute has sent out shows the feet of a young girl wearing ruby slippers with the headline, “It just doesn’t feel like Kansas anymore.”

On the back is a list of names who have received endorsements from the Kansas Values Institute.