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## At issue are the issues, not his religion

Sometimes tempests carry implications beyond the immediate teapot. And I seem to have created just such a mini-storm with my letter, which was posted on OC Blog ([www.ocblog.net](http://www.ocblog.net)), about Bill Dalati, a candidate for the Anaheim City Council next month ["Letter on candidate condemned," Local, Oct. 13].

To review: I expressed concerns about Mr. Dalati because:

- 1) He supported an anti-American rally billed on a Council for American Islamic Relations Web site as "Rally Against U.S.-Israeli Terror in Palestine & Lebanon";
- 2) In 2004, he made a campaign contribution to Cynthia McKinney in her race for Congress (the donation was made after McKinney's infamous views were publicized on President Bush's pre-knowledge and alleged involvement in the 9/11 attacks); and
- 3) He argued that dowries given in Muslim marriages should be viewed legally as prenuptial agreements (he was quoted in this newspaper in 2001: "I think it is a prenuptial agreement, and it should be enforced here").

Mr. Dalati is a candidate for an important public office, and so his views and political affiliations and public activities are wholly appropriate for examination and criticism.

Mr. Dalati and his CAIR allies now are denouncing me as a racist and an Islamophobe. This is nothing but a smokescreen to muddle the public debate.

When I was the chairman of the California Republican Party, I encouraged Muslim Americans to join the GOP. I sponsored the first Muslim prayer at the party convention, despite criticism from some Christians.

I support another Arab American for mayor in Orange County because of his political views.

I do not judge candidates based on their religion or race.

**Shawn Steel**  
Newport Beach  
former chairman of the state Republican Party

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