

Contra Costa supes may ban naming relatives

By Lisa Vorderbrueggen Monday, January 24th, 2011 at 6:13 pm in [Contra Costa County](#), [Contra Costa politics 2](#)
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The language of a Contra Costa Board of Supervisors policy barring the appointment of the the supervisors' relatives to boards in which they select the members emerged from a sub-committee today.

[Supervisors John Gioia, of Richmond, and Federal Glover, of Pittsburg, who comprise the Public Protection](#)

<http://www.ibabuzz.com/politics/> Page 8 of 18Political Blotter 1/25/11 9:32 AM

[Committee, approved the wording](#), which will move to the full board next month. Click here to read the proposed policy: [http://ca-contracostacounty.civicplus.com/DocumentView.aspx?](http://ca-contracostacounty.civicplus.com/DocumentView.aspx?DID=5371)

[DID=5371](#)

The policy came out of a controversy last fall when David Piepho, husband to Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho, sought an appointment to a small cemetery board. David said he was interested in cemetery governance but critics said his primary intent was to keep his seat on on the Local Agency Formation Commission. (He had opted not to seek re-election in November to the Discovery Bay Community Services District; a cemetery seat would have allowed him to serve out the remainder of his term as an appointee of the Contra Costa Special Districts Association.)

After much ado, the board allowed David Piepho to apply for the opening but after a tense public hearing, they eventually appointed Vicky Rinehart to the Byron-Brentwood-Knightsen Union Cemetery District.

Embarrassed by the perception of favoritism, Glover and Gioia pursued a policy that would remove even the hint of impropriety: An outright ban on appointments to county boards of anyone related to a supervisor or a business partner of a supervisor.

Keep in mind, these appointments typically involve advisory posts with little or no financial benefits. Nonetheless, the public remains fiercely opposed to even a whiff of nepotism.

The policy undeniably places the Piephos in a difficult position. David was an elected official long before his wife ran for supervisor, and if this policy passes, he cannot seek appointment to any county board while she holds the seat.

And David is free to volunteer for any number of other civic organizations or run again for public office.

Regardless of where you come down on this issue, when the policy comes up for debate the discussion will be most interesting.