

Letters to the Editor
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
Pittsburgh, Pa

March 15, 2004

To The Editor:

Your March 12 editorial, "Follow the money," accuses us of whining after being made the target of lies that assert The Heinz Endowments is helping the presidential campaign of John Kerry. In fact, we are merely attempting to set the record straight. We are doing what any organization in such a situation would do; we are trying to get the truth out. Here is the truth:

Your latest allegation, copied from a New York Post editorial, is that an organization called September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows has received funding from foundations directed by Teresa Heinz Kerry. That is flat-out wrong.

The charge rests on the false assertion that Heinz Endowments' funding of the Tides Center for projects in western Pennsylvania is "fungible." In fact, by contract, every penny of our support to Tides has been explicitly directed to specific projects in our region. It cannot legally be redirected and is the exact opposite of "fungible."

The Tides Center provides management and administrative services for short-term and start-up nonprofit activities. Foundations from all across the country -- many, like Heinz, with strong centrist agendas -- use this service to support a wide array of projects. It is no more accurate to suggest that Heinz supports every one of these projects than it is to suggest that a person who contributes to a specific organization through the United Way supports the agenda of every other United Way beneficiary.

Through Tides we have supported programs to test the career readiness of area high school students, protect Pittsburgh's environment and retain young people in our region -- hardly an extremist agenda. Any reading of the grant material connected to these groups, easily accessible on our web site, in our public filings and in our annual reports, shows that they all are nonprofit, and therefore barred from partisan political activity.

Sincerely,

Maxwell King
President
The Heinz Endowments