

A union president shoved him at a Sacramento fundraiser, lawmaker reports

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A California lawmaker reported to the Legislature earlier this month that he was shoved by a health care union president at a downtown Sacramento restaurant.

The confrontation between Assemblyman Richard Bloom, D-Santa Monica, and Dave Regan, president of SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West, occurred on Aug. 8 at Lucca Restaurant and Bar, where the two were attending separate events for the California Legislative Jewish Caucus and California Forward.

Bloom's office declined to discuss the incident but confirmed that Bloom reported it to the Assembly Rules Committee. Spokesmen for Regan and California Forward denied any physical contact between them.

"If there was a shove, I didn't see it. If there was a shove, it was very minor. Certainly, nobody fell to the floor," said Steve Trossman, director of public affairs for SEIU-UHW, who said he was with Regan that night. "At the time, it didn't seem like a big deal to me. It's gotten blown out of proportion."

"We saw nothing physical beyond the verbal disagreement," said Ed Coghlan, communications director for California Forward, a Sacramento-based think tank that was hosting a dinner for its board members, including Regan.

The Assembly declined to discuss whether it was investigating the altercation. Debra Gravert, chief administrative officer of the rules committee, said she would not comment on a personnel issue.

Trossman blamed Andrew Crutchfield, director of the political advocacy group Govern for California, for provoking Regan. Crutchfield, who did not respond to calls and emails seeking comment, was attending the Jewish Caucus fundraiser with Bloom.

Crutchfield was introduced to Regan, according to Trossman, and "clearly was trying to pick a fight with Dave." He began "gloating" about a [recent Supreme Court decision](#) on union dues, Trossman said, and claiming "that all unions do is lie to their members."

Govern for California is affiliated with former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger adviser David Crane, who has frequently clashed with public employee unions over their pensions.

"This guy is clearly a provocateur. He was clearly proud of himself," Trossman said.

A few people from both parties came over to break up the dispute. Bloom got between Regan and Crutchfield, Sen. Ben Allen said, and that's when Regan pushed him out of the way.

Allen, a Santa Monica Democrat who was also attending the Jewish Caucus fundraiser, said he did not see the shove itself, but he was told about it shortly after by others who did.

"From the short period of time that I witnessed the altercation, Mr. Regan appeared belligerent," Allen said.

Trossman said Regan "maybe had a glass of wine" that night. He was not kicked out of the restaurant, Trossman said, and they stayed for another half-hour after the altercation. Representatives for Lucca declined to comment.

"I really don't think alcohol was a factor in this," Trossman said. "Dave is very passionate about workers, and this guy seemed to be gloating."