

Expecting the Best from the City of Phoenix
By Former Mayor Skip Rimsza

The City of Phoenix has long been the envy of the nation. Back when I served as Mayor, we were named the “Best Run City in the World” and regularly received awards for being financially sound, well managed with a talented and dedicated employee base whose sole mission was to serve its “customers,” – the taxpayers of Phoenix.

Because the taxpayers knew that the City would operate in an open, transparent and fiscally prudent manner with the limited resources, the voters were actively engaged. Together, we could accomplish many great things like building the freeway system, expanding Sky Harbor Airport and the list goes on. Phoenicians came to expect great things of this City – and they deserve nothing short of – “The Best!”

We must always strive to be the best; however, it is also something that is difficult to maintain. And lately, the City of Phoenix is beginning to slip.

When we see actions like cutting services while granting pay raises, it is clear that the system is starting to serve itself. When we see a budget process that completes 15 public hearings without a mention of the pay raises – we can see that something is wrong.

Let me be clear, the City of Phoenix has some of the best employees in the country. Most of them work tirelessly to serve their customers and we should be grateful for their dedicated service. However, the Union Bosses, who feed off their union dues have become out of control because they are out to serve their best interest – not the taxpayers of Phoenix! And the current leadership has not stood up to these Union Bosses, so the City has become out of balance.

We are now facing a watershed election, where the voters decide who City Hall will serve. Will we elect a Mayor who represents the citizens of Phoenix or someone who stands for the union bosses and their own interests? Will we have a government serving its own selfish interests or a government that represents the people?

It is my belief that City Hall must be reminded that it serves the taxpayers – not the other way around. Emergency tax hikes without public input is simply wrong.

Who is really serious about managing the budget? Who will serve the taxpayers and who will serve themselves? Several candidates in this race have a track record serving the Union Bosses.

Mr. Mattox is supported by the largest public employee union in the city and stood with them by voting to support the food tax increase and the pay raises.

Mr. Gullett was a lobbyist for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which is largest public employee union in the country. Nationally, they pushed for the boycott of Arizona – locally, Mr. Gullett tried to get County government to bargain with his union supporters.

Mr. Stanton was an ardent opponent of SB1070 and is supported by several labor and union groups such as United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Union, the AFL-CIO affiliate Maricopa Area Labor Federation who have stood against Arizona and supported boycotting the state.

The voters do have a choice of someone who will stand up for the taxpayers: Peggy Neely. She voted against the food tax increase and last year's budget. Time and again, she has pushed for transparency, not only in the budget process, but throughout city hall.

The Phoenix I want represents the interest of the Citizens of Phoenix, not the union interests.

What kind of Phoenix do you want? One guided by special interests or one driven by a leader who has a track record attracting jobs, serving the citizens and making the hard choices? Peggy Neely is the only candidate with a track record of asking hard questions, supporting fiscal responsibility and bringing people together, which has always been the culture of Phoenix leadership.