

May 6, 2017 Municipal - General and Bond Election City of San Antonio, Texas

CANDIDATE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

&

GENERAL COMMENTS

Candidates and Bond Issue

by Phil Sevilla, President
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TLIPA canvassed and vetted candidates utilizing several means which started after the candidate filing deadline on February 17, 2017. A long form questionnaire (click on Candidates Values Questionnaires TAB on TLIPA's homepage) was sent via email to the candidates who filed with the City Clerk's office (79 candidates). Candidates were called if they did not have a campaign website, Facebook page, email address in their application, or any election material known to TLIPA volunteers.

At least three attempts were made during the course of the election campaigning period until April 10th to contact candidates to request responses. A short form Q & A (Yes or No) form was also developed to assist in getting quick responses from those candidates via phone calls or candidate forum interviews if responses to multiple requests were not received. Candidate interviews were also conducted at a central location over a four day period.

Additional information from candidates' public speeches, responses in candidate forums, voting records, professional background, statements, and articles regarding the candidate available in the public record were analyzed and considered as part of the process of the Texas Leadership Institute for Public Advocacy's board in completing our committee's endorsement list for this election.

Mayoral Election

There are fourteen candidates running for the City Mayor's seat in the May 6, 2017 election. A number of these candidates are familiar from past local races. We reviewed our older files from previous elections but included all candidates in our questionnaire screening process. Seven responded and the Mayor's voter guide is included on the homepage of TLIPA.ORG on key topics considered significant to our committee.

This mayoral election has been a difficult one to assess. The top four candidates, in our opinion, are Mr. Manny Medina, Mr. Ron Nirenberg, Keven Roles, and incumbent Mrs. Ivy Taylor. All these candidates have skills and competencies that would benefit the office of Mayor and the city of San Antonio but shortcomings are also in evidence. We believe Mayor Taylor has not been a strong Mayor in her first term. Her past voting record from 2008 to 2016 has consistently been backing the political party whose platform is radically opposed to our guiding moral principles. We are deeply troubled that she supports the continued funding of Planned Parenthood and a number of ethical questions about

her campaign contributions. She did not display leadership in addressing the serious zoning questions of the new Planned Parenthood facility, the largest abortion center in South Texas. We are concerned about Mr. Medina's background as the county chairman for a political party whose values are in direct conflict with our organization's principles. Medina's voting record from 2008 to 2012 has been consistently behind the political party whose platform is directly opposed to our guiding moral principles. Mr. Nirenberg's voting record and performance as a councilman, we believe, have been deficient. His vision for the city where families can feel safe and secure has excluded the preborn members of our community. Ron enabled and assisted as councilman for District 8 the construction of the mega-abortion Planned Parenthood facility in his district. Considering our religious principles as an organization led by Catholic men and women, we are dismayed that Taylor, Medina, and Nirenberg support public funding of the largest national abortion franchise in the nation, Planned Parenthood. We are also troubled that these candidates do not support the Texas State Senate's efforts to protect women and children's security and privacy in public restrooms (Senate Bill 6, Texas Privacy Act).

While we believe Mr. Keven Roles lacks experience in public office, we found him to be knowledgeable and presented his positions intelligently during public forums on a wide range of issues impacting the city while his values are closely aligned with our organization. We believe his priorities are in line with ours in the areas of public safety, transportation, ethics in city government, reining in misdirected city spending, supporting pro-life programs in the city while respecting the role and obligation of the church in influencing public policy.

We favor **Mr. Keven Roles** for Mayor of San Antonio in the 2017-2018 term.

District Elections - City Council

There are ten city council races in 2017. We had great difficulty in getting responses from the ten candidates running for City Council office in Districts 1 and 2 including the incumbents. We do not support the incumbents Roberto Trevino (D1) or Allan Warrick, II (D2). Our committee does not endorse candidates who do not respond to our repeated attempts for information.

Both have exhibited a lack of support and understanding for life, family, and marriage and line up with the city bureaucracy's penchant for unfettered, wasteful spending and their own narrow, parochial priorities. San Antonio is much more than the downtown and "city core" areas of the metro area. District One should not get a disproportionate lion's share of bond funding. The state's Texas Land Office should take a larger role in the revitalization of the Alamo which is a statewide monument, a prized historical treasure for the whole nation. San Antonio has serious public safety, traffic and other infrastructure-related problems which should be a priority, impacting all the residents of the San Antonio Metro Area beyond downtown. Based on our assessment of the other candidates in these two districts, we could not identify a candidate who closely identifies with our values. We cannot support a strong challenger, Keith Toney (D2), who is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats, a homosexual rights activist organizations.

For District 3, TLIPA endorses **Mr. Nathan Carrizales**. He responded with very detailed, thoughtful intelligent answers to our questionnaire. He is graduating with a degree in communications this year. We believe his contribution to the City Council will exceed the performance the incumbent Rebecca Viagran who sought the endorsement of the Stonewall Democrats. As a Catholic, she has been informed but chooses to ignore the fact that the SDSA organization's position on moral ethics is in

direct contradiction to her faith. She voted without reservation for the special rights granted a class of persons based on "sexual orientation and gender identity" in the city's expanded ordinance vote in 2013. She represented San Antonio at the state capitol speaking out against the Texas Privacy Act. Her candidacy is not worthy of the support of any professed Christian. Viagran is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats.

For District 4, we are endorsing **Mr. Johnny Arrendondo**, who is an active and life-long member of Cornerstone Church, highly recommended by the pastors at that church. His educational and profession background with a BA in Criminal Justice, University of Texas at San Antonio, and over 20 years as a Supervisor and Manager in the retail industry makes him especially qualified for Councilman of District 4. His qualifications and experience far surpass the incumbent's, Rey Saldana, a staunch supporter of homosexual rights and a big spending city bureaucrat. His one accomplishment as a sitting councilman has been his loyal support for his friend and mentor, Julian Castro. Saldana is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats homosexual rights activist organization.

For District 5, the incumbent, Shirley Gonzales, should be retired. She was raised Catholic but her votes provide evidence that her faith does not inform her decisions as councilwoman. She voted for the homosexual rights ordinance in 2013. Gonzales is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats. We believe **Dolores Sotomayor** can improve upon the performance of Ms. Gonzales. She is a pro-life Christian and is informed and concerned about the city's decisions such as the \$850 million bond and \$3.4 billion Vista Ridge water pipeline project. She supports school choice and abortion restrictions. She is against the city passing a Sanctuary City ordinance. She has not sought a Stonewall Democrats endorsement. We need a change in District 5. We believe Ms. Sotomayor will do a fine job. We favor Dolores Sotomayor in this race.

For District 6 we endorse **Mr. Greg Brockhouse**, well known to our committee members. His values stand close to ours. He is experienced and knowledgeable about the workings of this city's government. He played a significant role in successfully shutting down the last attempt to fund a cost prohibitive and disruptive downtown streetcar project. He is pro-life, pro-marriage, and did not seek the endorsement of the SDSA. He supports restrictions on abortion in Texas, opposes a sanctuary city ordinance and supports School Choice. While he does not support the Texas Privacy Act, we believe his opponents running for the open seat in this district who did not respond to our questionnaires will not be open to nor support our values. Mr. Brockhouse will be open to listening to our opinions. His strongest rival, Rick Trevino is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats.

For District 7, we believe **Mr. Cris Medina**, the incumbent will win re-election. While we have had concerns with his voting record in the past, Mr. Medina is a church going Catholic and we believe he will be open to our positions and will be a councilman we can approach. Medina's strongest challenger is Ana Sandoval who is endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats. We favor Mr. Medina in this race.

For Districts 8, 9, and 10, our committee strongly endorses **Ms. Cynthia Brehm** for District 8, **Mr. Patrick Von Dohlen** for District 9, and **Ms. Reinette King** for District 10. These candidates are all professed Christians whose values line up with our Catholic moral principles. These candidates' questionnaire responses all lined up without exception with our values. They are all competent, experienced professionals who will serve their districts and the city well. Stonewall Democrats endorse Pat Stout for District 8, John Courage for District 9, Ezra Johnson for District 10.

City of San Antonio, Texas Bond Election (OneSA)

This general election will include the proposed \$850 million bond program covering 2017-2022 promoted by the current Mayor and City Council members. The municipal bond will cover over 170 projects encompassing city work on streets, sidewalks, bridges, drainage, parks as well as a new category, "affordable housing".

Several key facts about this new city-backed municipal bond (debt backed by the taxpayers of San Antonio) the City Council is asking voters to approve:

- It is the largest bond in the history of San Antonio, close to 50% higher than the last two bonds.
- Downtown and District 1 get a substantially disproportionate portion of the funding while Districts 7, 6, 10, 9, 5, and 4 are allocated a much smaller piece of the "pie".
- Some of the more costly projects included in the Bond program are allocated to large construction projects with questionable benefits for the majority of city residents such as the Broadway Street corridor (\$42M), Hardberger Park animal land bridge (\$13M), UTSA Athletics Complex (\$10M), Public Art (\$8.3M), \$20M for "neighborhood revitalization" to be determined by city staff.
- Each council district is giving up an average of \$21,000,000 to downtown and city core projects.

While the TLIPA committee is supportive of capital expenditures to improve the city's infrastructure, public safety, and quality of life for the people of San Antonio, the lack of transparency and broad public input into the components of the large debt borne by the taxpayers of the city is troubling. While city officials argue that property tax rate increases are not planned to fund the bond, in reality the increasing property values in San Antonio and commensurate higher amount of taxes levied by the city appraisal district in effect raise the annual tax bills of homeowners and businesses. While city revenues climb with increasing tax levies on higher property appraisals (a hidden tax), the bond program should be reduced to account for the city's climbing revenues from the growth and rising property values in San Antonio. The policies and assessment procedures of the Bexar County Appraisal District should be closely scrutinized and reformed. No one in city and council government is looking out for the San Antonio tax payer.

We strongly recommend that voters do not approve any of the six bond propositions which will require the Mayor and (new) City Council members to come up with a better plan to remove wasteful projects, re-allocate funding that is fair and equitable to ALL the districts, and roll back the amount of the bond to historical levels. The current Mayor and city council should be not free to build their legacy and large amount of municipal debt on the backs of taxpayers today and your children and grandchildren.

Vote AGAINST the current six bond propositions. The new Mayor and City Council members need to do a much better job. They will have the opportunity to re-examine the waste and pork in the current bond and place a rational, fair and equitable, and justifiable program on the ballot next November after the appropriate cost/benefit analysis is completed, published, and vetted.

