



Chairman's Letter October 2023

It all comes down to this: Voting.

As Chairman of the Republican Party of Santa Fe County, I am involved with things like requesting district maps and observing voting machine certification, but voting day is when we all get to have our impact on local, state and national priorities. Our voting rules have changed over the years, with good and bad repercussions. Voting day has evolved into voting month.

The [mail-in ballot request portal](#) is now open. Early voting starts October 10th at the county office. October 24th is when neighborhood early voting begins at polling places. Actual voting day is November 7th. With all these options available there is no excuse not to cast a ballot. And there are important local elections at stake.

Santa Fe City Council District 4 voters please vote for Republican Joel Nava. His opponent in this race is Jamie Cassutt, who is responsible for pushing the real estate transfer tax. Even the [New Mexican](#) has a contrary view on these sort of measures.

Santa Fe School Board District 2 voters please vote for Republican [Patricia Vigil-Stockton](#). We need parents' voices represented on the school board now more than ever.

For those in Edgewood please vote for Republicans Sterling Donner for Town Commission District 5, and Lyndsi Donner for Moriarty-Edgewood School Board District 5.

And for those not in these districts, there are several ballot questions that deserve our attention. My hot takes on some upcoming ballot questions:

Real Estate transfer tax on properties over 1 million to fund "affordable housing."

- We already pay property tax, sales tax and income tax. No new taxes!
- These affordable housing programs are subsidized, and price controlled. It is manipulation of the real estate market. Let the free market work.
- Should government really be in the housing development business? Leave it up to private sector developers. Read about the Santa Fe Housing Action Coalition [here](#) and decide for yourself whether or not we should be voting them a permanent funding stream.

Charter Review Commission.

- Sometimes rules and bylaws do need to be changed. However, can we trust this mayor and councilors to put the citizens first, or will they follow their own ~~progressive~~ regressive agenda?
- Do we really need a whole new budget and staff just to propose ballot questions?

Santa Fe Public Schools Tax Levy.

- Again, we are already taxed to support the schools. Are we getting our money's worth in student performance? The district thumbed their nose at reasonable parental notification requests. I, personally, am not inclined to support their funding requests. Furthermore, homeowners will be seeing increasing property tax bills anyway due to reappraisals in this rising market. It is not the time to pile on more taxes on homeowners.

Public School Improvement Tax.

- I didn't have to read very far into this ballot measure to find out this tax will be funding teacher housing and pre-k, among other things. This type of spending is outside the scope of our K-12 public school system, which is struggling to educate and graduate the students as it is. SFPS please focus on your core responsibilities. Do not expand into extraneous areas outside of your purview.

This is just my opinion, so please take a look at all the ballot measures [here](#) and make up your own mind.

Your community needs you to vote!

Robert Witsenhausen

Robert Witsenhausen, Chair