

September 8, 2022

Bill James
Santa Clara County Democratic Party

Dear Mr. James and esteemed committee members;

I am disappointed and disheartened to have received your communication yesterday and the accompanying resolution of the Santa Clara County Democratic Party, removing your endorsement of me.

This action is not only unnecessary it is short sighted and uncalled for. Throughout my 18 years of public service, I have championed the values of the Democratic Party not only in word but in deed.

My entire upbringing and family history has been rooted in the principles of the party. My parents were first generation immigrants to this country and worked hard to provide for their children and their families despite the many challenges they faced and barriers they had to overcome.

With hard work and dedication, they not only overcame the language barrier, assimilated into American life and battled perceptions about their ethnicity and culture to become successful and productive tradesmen and contributing citizens in their own right. Their example laid the foundation for the principles that I uphold today, including a mission to serve the greater good of the community above self, and provide equal opportunity for all.

Alongside this example, their membership in the local labor union provided me with an invaluable first-hand knowledge of the importance of these unions, in protecting workers rights, providing fair and living wages, opportunities for advancement, and workplace safety regulation.

Taking from the example set by my parents and from the experiences they gave me; I have dedicated my career to public service. As such, my efforts have always been focused on protecting and ensuring that the same opportunities that they were given for advancement and inclusion are also provided and extended to the most disenfranchised and marginalized populations. No matter if I was serving on the school board, college board or city council, I have spent my time working to advance social programs that provide equity for all members of my community.

My voting record is one of consistency. If you study my term in office, you will see that no matter what position I held, my record reflects the values, principles and policies that align with those of the Santa Clara County Democratic Party.

On the Gilroy Unified School Board and the San Jose Evergreen College Board, I fought hard for hiring diversity, for better pay, and for programs that would foster and ensure equal opportunity for all regardless of race, gender identity, disability, creed or ethnicity.

On the Gilroy City Council, I have countless examples of voting to promote equity and inclusion. I am a champion of the local small businesses community and tirelessly work to promote and support their success. I have served on numerous committees including the ad

hoc committee for the unhoused, and for our downtown which represents the two lowest census tracts in Santa Clara County. To help address the challenges they face, I have worked alongside my fellow council members, residents and community members from all different backgrounds and political affiliations to find the most effective and creative solutions that would address the needs of the community that I serve.

Good leadership requires sacrifice, and hard work. It means reaching across the aisle to find common ground where naysayers say there is none. It requires collaboration and cooperation for the betterment of the community. The best, most effective, and well loved public servants are those who have taken on this challenge and led bipartisan efforts to enact meaningful change.

Our nation's history is laden with examples of this type of bipartisan leadership. Everything from The Great Compromise of 1787, to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, to the Social Security and Tax Reform in the 80's, to the American Disabilities Act in the 1990's, to the No Child Left Behind, and the Affordable Care Act of 2016 encompass just a few examples of programs that were only able to be accomplished because democrats and republicans worked together.

Following in these footsteps, I believe the goal of elected officials, especially local elected officials, is to work for the betterment of the community, not the betterment of political parties. One local community leader echoed this sentiment when he aptly pointed out that "City council members have the responsibility of bringing people together from both sides to solve issues".

I'm proud to say that over the years, I have been able to build partnerships with community members of every stripe, and organizations of every kind, in order to find solutions, promote the community, and support local businesses.

What I look for is a willingness to put partisanship aside and not take pride in scoring a victory for democrats or republicans. Rather, to take pride in serving those in greatest need like the struggling small business owners, or protecting and improving the quality of life for our residents.

In today's highly polarized society, working together and finding common ground should be a value that is championed, revered, and celebrated, not something that is rebuked. Extremism on both sides of the political spectrum will never solve the problems we face as a nation, nor at the state level, and they certainly will not solve the problems we face here in Gilroy.

If my endorsement is to be removed because of my record of collaboration, of championing the cause of those in greatest need, and of recognizing the values of bipartisanship that this country and the Democratic Party itself was founded upon, then so be it. However, I would respectfully ask that your recommendation be reconsidered and withdrawn instead.

We are stronger together. Let's face the challenges that lie ahead united and continue to partner with one another. You can count on my ongoing dedication to exemplifying the principles of the party through my actions. I'll continue to work with those willing to come together to find the common ground needed to move this community forward.

Sincerely,

Fred M Tovar MEd
Gilroy City Councilmember

