

Jomsky, Mark

From: Wilson, Andy
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2018 3:11 PM
To: Mike Severa
Cc: Jomsky, Mark
Subject: Re: My priority regarding measure J

Mike — I assume you want this included in public record so adding Mark.

Andy Wilson
Councilmember
City of Pasadena
District 7
awilson@cityofpasadena.net

On Nov 19, 2018, at 3:05 PM, Mike Severa <severa@gmail.com> wrote:

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Good afternoon mayor Tornek, council member Wilson.

I am writing today to share my priorities as a 20 year resident of district 7 and a city of Pasadena and public school advocate.

As a long time public policy follower I was heartened to see the virtual landslide in favor of increasing local sales taxes to help ease the pressure on both our city and public school budgets; though as you well know, the circumstances surrounding the latter are significantly more critical.

At the same time, I was disheartened to see the first statements from the city council in the wake of the election perpetuate the historically consistent narrative of public school naysaying. Granted, I know it's impossible to control cherry-picking quotes from local 'media', however, the statements, unless they were misquotes, were actually made. And having been privy to a number of personal follow ups with city leaders, it appears they were mostly accurate.

In order to justify those statements, council members have resorted to relying on ostensibly private feedback—which, apparently, runs orthogonal to that of pasadena voters (Note that most districts voted well in excess of 60% to approve, many over 70% and a few approaching or even exceeding 80%, so the idea that there is measurable call to act in conflict with the spirit of measure J, I believe, is mistaken). Regardless, because the public's feedback seems to be relevant for council member stances, I wanted to make sure you got mine. And that you understand that I stand with 70% of our voters (and I'd bet 90% of our electorate) asking you, on our behalf, to prioritize a sliver of local funding for our public school kids.

This is not a request to act irresponsibly. It is a request to listen to someone other than the traditional power brokers. And to understand that this city (finally!) understands that our state has made it very difficult to fund public education without local support; that a large part of that model has come out of the very policy ideals that are causing some of our city council to resist the voters' voice; that our school board is also elected, and explicitly for a particularly complex kind of expertise; and that our city's own children shouldn't have to be the ones to suffer from the politicking of adults (who mostly could afford these things a hundred times over) just because they aren't from the right class.

It's been an up and down ride. And most recently, I was once again heartened. This time by the council attachment for tonight's meeting suggesting a potential and positive way forward on this issue. While I understand some of you will be uncomfortable with even that model, I do think it's an excellent starting point. And particularly important one because our city council's waffling has now caused the school board to question whether measure J means anything at all. This is your

opportunity to make it clear whether it does. And if it doesn't, continue to leave our public school district and it's numerous supporters to move forward even without the support of the city that is its namesake.

I am confident that we can at least agree on the fact that strong public schools are in the best interest of virtually all of our city, and thus I am confident that you will stand, not to continue sending messages of belittling distrust public education's way, rather with voters to do the right thing by finally choosing to work together on the difficult task of providing for all our children.

'What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy.' - John Dewey

I appreciate your time and attention. Good luck.

Mike Severa
Pasadena, CA

#end