

95% of Residents Ineligible for Oversight Committee

Editor:

□ The May 31 Times included a Page 1 article announcing that City government was taking applications for people wishing to serve on a San Leandro "Citizens Oversight Committee."

□ This committee was mandated by the passage of Measure Z (approved by more than 67% of voters in Nov. 2010 elections) which raised the sales tax in San Leandro by 1/4 percent for the next 7 years in order to..."Protect and maintain local services."

□ The concept seemed very democratic and helpful in creating civic participation. Then I saw the rest of the story.

□

The headline continued, “Committee Members picked on Strict Criteria.” The headline really should have read: “Citizen’s Committee on Sales Tax Oversight to be Turned over to Business and Corporate Interests” or “Almost No Renters, Union Members, Homeowners, Wage Earners or Retirees Need Apply.”

□ Two of the five slots on the committee were specifically reserved for people nominated by the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Merchant’s Association. The other 3 slots were only open to:

□ 1.□ Owners or managers of San Leandro businesses without the stipulation that they live in San Leandro.

□ 2.□ Officers of Homeowner or Neighborhood Associations.

□ 3.□ People who currently serve on a San Leandro City Commission or Board.

□ Under these guidelines more than 95% of San Leandro residents would be automatically ruled

out of even being able to apply.

□ This is not the way a citizen's oversight committee should be organized. I call on Mayor Cassidy and the City Council to extend the deadline for applicants (yesterday); open the nominations for the Measure Z Citizen's Oversight Committee to a much larger pool of qualified residents; and eliminate the special privileges of reserving automatic positions on "citizen" oversight committees for business advocacy groups in San Leandro.

—**Richard Becker**, *San Leandro*

Says DA Plea-Bargains on Weak Chance of Conviction

Editor:

□ In last week's Times, Vernon S. Burton ("*Alleges Easy Treatment for Arrested San Leandro Officer*") was at odds with the way the Alameda County District Attorney's office adjudicated the case against former SLPD officer Jason Fredrikson. The DA's office like any business, etc., deals in numbers.

□ I'm a retired police officer and the DA's office keeps track of cases charged and the percentage of convictions. A plea bargain could happen for a lot of reasons, one of which is the DA knows going in a conviction by jury won't happen on the original charges.

□ A good example of this would be when arresting officers are white and the suspects are black, the charging DA in Oakland knows he won't get an unanimous 12-0 jury verdict in the majority of cases due to the sympathetic vote, so it gets plea bargained down or not charged at all. I've been involved in cases like that and seen/heard of many more. Any retired prosecutor would agree.

□ A prime example would be the Barry Bonds case. One of the charges that would have directly

linked him to steroid use ended up 11-1 for conviction. The one dissenting juror was a black female. As Johnnie Cochran used to say, the “card” was played.

□ So Mr. Burton it is what it is. I rest my case!

—**Bob Oliver**, *San Leandro*

Says Union ‘Misleaders’ Funnel Dues to Democrats

Editor:

□ I just hope that the workers in Wisconsin draw the right lesson from the Democrats' defeat at the polls; somehow, I doubt it for this trend of supporting the Democratic Party has taken hold of the labor movement for too long as it continues in its downfall.

□ Barack Obama didn't show up in Wisconsin because he was reading the arrangement of the tea leaves correctly and he didn't want to be on the losing side so ostensibly so he opportunistically stayed away.

□ Mel Lavine mentions as the reasons for the decline of the labor movement "...advances in technology, globalization and off-shoring..." Somehow, he fails to notice the elephant in the room – the influx of illegal scabs across the southern border who are willing to work for a third, or less, of the prevailing union wages for the benefit of U.S. corporations.

□ Mel Lavine also mentions that "Ronald Reagan did his part in 1981 when he fired the striking air controllers." Again, Levine fails to mention that it was Ronald Reagan who gave an amnesty to illegals, action that encouraged millions of scabs to cross the border with Mexico in order to usurp U.S. workers' jobs. No wonder that Reagan is Obama's "role model."

□ The right lesson for the workers from Wisconsin, and anywhere else, is that the workers cannot defend their rights won in the struggle at the workplace and in the streets by placing their trust in the ballot box and in the union misleaders who funnel their union dues into the coffers of the Democratic Party.

—**Leo T. West**, *San Leandro*

Calls on Community to Support 'Building Futures'

Editor:

□ I was blessed to have parents who taught me about helping one another in times of need. I am grateful to them for instilling that value in us growing up. For the past few years, several neighbors and I have prepared and delivered a monthly dinner to 30 women and children living at the San Leandro Shelter. Building Futures with Women and Children, the nonprofit that runs the shelter, helps people in crisis rebuild their lives.

□ It's a good feeling to support the success and future of these families. The San Leandro Shelter ranks second in the top four of our county's 14 homeless shelters in linking residents to permanent housing. And Building Futures' Housing Resource Center has kept 800 San Leandro, Hayward, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley, and Alameda households from homelessness since it opened in 2009.

□ Building Futures has cut costs to the bone by expanding their internships and shearing overhead expenses. But the sad fact is that without our support, they may be forced to cut services, or even close a shelter.

□ All families, mothers and children matter, and should have the resources they need to thrive. Helping ensure food, shelter and safety is a great investment in our community. Visit www.bfwc.org to make an online gift or mail your donation to 1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577. For general information about Building Futures or becoming a dinner cook, call 510-357-0205, ext. 114. I invite you to join me in keeping these essential services available!

—**Brenda Salgado**, *San Leandro*