

Letter: Reflection on the Harbor Election

November 22, 2024



Reflections on the Harbor Election and the Challenge of informed Leadership in Del Norte County

As I consider the recent harbor election results, a concerning statistic springs to mind. Some time ago during a board of supervisors meeting the Del Norte Unified School District announced that 66% of the local population is functionally illiterate. In my view, this has far-reaching implications for how decisions are made within our county. It means a significant portion of the population may be influenced by others rather than making informed, independent choices. I see this as an issue particularly affecting the Republican base in Del Norte County, where voters are sometimes led by endorsements rather than informed personal convictions.

Prior to the election, I encountered a troubling incident with the local Republican Central Committee. As an active Republican, I expected to receive an endorsement packet or at least an invitation to speak to the committee. Unfortunately, this was disallowed. Instead, the committee selectively invited only three candidates, two of whom had little or no experience attending the harbor meetings or understanding the issues facing the board. Only one candidate, who has been involved and informed, was genuinely qualified. However, despite this lack of experience, all three candidates were elected. These new commissioners, though well-intentioned, face serious medical challenges, which could impact their ability to maintain a quorum for crucial decisions.

Meanwhile, I have been working to protect and bring positive changes to this community over the past year. One of my key efforts was in defending our fishing community against a joint powers authority called Tri-Agency, which sought to implement policies promoting oceanic wind turbines that could have harmed commercial and sport fishing. By taking legal action and filing a Writ of Mandate, I was able to dissolve this agency, thereby safeguarding the fishing industry here.

Additionally, I confronted the Harbor District when it refused to provide requested public documentation, prompting me to file a second Writ of Mandate. Using the Court. I was able to obtain public documents which revealed troubling financial practices, including credit card misuse by the former harbormaster. Further, I submitted a comprehensive 563-page complaint against the harbor district to the grand jury, highlighting significant misappropriations amounting to 75,000.00. Although the grand jury only acted on one part of the complaint, it substantiated that harbor funds had been improperly used to cover personal expenses.

Needless to say, my disappointment at not being elected is profound. Despite these actions and the meaningful changes I've made without holding office, the electorate favored candidates less engaged with these pressing issues. I am left wondering what more could have been achieved if given the official platform to serve. The support I received from political colleagues in Sacramento speaks to my dedication and capability, yet here in Del Norte County, my contributions have gone largely unrecognized.

This outcome suggests that the community may still favor the familiar over those who push for reform and accountability. Regrettably, this tendency to overlook unconventional leaders represents a missed opportunity for the county. As long as people continue to be swayed by a narrow group rather than thoughtful, informed choice, our community's potential remains limited.

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