



PHOENIX LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association of Phoenix Police Officers Since 1975

February 4, 2010

David Cavazos, City Manager
City of Phoenix
200 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85003

David:

Let me start off by thanking you for attending our law enforcement appreciation cookout last month. Your presence was greatly appreciated, especially by the two officers you met that had been shot and seriously injured in the line of duty. They truly are examples of police officers giving up concessions. If you noticed when you came into the PLEA lobby, you most likely saw 36 of our own fallen Phoenix Police Officers who gave the ultimate concession. Many more of our members, day in and day out, risk the same concession to protect us. I attended the funeral of Lt. Eric Shuhandler on Wednesday February 3, 2010. The mayor of Gilbert and an assistant city manager from the town spoke to the large audience of over 1500 police officers, citizens, and dignitaries in attendance. As they spoke of Eric's honorable years of service and his love for his family and friends, what was missing from their comments was clearly apparent. Neither spoke to the police officers present of concessions, most likely because, once again, another police officer in Arizona made the ultimate concession – his life.

The Arizona Republic reported in an editorial on Thursday February 4, 2010 a comment you made; "Cavazos said one union is ready to vote on concessions due to the grocery-tax vote." In a letter sent to PLEA members on January 20, 2010 we notified our police officers of the possibility of concessions. We advised our members in this letter (*and on the PLEA website – www.azplea.com*) that until the City Council had hard numbers on which to make decisions on March 2, it was impossible for us to know what concessions, if any, were viable.

Certainly a food tax approved of by the City Council has a relevant bearing on the issue of concessions. PLEA received short notice (*one day*) of a food tax agenda item that the City Council was considering on Tuesday February 2, 2010. What PLEA shared with the City Council at this meeting reflected what community leader Paul Barnes shared with you and other council members over the past several weeks. Our concern and plan mirrored that of our community partners: a food tax that was aggressive, sufficient, limited, and reasonable with citizen oversight. We did not believe that a 2% food tax over 5 years met this standard for the following reasons:

- The 2% food tax over 5 years generates a **10% tax cost**. A 4% food tax over 2 years generates an **8% tax cost**. The Arizona Republic seems to struggle with basic math ($10 > 8$) by saying in the same article; "He [Spencer] urged the council to double the grocery tax to 4 percent." We believe it's unreasonable to overburden our citizens with excessive taxes. Why pay more than you have to?

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- The 5 year food tax more than doubles the length of time to address the problem that a 2 year food tax does. We have a problem that can be addressed now. Why not solve the problem as quickly as possible?
- The 4% food tax not only addresses the staffing crisis in public safety, it also provides funding to maintain quality of life services by facilitating the success of other departments beyond public safety. The 2% tax is insufficient in maintaining the progressive direction that the City of Phoenix is known for. Why not bring success to the city as a whole instead of to the first labor union that agreed to concessions?

All of the council members on Tuesday shared reasonable concerns and solutions. Mayor Gordon had his belief confirmed that Phoenix Police Officers make less than other officers who in work in the Valley.

It was Councilwoman Williams that struggled with the lack of accountability in the utilization of funding from the last voter approved tax initiative for public safety. This coincided with our request that the food tax be subject to citizen oversight.

It was Councilman Simplot that saw the value in community partnerships and input. This matched PLEA's philosophy of partnering with leaders in the community such as Paul Barnes, Jeff Fine, Greta Rogers, Donna Neill, and Ann Malone.

It was Councilwoman Neely that expressed the importance of community transparency and final budget numbers before addressing a tax initiative. PLEA agrees that any discussion of concessions should be based on budget numbers vetted by the community and council – this would be March 2.

Councilmen Gates and Mattox were clearly concerned about the impact the food tax would have on citizens and their quality of life. We share this concern and were prompted to make sure that if a food tax were implemented, it was sufficient to address the range of City services for all sections of citizens.

Councilmen Johnson and Nowakowski were adamant about the importance of a safe community and the important role that public safety plays in this. Likewise, PLEA thought it was important that any funding from a food tax should match the current percentage (*roughly 70%*) as prioritized by citizens in the budget.

Councilman DiCiccio communicated his commitment to fiscal responsibility. This is why PLEA submitted nearly \$7M in budget cuts to the police department over one year ago.

It was important for us to communicate our position regarding concessions, the food tax, and the importance of cultivating success in our communities and in numerous City departments. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M Spencer', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

MARK SPENCER
PLEA

c: Phil Gordon, Mayor
Thelda Williams, Councilperson District 1
Peggy Neely, Councilperson District 2
Bill Gates, Councilperson District 3
Tom Simplot, Councilperson District 4
Claude Mattox, Councilperson District 5
Sal DiCiccio, Councilperson District 6
Mike Nowakowski, Councilperson District 7
Mike Johnson, Councilperson District 8
Paul Barnes
Jeff Fine
Donna Neill
Greta Rogers
Ann Malone