



**Democrats of Oro Valley** Newsletter July 2020

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We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate. Should things go wrong at any time, the people will set them to rights by the peaceable exercise of their elective rights. *Thomas Jefferson*

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**JULY ZOOM MEETING: Speaker Laura Conover, Candidate for Pima County Attorney**



**VOTE BLUE NO MATTER WHO**



**Laura Conover, Candidate for Pima County Attorney**

**Background:** Laura is a lifelong Tucsonan, attorney, wife and mother, and ardent supporter of the health of all our community's families. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona where she earned both her undergraduate and law degrees.

**Career:** After a 16-year career of criminal justice work, including defense, victim advocacy, and almost 2 years of the management of 400 federal contract attorneys, she has the leadership and management skills the Pima County Attorney's Office needs, so the next generation of prosecutors may keep us safe and sound.

**Personal Statement:** I have become uniquely qualified to steer a large agency through even the toughest of times. We need to deal with the public health crisis of addiction and mental illness properly, through treatment, at a third of the cost, instead of continuing to try to prosecute our way out of the problem. With those freed resources, we could go after the true drug criminals: the higher-level dealers. We also need to build the first financial crimes unit to attack financial fraud and scams head-on. Being engaged in the community, I can say that we are ready for outcome-driven policies and reforms.



**Rex Scott, Candidate for Pima County Board of Supervisors, District One**

Greetings to all DOV members! I have appreciated the chance to participate in each one of your Zoom meetings during the pandemic and look forward to the time when we can all meet as one again. Democrats have demonstrated the proper concern for public health and safety during these extraordinary times. I could not be prouder of our party and the examples we have set!

For now, I want to share some links to pages on our website that will tell you more about me and our campaign for Pima County Supervisor in District One:

- This page describes the 23 years of experience as an appointed or elected leader that I have had which is greater than the combined experience of ALL the other five candidates for this office: <https://scott4supervisor.com/about-rex/>
- Click on this link to read about how I will use my experience to help Pima County to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://scott4supervisor.com/leadership-and-covid-19/>
- Our campaign has been endorsed by many leaders in our community and party. Each one of our endorsers has known me for at least 10 years. Read their statements of support here: <https://scott4supervisor.com/endorsements/>

You can help our campaign by sharing links to these pages on your social media sites, or by emailing the links to your family, friends, and neighbors.

Lastly, please consider donating to our campaign using the link below. There is no doubt the Republicans will spending a lot of money to save this seat that is **PRIMED TO BE FLIPPED!** With your help, we can add this victory to all the others we hope to savor: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/scott-for-supervisor-committee-1>



## Assessing property during COVID by **Dustin Walters, Candidate for County Assessor**

As local, state, national and international economies are declining at record rates, how will managing the property assessment process be affected while making sure to appropriately reflect local real estate activity? It is far too early to conclude the impact of this pandemic, but as a department leader, proper forecasting must be done. Anticipating future budget cuts, the Assessor's office will be working with a reduced staff in an environment of increased and more complex work. The question is, does today's unpredictability mean diminished customer service and reduced accuracy of property valuations? The answer is NO!

Property assessments are performed with annual regularity and the accuracy of the assessment roll is the bedrock foundation of the Pima County Assessor's Office. The Arizona Department of Revenue (oversight entity for all county assessors) has consistently acknowledged the Assessor's exceptional performance in property valuations from its comprehensive audits and sales-ratio studies. Applying advanced technology and automation will allow staff to evaluate market conditions and review complex valuations in a more effective manner. This will lead to more accurately valued properties in a continued effort to improve this process. Fair and equitable property assessments decide our future and as your next Pima County Assessor, no single property owner will be faced with an unfair share of the tax burden.

As a senior appraiser in the office, I have firsthand knowledge of how the office does and sometimes does not work for the taxpayer. We are witnessing an erosion of public confidence in the government's ability to deliver quality public services. In response to this, I am prepared and excited to progressively engage citizens and community members, to implement performance-based budgeting, and to develop modern customer service practices. The opportunities for improvements in these areas are truly boundless!

### **Our Lifeboat**

*by Tom Meconi*

We are all trying to keep our heads above the threatening seas of Covid-19, systemic racism, and Russian bounty hunters. As we cope daily with fresh assaults on our democracy, we must keep our eye on the prize. Change will only come on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and it is not hyperbolic to say that this is the most important vote of our lifetime. Our democracy is at risk of drowning and your ballot, your vote, is our lifeboat. We can build it together but we must not only be vigilant, we must act. The following organizations have any number of ways you can help get out and protect the vote:

- Field Team 6: <https://fieldteam6.org>
- Arizona Wins: [az-wins.org](http://az-wins.org)
- One Arizona: [onearizona.org](http://onearizona.org)
- Arizona Advocacy Network: [azadvocacy.org](http://azadvocacy.org)
- Arizona Ground Game: [azgroundgame.org](http://azgroundgame.org)

In the meantime, keep your head above water by wearing your blue life preserver, your DOV "VOTE" tee shirt. What, you don't have one? Friends and family need one? Just contact Tom at [tmeconi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tmeconi@sbcglobal.net) to order.

We are also looking into blue "VOTE" face masks and have ordered some samples. Updates to follow. Please contact the address above with any questions.

## **VOTER INFORMATION**

### **CANDIDATE SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISONS:**

## US Representative Congressional District 1

### Congressman Tom O'Halleran



#### **1. What do you see as the best strategy for conserving AZ's water supply for future generations?**

Water is the lifeblood of Arizona. I have spent most of my time in public service, as a state legislator, concerned citizen and community leader, and now in the United States House of Representatives, working extensively on Arizona water issues. We need to work to settle important water rights debates on rural and tribal lands across our state and work to identify innovative supplies that will help prop up the desert southwest for decades to come. Last year, I helped pass the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan, a water conservation agreement between seven Colorado River Basin states: Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Nevada, California, and Wyoming. I'm also working diligently to keep new uranium mining away from the Grand Canyon and surrounding areas so that we ensure the Colorado River and nearby aquifers are protected. Last year, I introduced the bipartisan Drought Relief through Innovative Projects (DRIP) Act, legislation to address drought conditions and protect the water supply of the southwest by removing and replacing invasive, non-native salt cedars. I'm in constant communication with stakeholders in the northern, southern, and central parts of the state to hear about the challenges each unique area faces in accessing and preserving their water supply.

#### **2. What can you do as an individual member of Congress to bring more economic development to AZ?**

Now, more than ever, we must ensure that we in Congress are doing all we can to help our communities succeed. Rural America supports urban America: we must ensure that we are properly investing in infrastructure like roads, schools, hospitals, and broadband, so talented professionals have an incentive to live and work in many of the areas of our beautiful district. We must continue to

### Eva Putzova



#### **1. What do you see as the best strategy for conserving AZ's water supply for future generations?**

Considering the abject failure of our political leaders to address the problem of depletion of major groundwater basins and the degradation of five of Arizona's perennial rivers, the best strategy for conserving what's left of Arizona's water for future generations is for voters to elect political leaders with courage to take long overdue action. Our elected leaders must acknowledge that groundwater and surface water are actually connected by finally amending the 1980 Arizona Groundwater Management Act to: 1. Regulate groundwater pumping in the rural parts of the state that are currently not in Active Management Areas where there are no limits in drilling and groundwater pumping. 2. Give county officials a leading role in regulating groundwater in rural areas. 3. Recognize the critical connection between groundwater and surface water even though they seem like separate sources. Without amendments to the Groundwater Management Act, mega corporate farms will continue to pump vast quantities of water, leaving future generations with water resource problems that are hard to fathom

#### **2. What can you do as an individual member of Congress to bring more economic development to AZ?**

To insure sustainable economic development in Arizona and around the nation, along with Representative Raul Grijalva and 99 other members of Congress, I support the Green New Deal and its related investments in underserved rural communities, particularly on tribal lands but also in the struggling mining communities. We need to abandon all fossil fuel development and mineral extraction projects

## Congressman Tom O'Halleran

identify programs like Opportunity Zones, applicable grants, and job-creating programs to support these areas that have so much potential for growth. During this Congress, I introduced the bipartisan Solar Vocational Education and Training for our Service members (VETS) Act, legislation to establish a workforce training program to prepare America's transitioning military personnel for careers in the solar energy industry. I'm pleased to see so many new companies coming to the Phoenix area, and am working with businesses of all sizes to bring more of this kind of development to Arizona's First District as well. Late last year, I helped pass the USMCA, an important, bipartisan agreement to expand and improve trade in North America.

### **3. How can you help to fix the massive damage Trump has done to our country internally and our standing in the world?**

As we all adjust to a new normal, I remain committed to hearing from Arizona families on what they need next. Overwhelmingly, they tell me they don't care who gets the credit, they just want the programs on which they rely to work. There is no doubt our country is caught up in political games and partisan rhetoric, and most of that is coming from the top down. To return to civility and address this pandemic in a calculated, united way, we need to do all we can to turn out the vote this fall and elect sensible Democrats, like Joe Biden and Mark Kelly, up and down the ticket to ensure we are making our country a safe, inclusive place respected on the world stage.

## Eva Putzova

immediately and invest in solar, wind, and other renewable energy development projects. We have to re-envision our transportation system and invest in high speed rail. This would create tens of thousands of new, high paying jobs in Arizona and would serve to replenish the jobs lost to international trade agreements like NAFTA that primarily enriched corporate elites. Underserved rural and tribal areas in Arizona would benefit from clean renewable energy projects after decades of environmentally damaging uranium, coal, and fossil fuel production.

### **3. How can you help to fix the massive damage Trump has done to our country internally and our standing in the world?**

The only way to fix the damage caused by Trump AND his Republican enablers in Congress, is to push for the progressive changes that a majority of people in the country want, like universal healthcare where everybody is in and nobody is out, as in Medicare For All, universal childcare, bold climate action in the form of the Green New Deal, fully publicly funded pre-K through college education, elimination of college debt, real immigration reform, massive investments in infrastructure on tribal lands, an end to money in politics by banning corporate contributions to political campaigns, an end to all wars of choice, and a conversion from wasteful military spending to peacetime civilian investments in renewable energy, education and healthcare. We also need to challenge and end the racist, sexist, xenophobic and homophobic rhetoric coming out of the White House and from many in the Republican Party. We can do this by consistently condemning such rhetoric publicly and presenting a vision of justice, equality, inclusion and peace in every statement we make in the halls of Congress.

## State Senate – LD11

**Joanna Mendoza**



**1. If you were able to introduce a bill on day one what would it be and why?**

Elected officials have a responsibility to be honest and transparent with the people they represent. Unfortunately, the truth is we're a long way away from getting our society and our economy back to normal. Now we have to look at all of the issues in light of the changes that COVID-19 has forced upon us. We need to invest in people-oriented policies and long-term recovery. Our affected workers need to have paid leave and higher unemployment benefits, and we need to strengthen our social safety nets like SNAP and banning evictions. We also need to make sure that we maintain and increase funding for education and child care. In order to get our economy going again, we need to ensure that working parents can actually get back to work. In order to do that, they need childcare. Arizona has long neglected the childcare industry and rural areas suffer the most, with 48% of working parents living in a childcare desert. Other industries have received large bailouts to ensure they survive the pandemic, but childcare has yet to see the major investment needed to stabilize the industry during the crisis and in the reopening and recovery period to come. The first piece of legislation that I would introduce would be funding for early childhood education. Arizona will no longer receive a federal grant allocated for preschool funding, and there is no state funding allocation either. Early childhood education is not only essential to the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, but necessary for our economic recovery. Investing in education now, even during a period of economic hardship, will help working parents get back to work in the short-term and will build a stronger workforce for the future, adding to our economic recovery.

**2. AZ gives mega \$\$\$ away in tax credits. The hit that the state is going to take from the pandemic's effect on the economy is going to compound the budget problems. Where and how do you get the \$\$\$ to fund education, public health, infrastructure?**

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our state has failed to provide adequate funding for public education, healthcare, and other critical resources. The effect of the pandemic on our economy can't be reversed overnight. Tough decisions will need to be made and we will need to ensure that we prioritize funding. But cutting funding to education, healthcare, and other essential programs is not the answer. There are concrete and immediate steps

**Linda Patterson**



**1. If you were able to introduce a bill on day one what would it be and why?**

If there is a place in America to take a stand: it is in public education. It is the underpinning of our cultural and political system. Public education after all is the engine that moves us as a society to a common destiny. It is in public education that the American Dream begins to take shape. 85% of Arizonans polled last year by the Morrison Institute revealed that they support additional funding for public education. I am in total agreement and look forward to being a strong advocate for public education while serving as your next state senator. In fact, one of my first actions in the legislature will be to be known as the 'Public Education Senator.' As a former public school teacher and principal, I bring new perspectives to the ongoing dialogue regarding public schools in Arizona. I know how to improve schools, student achievement and professional development for teachers. I am acutely aware that student achievement and adequate funding go hand in hand. Unfortunately, the majority party in power has decimated public schools over the past forty years and it is time to reverse that trend. In fact, my opponent has been leading the charge to undermine an institution we Democrat's cherish. We can do better! I will! It is essential that we move Arizona's educational system into the 21st Century! We need to provide teachers with the necessary resources to be effective while teaching their students. I like to think that the greatest success in any life is that moment when a teacher touches a child's heart and sparks curiosity and passion and she/he is never the same. Everything America is or ever hopes for is in our classrooms of today. The dream begins, most of the time, with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you on to the next plateau. America's future is in school today.

**2. AZ gives mega \$\$\$ away in tax credits. The hit that the state is going to take from the pandemic's effect on the economy is going to compound the budget problems. Where and how do you get the \$\$\$ to fund education, public health, infrastructure?**

Throughout my campaign I have expressed deep concern about Arizona's economy and the grim reality of that Corporate Power now holds over everyday residents of our state. I view our state as a microcosm of what is happening in Washington D.C. where the deck is being stacked against us, finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. As we contrast that with unequal distribution of wealth, it is necessary to be concerned, as we are seeing the emergence

## Joanna Mendoza

that we can take to ensure that we have the funding needed to support our communities as we work to recover from the pandemic. For starters, Arizona's tax code is filled with loopholes and tax breaks for corporations and special interest groups. We all pay our fair share in taxes every year, but over 70% of corporations in Arizona are able to reduce their income tax liability to \$50 or less every year. We lose tens of millions of dollars in revenue each year because of exemptions for out-of-state art purchases, private jet timeshares, and horse vitamins. And 4 inch pipes are exempt from sales tax because those are the size that Southwest Gas uses. How can we succeed when each one of us pays more in taxes every year than billion dollar corporations? By reforming our tax code and eliminating those special interest tax cuts, we can invest that money into public education, infrastructure, and other programs that benefit ALL Arizonans - not just the special few. We need legislation that will put an oversight committee in place to identify tax exemptions that don't make sense and reform our tax code. For too long we have focused on giving tax cuts to corporations under the promise of trickledown economics. But we know that system never really works. It continues to pick winners and losers. We need a system that uplifts everyone and in which everyone pays their fair share

### **3. If Democrats succeed in gaining control of the Senate should they move forward on their own or make an attempt at bipartisanship?**

We cannot continue to operate with an "us versus them" mentality. The division in our state and in our country is harmful. We must take control of both houses of the State Legislature, but we cannot turn around and treat Republicans the same way they've treated us. An eye for an eye approach doesn't get us anywhere. I will always live my Democratic values and work to improve the lives of the people of Arizona: fighting for public education, accessible and affordable healthcare, protecting our natural resources, and equality for all Arizonans. I will never compromise those values. There are many in the current GOP majority who I will never see eye to eye with on any issue. But I believe that we can find common ground and shared values with others across the aisle. The ultimate goal is improving the lives of the people who were present. We need to make sure that is always our focus and find a way back to developing bipartisan solutions rather than fighting over Party lines.

## Linda Patterson

of the haves and have-nots as we have never seen before. Within this dilemma we must recognize that government was created to pool resources to provide goods and services to its citizenry. The people residing in our state have needs that must be guaranteed by the state. Public education, public health, infrastructure, climate change are notable issues recognized by the majority of us. Accordingly, I strongly believe it is time to review and revise our tax codes for the following reasons:

1. Do you know that the largest corporations in Arizona paid less than \$50.00 in income taxes last year?
2. And do you know that box stores that open their doors in our state are provided tax breaks that are supposed to be limited for 3-5 years but that the state legislative committee charged ensuring they expire has not met to do so for years! Year after year these businesses have been given a free ride. Enough is enough!
3. What that means to you and me is that while they received a free pass on taxes, our property taxes, sales taxes, income taxes, gas taxes increase year after year! Time for a change. It is past time to update the tax codes in Arizona to a fairer system where everyday Arizonans are not left to pay an ever increasing tax burden while corporate Arizona gets a free pass. I will forward the effort to do so when elected in November. We can do better, and I will!

### **3. If Democrats succeed in gaining control of the Senate should they move forward on their own or make an attempt at bipartisanship?**

Bipartisan politics leads to a more functional government that address the issues of the people. From my public policy experience I know that better solutions to issues are almost always the result of a process in which those of diverse perspectives are willing to come together to seek solutions to problems. As a Moderate Democrat I can ensure a willingness to reach across the aisle in the state legislature in order to forward the business of everyday Arizonans. Our state legislature has become increasingly polarized to the point where bills written by Democrats are disregarded and never reach it to an assigned committee for further consideration. Proposed laws die and we all lose. This is not how democracy was created and I will do all in my power to work for responsible, bipartisan solutions. It is only right to do so in order to represent Arizonans. I promise that I will be a part of the solution in representing you in the state senate. I know that my highest honor will come from representing you. My 30+ years of experience in public policy make me uniquely qualified to be the best state senator possible. I was highly regarded for changing systems that were dysfunctional and not working for others. I will do the same for you as your state senator. Thank you for your support.

# Pima County Board of Supervisors, District 1

**Brian Radford**



**Rex Scott**



**1. What is the number one project or problem in the county that you want to work on?**

As I talk to voters, the pressing issue is a need for better street repair and road maintenance. As the next Board Supervisor for District 1, I will place an emphasis on critical infrastructure to include road and bridge repairs. The county recently adopted a 10 year road repair plan, however, it appears some neighborhoods have not seen road repairs in the past 20 years or better! We can do better, and we will.

**2. The pandemic will cause public revenues to take a huge hit. How will you approach the inevitable reallocation process?**

The drop in revenue will be a challenge to re-prioritize the county budget and look for cost savings and/or re-allocation of funds to the most critical needs. Revenue levels may be able to be supplemented by any state or federal aid available to the county. We must be resourceful and restrained with our tax dollars until funding levels are re-established to pre-pandemic levels.

**3. Do you support reauthorization of the regional Transportation Authority (RTA)? Why or why not?**

Yes, I whole-heartedly support the Regional Transportation Authority and our vision for clean energy transportation via buses, shuttles and better roadways, highways, and bridges. The RTA is critical to include the community input into future transportation needs as Pima County continues to grow. We must be mindful to create an efficient transportation plan that meets the need of the community while protecting and preserving our natural resources and protect our fragile desert environment

**1. What is the number one project or problem in the county that you want to work on?**

According to pavement condition indices used in a recent survey of all roads in unincorporated Pima County, 70% of those roads are in poor condition. The current Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the PAYGO program in late 2019, which will bring all these roads back up to par within 10 years. Most of the unincorporated roads are in District One, so it is our residents who have the greatest interest in seeing this program successfully completed. As our next county supervisor, I will ensure that the annual reviews of the PAYGO program focus on the most critically needed repairs and that a well-monitored preventive maintenance program is part of the plan so that repaired roads do not fall back into disrepair.

**2. The pandemic will cause public revenues to take a huge hit. How will you approach the inevitable reallocation process?**

If the PAYGO effort is the single most crucial “quality of life” program we will undertake, that’s because it is woven into the primary task for the Board, which is to ensure that all services and supports county residents depend on are provided with the highest levels of customer service and equity. Given the impact the pandemic will have on county revenues (both property tax collections and state-shared monies), it will be essential that public health and safety be prioritized over everything else. I have experience dealing with public sector budgets as a former elected official and school administrator, so I will use that experience to lead in making the tough decisions that will need to be made.

**3. Do you support reauthorization of the regional Transportation Authority (RTA)? Why or why not?**

The current half-cent sales tax that has supported the RTA since 2006 will expire in 2026. Unlike the incumbent and some of the members of her party seeking the District One seat, I backed the state legislation that will allow us to ask voters to either consider renewing the half-cent tax, or authorize a full cent tax. There are discussions going on right now involving the county and other jurisdictions to prepare a package to present to the voters. I am very much inclined to support renewal of the RTA at either the half-cent or full cent tax, dependent on the nature of the package presented. It’s encouraging to hear that maintenance may be part of the new package given our regional needs in that area. The current RTA only addresses construction.

# Pima County Recorder

**Kim Challenger**



**1. One of the responsibilities of the Pima County Recorder is overseeing a staff of 77 FTE. What specific managerial skills do you have for overseeing a staff of this size?**

The managerial responsibilities of leading a staff of 77 FTE requires excellent communication skills, knowledge of the process, honesty, integrity, and the ability to delegate and inspire. Experience is critical in working with and leading others. For the past 20 years, I have successfully led diverse teams of 12 to 150. Skills such as team building, and results-based project development are essential and only gained through experience. I have been part of the Pima County Recorder's Administrative staff for over five years and am currently the Assistant Chief Deputy. I have the strong foundation needed to manage this office. I understand how to run the Recorder's Office and know how to lead the staff through the complicated tasks associated with voter registration, early voting, and document recording. My experience working in the Recorder's Office affords me the ability to see what needs to be done. I know how to motivate the staff and get the best possible results for the citizens of Pima County. I am the experienced leader in this race and know how to inspire others to make my vision of the Recorder's office possible.

**2. What do you see as the number one challenge when you assume office and how will it be addressed?**

The biggest opportunity I will face after assuming the office of Pima County Recorder will be creating a smooth transition in leadership. I have worked alongside F. Ann Rodriguez for many years. We share common goals and aspirations for the office, but change is never easy and for many it is scary. I have assembled an experienced transition team and will manage the change smoothly and without disruption to the daily operations of the office. There are many projects that the new Recorder must be ready to tackle on day one. What may feel like challenges to an outsider are well-planned, thought-out projects to me. Part of what has made this office so successful under the leadership of F. Ann Rodriguez is her ability to anticipate change, adapt when needed, and create innovative processes while maintaining the highest level of integrity in the election process. As your next Pima County Recorder, my top priority is to increase voter registration

**Gabriella Cazares-Kelly**



**1. One of the responsibilities of the Pima County Recorder is overseeing a staff of 77 FTE. What specific managerial skills do you have for overseeing a staff of this size?**

I have a Master's degree in Educational Leadership through Northern Arizona University, which I completed with distinction. The Educational Leadership program was designed specifically to prepare a leader on how to both build a consensus within an institution and also independently make difficult decisions when necessary. I have managed other people, although it has been without the benefit of the title or salary. During my time at Tohono O'odham Community College I regularly managed others and gave significant direction to those in the Student Services Department. I am particularly skilled at deescalating and mitigating conflict and conveying policies and procedures in a definitive way that allows for a sense of purpose and buy-in from fellow stakeholders. I am also a seasoned educator who is not only skilled at classroom management in "high risk" settings, but who is often leaned upon in crisis situations. I am an excellent communicator and can be direct, empathetic or firm, depending on the situation. I care deeply about worker's rights, job safety, privacy and morale. It is important that my staff feel both supported and empowered so they can bring forth issues or ideas for improvement.

**2. What do you see as the number one challenge when you assume office and how will it be addressed?**

When I am sworn in I will be filling the role of a 28-year office holder and it will be an adjustment for everyone who works in this office and those who regularly utilize its services. However, change is necessary and with strong leadership it can be an opportunity for growth. When F. Ann Rodriguez was first elected, she was not yet an employee of the Recorder's office. The previous Recorder, Mike Boyd, was not only unwilling to help her with the transition, he took all the office furniture! I have spoken with Recorder Rodriguez about a mutual interest in a smooth transition. We are both prepared to work together for the benefit of the office and the needs of our constituents. One challenge I foresee will be the inevitable resistance to any changes from within the office and from outside partners. Although any change is understandably difficult, I plan to use my consensus building skills to create buy-in from within our office we move towards more practical, innovative and

**Kim Challenger**

and voter engagement while preserving voter confidence. As the current Assistant Chief Deputy, I know what needs to be done and know how to do it. There is no time for on the job training. The Recorder's Office plays a critical role in the lives of the citizens of Pima County.

**3. The Recorder oversees a budget of \$6.6 million. What experience do you bring to administer a budget of this magnitude?**

I'm very comfortable with the budget process and have managed multimillion-dollar budgets. When I started with the Recorder's Office, I had been managing for-profit budgets ranging from \$5 million to \$17 million. Learning to manage a public sector budget was a new experience for me. The Recorder's Office annual budget will vary year to year from \$3 million to over \$6 million. Presidential, Mid-term Election cycles, Jurisdictional Elections, Special Elections, City of Tucson Elections, recall elections and County-wide bond elections all affect the budget in different ways. There are statutory guidelines that must be followed, Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) need to be created, all the equipment and supplies must be ordered and most importantly, the staffing requirements must be estimated. To fully grasp the Recorder's budget takes a minimum of four years. Anticipating and planning for federal, state, and local changes in laws or unexpected grant fund allocations are key in the forecasting process. Your next Recorder must have a good understanding of the budget process. When unexpected issues arise, like a pandemic, I have the experience to make the appropriate decisions for the staff, the voters, the taxpayers, and all citizens of Pima County.

**Gabriella Cazares-Kelly**

accessible services. No matter who fills this role, the employees of this office will be adjusting to new leadership. A strength that I bring to the table is that I will be questioning policies, procedures and protocols. There will undoubtedly be many opportunities for growth in an office that has served under the same leadership for 28 years.

**3. The Recorder oversees a budget of \$6.6 million. What experience do you bring to administer a budget of this magnitude?**

In my experience I have come to understand that an institution's values and priorities must be reflected in its budget. As an active union member in my school district, I have stopped an unnecessary 1 million dollar budget cut proposed by my district's leadership. My school district has a similar budget and at one time had a surplus of more than 14 million dollars for which there were no immediate or long-term documented plans. I have demanded documentation and public accountability for the use of public funds. I have successfully advocated for permanent pay increases for bus drivers to be paid using federal impact aid dollars, and I have continued to advocate for workplace retention incentives, such as grow your own programs that encourage education and advancement. I have experience working with many restrictive federal grants in a Higher Education setting and understand the need for accountability, documentation and justification. The creative, innovative and practical solutions that I have been discussing throughout my campaign will reduce costs in many areas. Initiatives such as receiving text message receipts when an early ballot is received will allow voters to feel more confident about utilizing the Permanent Early Voting List, thus reducing the need for expensive provisional ballots when voters experience a problem voting at the wrong polling location. Utilizing a text message system also has the ability to convey important messages to voting regarding important deadline dates and voting information. The development of a strong social media presence serves the purpose of both informing voters and community organizations about need to know information, as well as defraying marketing costs.

# Pima County Attorney\*

Laura Conover



**1. How do you approach allocating your time between managing and “lawyering”?**

I am the product of extraordinary mentorship here in this community. The phrase “it takes a village” applies to my earliest days here as a toddler and all the way through to now. I was so blessed by those who made time to teach me right and watch me grow. I made tutoring and mentorship part of my career in its earliest days, even beginning in law school.

I began teaching ethics lectures as early as 2008. By 2010, I was adjunct T.A. at our law school, teaching “Ethics for the Criminal Law Practitioner.” By 2014 I was tasked with designing and training the introductory sections every attorney must go through once they are accepted to practice law in federal court. By 2016, the State Bar of Arizona made me an ethics faculty, and I began statewide training of new attorneys, and for attorneys who needed intervention and disciplinary/remedial training. All of this was in addition to my practice of law, and while it often made for 60 hour weeks, it has always been an honor. Teaching, training, mentoring is very rewarding.

In 2018, this work balance changed dramatically. The Judges in federal court predicted the federal government might shut down, and anticipating that, they gave me a judicial appointment to represent and manage nearly 400 contract attorneys. Indeed the government did shut down, and they went unpaid for a time, but I ensured our Federal attorney’s continued to perform their constitutional obligations, and they were in fact paid for all their labor. Shortly after, measles broke out in Pinal County where federal jails are located. These events, while both tragic and heartbreaking, prepared me to face the many challenges in front of us today. This judicial appointment has been the most rewarding job of my career to date. I love managing attorneys, but I had to take my beautiful private law practice down significantly in hours to do the job right. I am glad I did. With the partnerships I had built in 2016, I was ready to be part of a team of eight federal leaders that moved the busiest federal courthouse in the nation to a completely virtual environment and moved 1800 non-violent migrants out of custody before the virus hit.

It’s always about priorities. My number one priority is building a fairer criminal justice system for the entirety of our population, and I will stop at nothing to get us there.

Jonathan Mosher



**1. How do you approach allocating your time between managing and “lawyering”?**

I have been a lawyer for 25 years and a prosecutor for the last 15 years. Over the past 6 years, I have been promoted to the positions of Felony Trial Supervisor, Chief Trial Counsel, and then Chief Criminal Deputy, each with higher levels of responsibility. Each of these leadership roles has meant spending more time leading and managing other prosecutors and less time prosecuting criminal cases in the courtroom.

Prosecution is a highly specialized type of legal practice. Prosecutors must of course follow all the ethical rules for lawyers, but there is a separate set of demanding ethical rules governing prosecutors specifically, and we have a unique role. We serve the residents of Pima County, but we also represent the State of Arizona, and we swear an oath to defend the Victim’s Bill of Rights of the Arizona’s Constitution. Unlike other lawyers, our job is not to win our cases, but to ensure that justice is done. This is one reason why other legal work does not train or qualify a person to be a prosecutor. For example, after nearly a decade in civil practice, I became a prosecutor in 2005. I then went through a demanding three-month-long training process before I could prosecute my first felony jury trial. And for years, I was mentored by seasoned prosecutors. It is difficult to imagine how a person might be qualified to lead an entire prosecution office without having gone through this training and mentoring process and without any prosecution experience. This is why the term “prosecuting,” better than “lawyering,” describes the highly specialized type of work I have been doing for 15 years.

As for dividing my time in my current role at the County Attorney’s Office, the management function and prosecution function are highly intertwined. For example, deciding whether to issue charges in a cold case homicide is both a management decision and a prosecution decision. I have been highly involved in these management decisions for years. In my position as Chief Criminal Deputy, leading and managing more than 70 prosecutors, it became necessary to substantially reduce my courtroom prosecution work to devote nearly full-time efforts to management and leadership. As a truly collaborative and empowering leader of other prosecutors, working closely with myriad outside agencies and organizations, nearly every task combines managing and “lawyering.” This vision for how prosecution should be done, and this experience, is why I am the right candidate to be Pima County’s next County Attorney.

## Laura Conover

### **2. What case in your past sticks with you the most and why?**

After thousands of cases, working with people from all backgrounds all over our community, defendants and victims, with every charge possible in the Arizona law books, there is one moment in time that I will never forget. Handling some 55 cases at a time at the Pima County Public Defender's Office in 2006, maybe 2007, I was able to, in a period of time, move four young women out of jail and into The Haven, an in-patient treatment facility. Three of them were deeply addicted to meth, one to heroin. The Haven provides treatment and counseling and trauma therapy. Importantly, where appropriate, children visit their mothers there, so family counseling can occur as well. I visited frequently that autumn to review cases, and mark therapy progress. All four of them beat their addiction, became re-employed, and were reunited with their children. The person-to-person experiences will stay with me for a lifetime. This is what the criminal justice system should be about. This is the marked progress we need. We can do this on a macro-level, and we will.

### **3. How can you slow down the school to prison pipeline?**

In 2016, a coalition created by the juvenile court system created a set of guidelines for schools that would increase guidance to handle behavioral concerns 'in-house' or within school policies and within families. The guidelines still exist and were popularly received. However, the Pima County Attorney's Office did not lend support for the final recommended policies and the initiative died. We need a County Attorney's Office dedicated to:

- A. Deflecting children to services and AWAY from jail or the criminal justice system entirely.
- B. Tackling the racial disparity within the juvenile detention facility.
- C. Educating schools preemptively about the limited behavior that should be referred to law enforcement.
- D. For children for whom the system must intervene, keeping them in the specialized juvenile court and NOT transferring them downtown to be handled as an adult.
- E. Working to seal juvenile records so young mistakes don't permanently ruin potential and economic stability for life.

## Jonathan Mosher

### **2. What case in your past sticks with you the most and why?**

The case that sticks with me the most is State v. David Watson. There are two reasons. First, Watson, who was a fire department captain, escaped justice for many years after murdering his ex-wife in 2000 and then murdering his mother-in-law and her best friend in 2003. Nearly 15 years had passed from the first murder until I was asked to look at the case and decide whether we had sufficient evidence to go to trial. Two years later, I obtained guilty verdicts on three counts of murder after a two-month long trial with over 1,000 exhibits. Putting together the pieces of the evidentiary puzzle was a long and arduous process that took extreme dedication, personal sacrifice, and massive teamwork among prosecutors, staff, detectives, and victim advocates. Preparing for trial and then taking the case to trial took the better part of a year, working 15-hour days, seven days a week. Victim family members had waited nearly two decades for justice and accountability. After the guilty verdicts were read, victim family member's expressions of gratitude for our monumental efforts are something I will never forget. Working this hard to provide justice for these long-suffering family members after such a long delay was immensely satisfying.

### **3. How can you slow down the school to prison pipeline?**

The school to prison pipeline has developed as a result of over-criminalization of misbehavior, mental illness, and substance use disorder, much of which results from trauma. We need to implement trauma-informed strategies that provide restorative justice for misbehavior and treatment for mental illness and substance use disorder. I will urge our schools to make referrals to trauma-informed, specially trained intervention specialists.

I have a plan to expand the existing Community Justice Boards, which are a prosecutor-led restorative justice diversion program implemented by a small team working with dozens of volunteer boards throughout our county. The more than 95% of youths who are successful in this program have the criminal charges against them dropped, and they avoid a criminal record. Hundreds of youth every year avoid a criminal record and re-connect with their parents, their teachers, their community, and their healthy peers through this successful, national-award-winning program. My expansion will apply this proven solution in partnership with our schools before juveniles are cited or arrested, before they enter the criminal justice system, without the need for a citation or arrest to receive restorative justice interventions.

Above all, we need a new attitude and a fresh approach for prosecutors. For example, the failed war on drugs is a big part of the school to prison pipeline. Once we recognize that incarceration is not the answer to every problem we face in the criminal justice system, we will be far along the path to stopping the tragic flow of this school to prison pipeline.

**\*Mark Diebolt: Did Not Respond**

# Pima County Assessor

**Suzanne Droubie**



**1. What experience do you bring to managing an organization with 130 FTE and a budget of \$8.5 million?**

My experience sets me apart. I have over 24 years of combined experience as a property tax agent, property appraiser, real estate agent, management and customer service specialist. My management experience was in retail sales environment and customer service center. I was part of a team that managed over 50 employees and was responsible for interviewing, training, evaluating and promoting employees. I was responsible for scheduling and inventory control for my own and eventually over 70 corporate stores through our customer service department. All of this had to be accomplished within specific budgeting parameters. I am the only candidate with substantial relevant experience in related areas both inside and outside the Assessor's office. I am the only candidate with experience in the public sector as a fee appraiser and real estate salesperson. I have over 7 years in the Assessor's Office as a member of the field crew, and as a senior appraiser. I was promoted from the Assessor's office to create the property tax support team in Finance and Risk management to assist with property tax cases alongside the County Attorney's office. I moved into the Private Sector as a property taxpayer advocate/tax agent to better assist the taxpayers of Pima County with all property tax concerns. It takes someone with a varied and objective outlook to bring about real change. I am someone who works directly with the taxpayer, who has already had an inside perspective into the inner workings of the Assessor's Office. I feel I am best equipped to move the office forward; to bring the service back to the public service role and really transform the office into a valuable resource for the community.

**Brian Johnson**



**1. What experience do you bring to managing an organization with 130 FTE and a budget of \$8.5 million?**

That's a very good question for an elected row officer who may or may not have experience in management. Prior to my career with Pima County, I had a long career in Hospitality, specifically in Food and Beverage management in hotels and as a General Manager for Florida's largest catering firm which employed over two hundred people. I also had specific management training with both Sheraton and Hilton hotels.

I was in the Assessor's office for eight and a half years so I understand the workflow. The property tax process is laid out in statute; the dates when events occur are established for all fifteen county assessors in Arizona. Inside the assessor's office processes need to be developed not only for efficiency to meet budgetary guidelines but also to meet the statutory requirements.

Eighty-nine percent of the assessor's budget is for personnel services, for those 130 FTE. The key to successfully manage the staff is to be fully staffed. Currently, the assessor's office has thirty vacant positions. That needs to change. Also education and training are important. Getting the job done well requires knowledge and skill in the assessment process.

**Dustin Walters**



**1. What experience do you bring to managing an organization with 130 FTE and a budget of \$8.5 million?**

The Assessor is a technical position that requires leadership experience and administrative talents. With a broad and diverse background in Sales, Operations and Customer Service management positions from the private sector, I bring a business perspective that uniquely qualifies and sets me apart. I spent the latter part of my private sector career in leadership positions that consisted of regional responsibilities, management of 50+ employees with human resource practices and budget management of \$4+ million. My success as an Operations Manager includes conducting JSA (Job Safety Analysis) and reducing job related injuries and Workman's Comp claims by 70%, implementation of Standard Operating Procedures that generated increased productivity by 55%, and redesigning workplace layouts and product flow-thru which reduced waste by 65% through Lean Manufacturing methodologies. My career in the Assessor's office started at the bottom as a Field Appraiser. Over the years, I have been fortunate to have had several senior level positions where I have evaluated all types of property, assisted residents and business owners in the appeal process, conducted employee training, and participated in process improvement projects. I know firsthand how the office works and sometimes doesn't work for property owners. Experience is good, but it's great when it's relative to the job at hand. I am the only candidate who has a current working knowledge of the assessment process as well as the executive skills to establish and execute policy, manage budgets and foster a healthy, productive and trusting employee base. My career successes are due to the leadership I provide to those around me. There is no better evidence of this than the support of my coworkers. Because they appreciate my collaborative spirit and inspired leadership, I already have their buy-in and will be able to implement changes that benefit EVERYONE in Pima County.

## Suzanne Droubie

### **2. People can get worked up over their assessments and consequent property taxes. How do you calm them?**

No one is ever excited about having to pay property taxes. The mass appraisal system is a difficult process to understand and without having someone willing to sit down with you and listen to your concerns and give you the answers you deserve, it is understandable that people are frustrated. I currently spend every day working directly with the taxpayers to help ease those frustrations and will be better able to do that as Assessor. I have found that if you listen, take the time to hear and understand the issue, and then explain how valuation and taxation works and how it is applied to their property, people regain their confidence in the system.

## Brian Johnson

### **2. People can get worked up over their assessments and consequent property taxes. How do you calm them?**

Transparency and education are the way for taxpayers to understand their valuations and property taxes. I have been promoting a central database for the Assessor, Treasurer and Tax Assembly, the unit in Finance that is responsible for putting it all together. That database could then be tied to Pima Maps, creating a user friendly interface for taxpayers. Taxpayers want consistency and predictability. There are checks built in Arizona's property tax statutes. There's a levy limit, truth-in-taxation and most recently Prop 117 which limited annual increases in taxable value to five percent. Many people don't know that. That's where education comes in. The Assessor is bound by statute to assess your Full Cash Value at market. The Department of Revenue conducts sales ratio studies for compliance and could issue equalization orders. In a hot real estate market values can increase rapidly. That's why the Assessor should educate the taxpayers about the Limited Property Value which is your taxable value.

## Dustin Walters

### **2. People can get worked up over their assessments and consequent property taxes. How do you calm them?**

As your Assessor, I will consistently promote civic engagement to seek service improvements and educate our community. The focus of my campaign from the very beginning has been on educating the public about the role of the Assessor and how this position affects everyone. Frustrations and misunderstandings are caused from poor communication and a lack of knowledge. As your Assessor, I will accept the responsibility to educate property owners and tax payers about the assessment process. This office, under my leadership, will be proactive instead of reactive. I will develop a Community Outreach Team that will travel throughout Pima County during and after business hours, educating and providing resources and information relevant to the assessment process, petitions, exemptions and all other Assessor functions. This Outreach Team will create bilingual videos, brochures and will establish a social media presence that allows for convenient dialogue. As your Assessor, there will be a constant emphasis placed on servicing your needs. I believe all governmental offices should excel in customer service and to do that, I will implement a mandatory Customer Service and Quality Control training program for all employees.

I have been all over Southern Arizona and I've learned that if we want to solve problems, we have to talk to each other and work together. Along with establishing relationships with community leaders, state officials and other county departments that play a role in the valuation and taxation process, I will create an advisory committee with developers, agents, property owners, and others from the real estate community to learn of any issues that could impact property values.

Knowledge is power and as your Assessor, this office will proactively educate and engage the community to ensure transparency and inclusion. This office succeeds when property owners, community leaders, industry professionals and employees work together. As a servant leader, my focus has always been on the growth and well-being of people and the community.

## Suzanne Droubie

## Brian Johnson

## Dustin Walters

### 3. Why do my taxes go up even though my assessed value goes down?

Property taxes are a two-part process and, then to make it more complicated, they are impacted by other factors determined by where the property is located. The following is a simplified explanation in an effort to keep you from falling asleep!

#### Part 1 The Assessment:

- The Full Cash Value (FCV) is the market value of your property as determined each year by the Assessor. This value IS NOT used to determine your property taxes. It sets that cap that your Limited Property Value (LPV) cannot exceed.
- The LPV is the value they use to calculate your taxes and in a normal year, where no changes have occurred, it will increase by 5% until it hits the cap set by the FCV.

#### Part 2 The Tax Rate:

- The tax rate is set every year by the Board of Supervisors and this rate is used to calculate your taxes.

The answer is:

- If your FCV is reduced and the Tax Rate stays the same but your LPV is not the same as the FCV it will increase up to the allowed 5% and your taxes will increase.
- If your FCV is reduced and the LPV is the same and does not increase but the Tax Rate goes up, your taxes will increase.
- If your FCV and LPV and the Tax Rate all stay the same but an additional factor such as a school bond is applied to your area your taxes will go up.

The Assessor's office is responsible for determining the value of your property, but in order to provide you with the best customer service, we will work closely with the other departments in the county so we will always be able to give you a full explanation of how property taxes work.

### 3. Why do my taxes go up even though my assessed value goes down?

The Assessor has no control over property taxes. That's the responsibility of the ninety-four taxing jurisdictions in Pima County. There can be significant differences between taxing jurisdictions, especially school districts. Some school districts pass budget overrides that are paid for in a secondary property tax. Pima County has information on the county website at [https://webcms.pima.gov/government/property\\_taxes/](https://webcms.pima.gov/government/property_taxes/)

There's lots of useful information there with links and phone numbers to get your questions answered.

### 3. Why do my taxes go up even though my assessed value goes down?

Since your property assessment affects your property taxes, it is important that your assessed value be accurate and fair. Property owner or NOT, you need to understand the two parts of the property tax system: Valuation and Taxation. The Pima County Assessor is responsible for locating, listing and valuing county wide property for tax purposes which is expressed as its taxable or assessed value. The Assessor is not responsible for establishing taxes, calculating tax bills, collecting taxes or anything associated with taxes.

The most concerning outcome for any property owner is when your assessed value decreases and your tax burden increases. This can be the result of several scenarios that affect the county tax roll and budgets of taxing jurisdictions. One of those scenarios is when a Tax Agent argues to unjustly lower a property assessment in an effort to provide tax relief for a paying client. When valuations are inappropriately adjusted, the tax burden is shifted, inequities are created, and YOU (citizens of Pima County) pay the difference. This is a SOCIAL INJUSTICE, as it inherently discriminates against ALL other property owners and tax payers. Having the resources to hire a lawyer or tax agent does NOT afford ANYONE special assessment privileges. I have never negotiated (negotiation is NOT a condoned valuation methodology) a property value nor have I argued to unjustly lower valuations in an effort to provide tax relief for a paying customer. The other two candidates can't say that! To me, there is only one correct way to assess property values, and that is the fair way. Whether your property is worth \$5 or \$5 million you will be treated fairly. I have been committed to every property owner in Pima County for my entire career and will ALWAYS be a strong voice of fairness and fight. I am running to become your Pima County Assessor because the prosperity of this community is directly related to your value. Fair and Equitable property assessments decide our future and with my experience, knowledge and resolve, I will fight to ensure this public service office is competent, accountable and puts community first, because it's YOU I value! No other candidate can match my character, my experiences and my successes. I would be honored to serve as your next Pima County Assessor.

## Endless Republican Perfidy Requires Relentless Vigilance

by Dee Maitland

It's exhausting fighting on so many fronts and having to understand the workings of so many government agencies. Unfortunately, we need learn one more perfidious Republican's name if we have any hope of turning this state away from the dark side.

Twenty years ago the citizens of Arizona passed Prop 106 and established the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC). The Commission of Appellate Court Appointments (CACA) was responsible for reviewing applicants and generating eligible candidate rosters to be used to appoint 2 Democrat and 2 Republican members to the IRC. These four chose the fifth member from a list of Independent applicants. Twice in the last 2 decades, after completion of the Census, the IRC established fair voting districts that withstood all court challenges.

Unfortunately, at this point we can have no faith that CACA is capable of impartial review and selection of candidates for the IRC due to its current political imbalance and a recent rule change proposed by Chief Justice Robert M. Brutinel (a Brewer appointee) who serves as the chair of CACA. The Arizona Constitution, Article 6, § 36(A) mandates that: **“the governor, the senate and the state bar shall endeavor to see that the commission reflects the diversity of Arizona’s population.”**

Current CACA membership includes 9 Republicans, 4 Independents and **no** Democrats. State voting records have the state almost equally divided between the three political categories: Republican 34.7%; Independents 33.1%; and Democrats 31.3%. Republicans should not hold 69% of current appointments. Further there are two independents whose independence could be challenged. Ciscomani is married to an advisor of the governor. Contorelli is married to the daughter of Republican Steve Pierce. Transparency is crucial to assure one party and its “independent” sympathizers do not dominate CACA and thus the IRC selection process.

Adding to this partisan dominance, Brutinel’s proposed rule change would allow individuals and organizations to anonymously submit confidential comments on applicants. The public and the applicants would have no ability to discover or counter any false or partisan information. Second, while CACA must adhere to Open Meeting Laws, the rule change would allow for a broader use of executive sessions with minimal attendance required by CACA commissioners.

As planned, the short time period allotted for comment on this rule change has passed. The only way to fight Republican corruption of the judiciary, CACA and the IRC is to assure that absolutely **no** Republicans win election in November; particularly Robert M. Brutinel. We can do this!

### OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE BE GENEROUS HELP OUR LOCAL FOOD BANK

\* Please consider donating some non-perishable food items or making a cash donation to one of our local food banks during this stressful time.

\*The Democrats of Oro Valley care about the health and well-being of our

### SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

\* Thanks to all of you who support our brave troops.

*\*Please donate any of these items to one of our local veterans groups for distribution: deodorant, shaving items, toothpaste, tooth brushes, pocket novels and puzzle books.*

### August Zoom Meeting

Monday, August 10  
6:30 pm

Katie Hobbs  
Secretary of State  
of Arizona