

## **OPEN LETTER to El Paso County Republicans**

**from the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners,**

**AMY LATHEN**



P.O. Box 25205  
Colorado Springs, CO 80936-5205

Dear Fellow Conservative Activist,

As I write today, our mighty nation stands on the brink of socialist decline or a rejuvenation of liberty and Constitutional principles.

As a blessed citizen of this extraordinary nation, I know that each one of us will play a part in making the decision of which of those directions we will take. Big Government or Liberty? Collectivism or Liberty? Marxism or Liberty? Fascism or Liberty? **Obama or Liberty?!**

I have spent over a decade working in the El Paso County Republican Party in a variety of ways. I have been honored to serve on our Executive Committee for all those years and consider the work to be a privilege. It provides an avenue to fight **against socialist liberals** and **for the conservative principles** in which I so strongly believe and to leave an America for my children and future generations that is **FREE**. **I want to thank you for your trust and partnerships in all the efforts we have shared over the years.**

In January of 2008, I began a new chapter of service as one of your El Paso County Commissioners. Today, I am excited and honored to announce to you that **I am running for my second term in office.** I sincerely ask that you take just a few moments to **continue reading** as I seek your support, share my views on several issues, reflect on work done in the last four years and my intentions for the future.

These few years of my first term have flown by. Working aggressively and passionately, **I have only just begun!** I will stand strongly on my record. I will not waiver in defense of my principled, conservative service and my conviction to continue serving. **I ask for your support.**



### **TRANSPARENCY/SERVICE**

If I can't answer your county question, I'll find the answer. If I can't find the answer, something must be wrong and I must fix it. **For nearly four years I have served with an open door and complete transparency.** I meet in peoples' homes, on their roads, in their clubs, in their schools, in my office or wherever and whenever needed. I have regular town hall meetings in order to keep you informed as to what is happening in the county. **This year alone, I have already had 8 town hall meetings,** not including all of the visits to clubs, individuals, neighborhoods etc. I serve as liaison or board member on over 14 different boards and committees – working constantly to stay in tune with the issues that matter to El Paso County citizens.

I began working this summer with our Information Technology staff to essentially put our administrative **"checkbook" online.** All our records are already open and public, but they are not necessarily easy to find at a moment's notice. **I am working to make it as simple as possible for you to see how your tax dollars are being spent – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

This is **YOUR** county government and you've hired me to be there, to be accessible and to respond. I take my responsibilities to my constituents very seriously. I work full time and I love serving in this way! I have served with respect and integrity and have **kept the promises** I made when I first took office.



## SPENDING/BUDGET

When I came onto this Board in early 2008, the county was in a serious financial crisis. Spending commitments were in excess of declining revenue and difficult decisions needed to be made. Leadership changes began and with an eye on the future sustainability of this county, we began a major prioritization process. Through this process, **over 300 positions were laid off, eliminated and frozen. Entire departments were eliminated. Thirteen administrative departments were consolidated to four! Massive spending cuts were made. Budgets were reprioritized.**

### **Core services have once again become the focus.**

Today, we are a leaner, more efficient organization. While we still have revenue challenges in some areas, especially within public safety through our **Sheriff's Office** and **District Attorney's Office**, we are more responsibly representing your interests and your tax dollars. We are working on those challenges and addressing them through vigorous **prioritization and consolidation.**

Faced with monumental facilities challenges in our Coroner's Office, Sheriff's Office, Departments of Human Services and Health, we consolidated multiple operations into a single location on Garden of the Gods Road and did so with **NO new general fund expenditures, NO new taxes, NO service cuts and NO expansion of programs.** We were able to accomplish this by using the **existing budgets of the consolidated agencies** and capitalizing on the lagging commercial real estate market. This decision will positively serve this county for the long term and has taken mandated service departments that were spread all over the city, and placed them in one centralized location.

I am honored to have been a part of the decisions which have been made over the last 3+ years which have **improved** and **reduced the size and scope** of your county government.

I have also consistently voted **AGAINST** unsustainable, irresponsible Obama administration stimulus dollars for new social programs here in El Paso County. These programs are predominantly outside the Constitutional scope of government and have nothing to do with our responsibilities to infrastructure and public safety. With all of these Federal programs and dollars come regulations. **There are strings attached!** These **deeply erode local control.** Ronald Reagan was absolutely correct when he said that local government is the best government because it is closest to the People. I have sought to protect that principle in all aspects of my representation. My record here is strong!



## ROADS

I have been a **staunch advocate for the roads** within District 2 and projects throughout the county. I have worked to bring back road options which help us do more with less. For example, the use of chip sealing on a native soil road used to be done many years ago in El Paso County but had been abandoned sometime in the 90's. In bringing this back as an option, we are able to address pavement on roads that otherwise would be far too costly if using hot mix asphalt. This means more lane miles improved, money saved and then spread throughout more of the county. Examples include Calhan Hwy. S., Peyton Hwy, Meridian Road, Eastonville Road, etc.

It is imperative that we maintain and prioritize our vital infrastructure. More dollars have been spent in District 2 in the last 3 ½ years than in years past, **all due to innovation, attention and reprioritization.** **These are NOT new tax dollars, but more efficiently used existing dollars,** which are restricted and only allowed by law to be expended on our roads!



## LAND USE

One of our most important roles (if not THE most important) here at the county is the **protection of private property rights.** Through our Land Development Code, we significantly impact property and business owners and their ability to use their land. We **MUST** ensure that this impact is positive and not over burdensome.

In the time that I have served on this Board, I have personally witnessed the **devastating effects of over burdensome regulations.** It is because of this that I partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to create the Barriers to

Business group. This group of volunteer citizens is tasked with reviewing the monstrous County Land Development Code in order to identify overreaching regulations as well as improve the land use process and service delivery. As a result, ongoing recommendations are being made to our Board to implement changes and **root out policy which impedes business and interferes too heavily with private property rights**. We are making great progress!

This is an intensive project with many months of work ahead. I am thrilled to be working with such dedicated partners to improve county policy.



## **WATER**

**Water is the lifeblood of El Paso County.** Renewable and non-renewable sources alike must be protected for us and for future generations.

I am glad to have spearheaded the formation of the **Water Quality Study Group** to study our groundwater sources and make informed, scientific decisions about potential policy changes in order to protect our water. Policy changes must be made based in science and sound thinking. This too, is a group of **expert and concerned citizens serving** in order to help us make the right decisions going forward so that El Paso County's water is viable for generations to come.

Furthermore, as we grapple with the potential of **oil and gas exploration and development** in El Paso County, I am highly cognizant of the responsibility of protecting our most vital resource, our groundwater! This is why we have been working non-stop and very aggressively to gather facts, look at similar jurisdictions, study State Statutes and understand our authority moving forward. We are asked by some to block this industry entirely, something we are not legally able to do. Others seek an open door policy with no local regulations. We must make very serious decisions.

**If** there is oil and gas in El Paso County, we seek to create an environment in which that resource may be developed responsibly, ensuring compliance with existing laws that govern its recovery, developing a system to protect our water and local infrastructure and recognizing the potential economic impacts to our region.



## **TERM LIMITS**

Only by referral by the Board of County Commissioners can a county-wide question be submitted to the ballot. In 2008, our Board was asked to place a question on the ballot to increase terms for county elected officials (ourselves included) from 2 to 3. We rejected that request. Again in 2010 the request was submitted, **in part to bring local terms in line with the efforts nationally to enact 12 year Congressional term limits**.

We agreed and placed three questions on the **GENERAL ELECTION** ballot to address term limits for county-wide elected officials, County Commissioners and the District Attorney.

Since the election, many folks have said they were confused. We held 4 public hearings to listen to the concerns of the people. As a result, I recognized a certain level of confusion and **I made a motion to place a clarifying question back on the ballot** so that there would be no further confusion and we would clearly understand the **will of the People**. I made sure that if the voters decide to go back to 2 terms for county elected officials, that **I will be held to that standard**, with **NO grandfathering**. This passed on a 4-1 vote and you will see a question on the 2012 **GENERAL ELECTION** ballot which will allow you to very clearly express your intent.

I have listened and responded **without any possibility of personal gain** and have made sure that the **power remains** (as it always has been) **in the hands of the voters where it belongs**.



## **LEGISLATION/POLICY**

This is a huge category with too much to list from the last several years in this letter alone. However, highlights include my organization of a **unanimous resolution** from the County **OPPOSING** the devastating ObamaCare. I have **consistently OPPOSED SB200**, which is the state healthcare exchange bill. I **OPPOSED**, in writing and testimony, the

'**FASTER**' bill which has so terribly increased our vehicle registration costs. I **OPPOSED** a county/city tax increase request in 2008, 1A. I **OPPOSED** the refinancing of the Department of Human Services in 2008, which was, I believe, an unnecessary and unsustainable "cash out" action.

I forwarded and successfully passed a unanimous resolution **SUPPORTING TABOR** when it was under attack by super liberals, not just from within our own state but from DC interests bent on lifting restrictions on governmental growth in Colorado. I **SUPPORTED** the refinancing of the jail/courthouse bonds, which were originally approved back in 2002 long before my time on the Board, which **saved hundreds of thousands of tax dollars**. I have led the effort to send unified letters and to work in **SUPPORT of city/county collaborative efforts** in order to eliminate redundancies and save money.



### **EXPERIENCE**

When I campaigned for this office in 2007 and 2008, I wrote a contract with the county and I pledged to lead conservatively, respectfully and in constant vigilance over your hard earned tax dollars. I have kept that pledge. **I have done what I said I would do!**

I have learned a great deal in the last 3 ½+ years. I have remained **CONSISTENT, PRINCIPLED** and **FOCUSED on CONSERVATIVE governance and responsible leadership**. I have met so many wonderful people over these years! I have gained tremendous knowledge about road systems and maintenance, land development policy, water policy, public safety, budgeting, economic development and more. I am working on ongoing projects and have **no intention of slowing down**. I have much more work to do and I believe that **continuity of leadership** truly matters.

I have been deeply honored to represent such strong people in such a special place in Colorado. **I ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT** as I continue working and seek a second term to serve you.

I will answer any questions you have about my **RECORD**, my **LEADERSHIP** and my **PLANS** for continued service. I invite you to get to know me better by exploring my website at **www.amylathenforcountycommissioner.com**.

I **thank you** for your support all these years. I **thank you** for your time in catching up a little on the last few years and I look forward to touching base with you in the coming months as I seek your support for my **continued service as your El Paso County Commissioner in District 2**.

Very Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Gatter".

## Honest, Proven, Conservative, Hard Working Leadership

**www.amylathenforcountycommissioner.com**

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**(Contributions are requested.** There are no dollar amount limits. Corporate contributions are **not** allowed. Please seriously consider a financial commitment **to support and continue solid conservative representation** and mail it to the address listed above.)