

LETTERS: Public workers draw support

By [Letters to the Editor](#) - July 30, 2023

Only have a minute? Listen instead

Texas support the financial strength of their cities' municipal employees, firefighters and police officers' retirement systems. At least that's the message they've sent in three local elections across the state, reaching back to 2017.

The most recent proof: In El Paso in May, voters approved a pro-pension system charter amendment, Proposition I, by a 59%-41% margin. The city administration and El Paso Firemen and Policemen's Pension Fund agreed to bring the charter amendment forward, setting 18% as the city's contribution floor each budget cycle. The first responders there do not receive Social Security, so their and the city's contributions must support a secure retirement. The voters' approval will ensure public servant loyalty far into the future. And El Paso also will benefit from strong municipal bond ratings that keep future taxes low.

In May 2022, Longview voters supported \$45.6 million in pension obligation bonds for the Longview Firemen's Relief and Retirement Fund. Again, the vote was an overwhelming 59%-41% approval. Longview voters also receive long-term firefighter loyalty, even in the face of tight labor markets where higher-paying jobs can be found. Longview voters did not give blanket approvals to all bonds offered at the time: they rejected school bond initiatives by a 59%-41% margin.

In 2017, Houston voters approved \$1 billion in bonds to strengthen city employees' and police officers' pension systems after years of underfunding. The vote supporting public employees was even more impressive: 77% approved and 22% opposed the proposition. The 6-year effect of the bond issuance has significantly improved the financial conditions of the city of Houston and the two affected pension funds.

There have been no election losses for the financial support of local pension systems that we can remember. Texas voters support their local public employees, especially when it comes to ensuring strong, secure retirement benefits after careers of service to their communities.

Sherry Mose

Board president

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Trump and Putin

Now we know what Donald Trump was talking to Vladimir Putin about during those many off-the-record talks that Trump kept secret and left the American people in the dark. They were discussing weakening and dismantling NATO to give Putin his wish of expanding Russia and creating a new Soviet socialist republic, USSR.

We saw how Trump spoke in a very forceful way about how NATO is weak and useless and not needed any more, do away with NATO. Trump was creating a clear pathway for Putin to have his way and take over the former USSR countries. What other reason would Trump have for talking to Putin about NATO in secret?

Of course, this was a quid pro quo arrangement. Remember, Trump always wins.

I wonder what Trump wanted in return; perhaps a guarantee of another presidential term. Only Russia could guarantee this. Russia did it before.

The devil works in evil, mysterious ways, always in the dark.

Arnoldo Gonzalez

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