

HOUSTON, We Have Problems.



CONGESTION

HOMELESS



POTHoles

FLOODING



HOUSTON WE HAVE PROBLEMS

WHY SYLVESTER TURNER MUST NOT WIN A SECOND TERM

By *Gary Polland, TCR Editor-in-Chief*



Why Sylvester Turner Must Not Win a Second Term

“Houston we have a problem,” was the distress call heard around the world. It was

a cry for help that engaged the best and brightest minds from a control room near Clear Lake, a community not technically within the Houston city limits at that time. With steady leadership, those minds went to work and ultimately solved a near impossible challenge, saving the lives of the three Apollo 13 astronauts.

Nearly half a century later, the city of Houston finds itself in distress but without any steady leadership in the control room to provide rescue or even a hope for rescue. In fact, under the so-called leadership of **Mayor Sylvester Turner**, the city’s problems at the time of **Turner’s** election four years ago have only been exacerbated, while even more problems have been created by his administration.

The worst of these problems are well documented—financial issues, looming underfunded pension obligations, animosity between first responders over pay parity, flooding, traffic congestion, increasing crime, dangerous and decaying infrastructure and an exploding homeless population.

Then there is the stench of corruption rising from City Hall that challenger **Tony Buzbee** decried and which fellow challengers **Dwight Boykins** and **Bill King** echoed. A deeper dive into these problems and **Turner’s** failure to provide leadership leads to one inevitable conclusion—Houston cannot afford four more years of **Sylvester Turner**!

The next question naturally is which challenger provides the best alternative to **Turner**, both in terms of electability, and effectiveness, once elected? First let’s review the case for change demonstrated by the mounting problems created or multiplied by the **Turner** administration.

Public Safety—Turner’s Broken Promise Leads to More Crime

Most citizens of Houston, or any city for that matter, would agree that ensuring public safety should be government’s most important job. Most politicians know this

Turner was ill-prepared for the office, which is why Houston has the problems that it has; and why they are only getting worse.

fact—because it is usually reflected in their polling—and campaign on public safety with the weight it deserves. Career politician **Sylvester Turner** is no different. In fact, when he ran for mayor in 2015 he promised to bolster HPD’s ranks by an additional 800 officers. How much progress has **Turner** made towards that campaign promise? Zero is the answer. Actually the answer is less than zero, since there are actually fewer police officers since **Turner** took office. **Turner** blamed the lack of progress in hiring police on a “hiring freeze,” despite the fact that he has managed to hire 693 municipal employees not related to public safety,

during his so-called “hiring freeze.”

There is also an issue of how those officers are deployed. Of the approximately 5,200 on the payroll, more than half are sitting at desks, not in cars patrolling our increasingly violent streets. That leaves a net of around 2,300 officers on the streets, not nearly enough to patrol 669 square miles transected by over 16,000 lane miles of roadways. By contrast, the city of Chicago has approximately 13,500 officers, and only leads Houston in population by less than a half million people. And then there is the growing gang problem; there are currently over 23,000 identified gang members in the Houston area, which means the 2,300 police on the street are outnumbered ten-to-one.

Mayor Sylvester broke a critical campaign promise and in doing so left our police department understaffed and our citizens vulnerable. And the result? Crime—both violent and non-violent—continues to increase. And solve rates for property crimes are abhorrently low. Currently only about 6% of home break-ins and burglaries are ever solved. That means criminals have about a 94% chance of success—much higher odds than a Las Vegas casino or a \$5 scratch-off ticket. Burglary of a vehicle is even higher—there is an almost zero percent chance that one of those will be solved.

But wait, don’t think that **Turner** has done nothing for police. After 3-and-a-half years of doing nothing, **Turner** has now leapt into action—just in time for an Election year—and has approved five cadet classes for 2020. He also negotiated a 7% pay raise for police—which, coincidentally was followed by a police union endorsement for **Turner** just in time for the 2019 election.



Public Safety II—Firefighters Brave the Heat, but Left Out in the Cold by Turner

Speaking of endorsements...in the 2015 election, **Turner** touted support by the police and firefighter unions. That support naturally translated into votes; after all, if first responders believe in a candidate, isn't a voter's trust warranted as well?

It could be argued that those endorsements, and the rank-and-file support that followed, were easily the margin of victory for **Turner**, both in getting into the runoff and winning the runoff by just over 4,000 votes. It was not just the endorsements that mattered; it was the enthusiastic support by the rank-and-file police and firefighters that made the difference. These first responders worked for **Turner**—phoning and block walking—because he promised his support for them. He promised to take care of them, back them up and not touch their pensions. So how did **Turner** repay the support of these first responders?

He immediately turned around and stabbed the firefighters in the back by cutting their pension benefits by a staggering \$150,000 per firefighter. It is important to realize that these were benefits that the firefighters had already earned and that at that time their pension was the healthiest and best funded of the three pensions—police, fire, and municipal employees—and vulnerable to raiding by **Turner**. Also worth noting is that the City had traditionally maintained pay parity—equal pay for police and firefighters—but the firefighters in the 2000's conceded parity in exchange for maintaining the integrity

of their pensions. Thus when their pension was raided, the firefighters demanded pay parity since **Turner** broke the terms of the agreement under which parity was conceded. But **Turner** twisted the knife and refused. It was at that point that the firefighter's petition drive and long march to Proposition B—a charter amendment for equal pay—began.

Instead of letting voters decide the issue, **Turner** fought tooth-and-nail to keep the charter amendment off the ballot. Even after firefighters successfully collected the required number of signatures to place the measure on the ballot, **Turner** and his administration stonewalled the effort, and kept it off the ballot.

When Prop B finally made its way on to the November 2018 ballot, an overwhelming majority of voters, 298,060 to be exact, approved the measure in a 60% to 40% landslide. But the fight wasn't over. **Turner** vowed to reject the will of the people and fight it in the courts, leading Republican State District Judge **Randy Wilson** to uphold it, clearing the way for implementation.

Unfortunately for the firefighters, **Judge Wilson** and every other judge on the ballot lost their elections. As soon as the new judges took office at the beginning of 2019, Wilson's replacement—**Judge Tanya Garrison**, a close ally of **Sylvester Turner's**—reversed her Republican predecessor and declared Proposition B unconstitutional.

This story is worth telling since it shows the lengths to which **Turner** and allies like **Judge Tanya Garrison** will go to cement **Turner's** betrayal of the firefighters. It also demonstrates a complete disregard

for any potential risks to the public's safety represented by the hostility **Turner** created when he pitted first responders against each other.

Public Safety III—Would You Like a Fire Truck With That Bandage?

Sightings of HFD ambulances without a fire engine at an incident are as rare as those of the Loch Ness Monster. That's because of a City of Houston policy known as the "All Hazards Response Policy" which results in the deployment of firefighting equipment to incidents that may only require an EMS response. Why is this important? It is because an overwhelming number of HFD calls are medical in nature—in fact of the roughly 340,000 calls each year, nearly 300,000 are medical (2017 stats).

In full disclosure, this policy was implemented prior to **Turner**, but it is one that he has continued. The implications for this policy are several; it places a strain on HFD resources—deploying fire equipment where it is not needed, and making those resources unavailable should there be an actual fire emergency—as well as wear and tear on both the equipment, and on the streets on which that heavy equipment operates. **Turner** and his fire chief should be held accountable for this policy that continues to put Houstonians at risk.

Harvey Assistance—The Disaster after the Disaster

Sylvester Turner certainly isn't to blame for **Hurricane Harvey**, which was a natural disaster. What followed **Harvey's** landfall, however, was a man-made disaster that tens of

thousands of our neighbors affected by the storm are still enduring. In the aftermath of **Harvey**, the **Turner** administration approved city contracts worth tens of millions of dollars to help Houstonians rebuild their devastated homes. Among those contracts was one with **ICF International**—a Virginia-based firm who listed among its sub-contractors in the bid proposal numerous donors to **Mayor Sylvester Turner's** campaign, including **Turner's** former law partner—for “outreach and case management.” Another vendor, **Aptim**, whose motto is “Expect the Extraordinary,” received a contract from the **Turner** administration in the amount of \$14 million for “project management.” Both firms received millions of dollars up front prior to any work being done; meanwhile, flood ravaged Houstonians paid out of pocket to restore their homes, with no support from **Turner** and his administration. So did **ICF** and **Aptim** deliver the “Extraordinary”? Hardly. On August 1st of this year, the City of Houston reported that of the 19,000 Houstonians who took the eligibility survey, 4,900 were invited to apply for aid. Of those 4,900, approximately half applied for aid and, as of June of this year, the City reports an astounding number of 4 were helped. But as of August 27th, not a single one of those had been able to move back into their homes, well over a year after **Harvey's** landfall. As expected, the resulting public outcry and media scrutiny into **Turner's** failure to launch has been intense; so much so that the City canceled the contract with **Aptim**, but only after paying them in excess of \$8 million.

Infrastructure—Streets, Drainage and Waste Management

Houston's infrastructure is outdated and literally crumbling beneath the shoes on our feet and the tires on our cars. **Sylvester Turner** campaigned on the promise to fix our broken streets. But ask yourself, do the streets seem any better than they

were four years ago? The public consensus seems to be a resounding, “NO!” Story after story of blown out tires, damaged vehicles and auto accidents caused by potholes and uneven streets populate media stories and social media posts. It has gotten so bad that the city has space on its website that provides instructions for filing a claim for damages caused by dilapidated streets. Yet **Turner** claims that potholes are repaired within 24 hours from the time they



are reported. He also claims that the city can fill 300 potholes a day, even though city records indicate they were averaging 100 a day in 2018. The problem here is one of both quality and quantity. Enough potholes are not being filled and those that are being filled are not being filled properly, which leads to the same potholes being filled over and over again.

Experts estimate that the cost to adequately maintain Houston's 16,000 lane miles is \$600 million, yet the city spends half that amount. And spending on capital improvement projects, in general, has declined to its lowest point since **Turner** has taken office. Decreased spending is also aggravated by an outdated bond financing style of project planning and implementation that creates a project life cycle—from conception to completion of a project— of 8-10 years as compared with an average life cycle of 3-4 years for Harris County projects.

Unfortunately, wasting time is a luxury that the city does not have when it comes to infrastructure projects, especially in the area of flooding, in which there is no way to

predict when the next big storm will hit. But wasting time is apparently an area where **Mayor Sylvester Turner** excels, which leads to gross unpreparedness. For example, in early July of this year, the city of Houston scrambled to prepare for a possible impact from the storm that would become Hurricane Barry. That event and the questions that arose from it, led **Stephen Costello**, a **Turner** appointee Chief Recovery Officer for the city of Houston to admit,

“When people ask us today if we're more prepared now than we were prepared for Harvey, the answer, unfortunately, is no...” And **Costello** has the background to know the truth; he is after all a former City Council Member, a former candidate for mayor (2015) and an engineer by profession. It is incomprehensible that the **Turner** administration has made zero progress towards flood preparedness in the two years since the most devastating flood event in Houston's history. It is just as mind boggling that the **Turner** administration ignored the calls that started from the beginning of his administration to formulate a flood mitigation/response strategy long before Hurricane **Harvey**, despite the two significant floods that preceded **Harvey**.

Despite warnings by experts that the city was woefully unprepared for another significant rain event, **Turner** chose to take no action until after **Harvey** hit in August 2017, nearly two years into his term of office. And yet, he and the city are as unprepared today as they were two years ago, when lives were

lost, property destroyed and the landscape forever changed. That dereliction of duty alone should warrant his ejection from City Hall.

There are so many other areas where the city of Houston languishes in mediocrity or worse. Waste management is another. In some parts of the city, large piles of heavy trash and debris line the streets for months waiting for pick up. In other areas, normal trash pickup is delayed for days or even weeks on



end. In that same vein, the media stories that have shown proof of recyclables being sent to the landfill despite paying out millions in taxpayer dollars for recycling, should outrage any Houstonian whose tax dollars have gone to fund the effort. In a city that aspires to greatness, timely pickup of trash should be a service easily provided; yet it is not.

Affordable delivery of services is another epic failure. Houstonians' water bills, which can run from \$200 or \$300 a month into the thousands of dollars a month, are markedly higher than their counterparts in Harris County where water bills typically run \$100 or less per month.

City Finances

If you believe **Mayor Sylvester Turner**, the reason that his administration can't perform better is due to a lack of money, a problem that he attributes to the revenue cap that voters passed in 2004 in an amendment to the City Charter. The cap limits the annual growth of property tax revenue to the combined rates of inflation and population

growth, or 4.5%, whichever is lower. Despite the revenue cap, **Turner** still managed to grow the budget to \$5.1 Billion for FY2020, up nearly \$250 million from 2019. In total, spending has increased overall by 15% since **Turner** took office. It makes you wonder how large the budget would grow without a revenue cap. Fiscal conservatives agree that one way the city could keep spending in check would be to implement a zero-based budget—one in which all expenditures

must be justified on an annual basis as opposed to one in which the previous year's budget expenses are assumed to be already justified. During the 2015 campaign, **Sylvester Turner** agreed that zero-based budgeting was a good idea and one he pledged to implement. Unfortunately, **Turner** has still not implemented zero-based budgeting, thus allowing his budgets to increase automatically each year.

Corruption

The hottest topic in this year's election undoubtedly has to be corruption at City Hall, a charge leveled at **Mayor Sylvester Turner** by at least two of his challengers. Included in these allegations is an ongoing "pay-to-play" system in which campaign donors, business partners and friends and family are rewarded with city contracts for their relationship with **Turner**.

As noted earlier in this article, **Sylvester Turner** bungled Hurricane **Harvey** relief with the selection of two contractors, **Aptim** and **ICF International**. **ICF's** connection to **Turner** campaign donors including

Turner's former law partner was also noted. As far as **Aptim**—remember that is the contractor who had their \$14 million contract pulled for failing to perform—they also have connections to **Turner** donors. According to former investigative reporter turned private consultant **Wayne Dolcefino** on his blog (**Dolcefino.com**), "Three leading subcontractors on the management contract have given the **Turner** campaign close to \$200,000 in campaign contributions." **Isani Consultants** got nearly 20 percent of the disaster management contract. Their principal is **Bobby Singh**, whose family has pumped tens of thousands of dollars in campaign money to the Mayor while getting on dozens of city contracts. **Isani** has received nearly \$38 million in city contracts, much of that while **Turner** has been in office.

The **Harvey** contracts and the pay-to-play manner in which they seem to have been awarded are just the tip of the corruption iceberg. Another fairly clear example of pay-to-play corruption is in a story by **ABC-13** investigative journalist **Ted Oberg** regarding the extension of the employee health benefits contract with **Cigna**, in which **Kelsey-Seybold** was a partner. In his news story that aired September 10th of this year, **Oberg** shows campaign finance records that report Kelsey-Seybold executives donated over \$80,000 in a single day (February 16, 2016) to **Mayor Sylvester Turner's** campaign. This was also the very same day that **Mayor Turner** had a private breakfast meeting with Kelsey-Seybold's CEO. Following the meeting and collection of the \$80,000, **Turner** made the decision to extend the Cigna contract for two years, rather than opening it up for a transparent, competitive bid.

Another flagrant example of pay-to-play involves **Mayor Sylvester Turner's** former law partner, **Barry Barnes**, who was awarded \$6.7 million for "legal services" from a \$35 million **Hurricane Harvey** relief contract. Two months prior to the

City Council vote, legal services were estimated to be just \$2.7 million of the contract, but that estimate swelled significantly in favor of the mayor's law partner leading up to the vote. When ABC-13 investigative reporter **Ted Oberg** called the Mayor out on the sweetheart deal, **Turner** attacked **Oberg**, accusing him of acting as a political agent for his opposition.

Of course, this wasn't the first or last time that **Turner** would attempt to distract the public from the truth with a diversionary tactic. Just a few weeks ago as his political rivals turned up the spotlight on his corruption; **Turner** once again ducked the issues and instead played the "race card" calling the attacks a "dog whistle." The inference by **Turner** was that accusations against him were nothing more than an attempt

news story by investigative reporter **Wayne Dolcefino** just days before the runoff election between **Bob Lanier** and **Sylvester Turner**. In the broadcast, **Dolcefino** grills **Turner** and his male roommate **Dwight Thomas** about their mutual friend **Sylvester Foster**, who reportedly fell overboard in 1986 in a boating accident and was presumed dead.

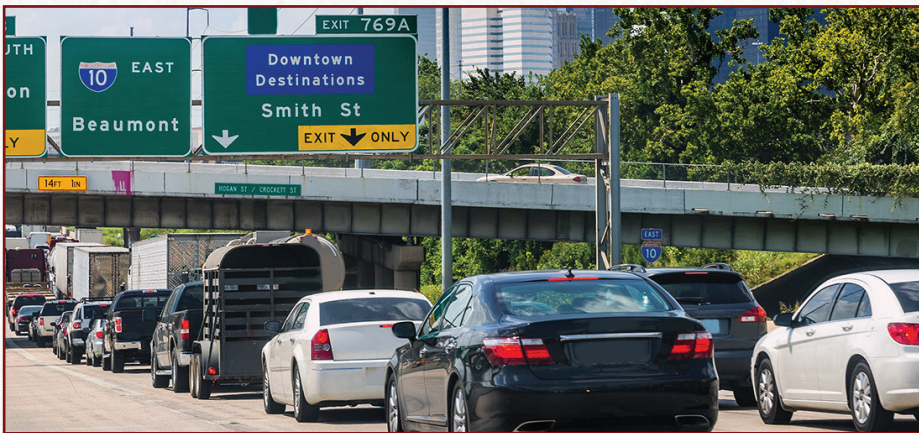
Dolcefino's broadcast was the culmination of a sordid tale with all the makings of a Hollywood movie—albeit not necessarily a big-screen one, but definitely a direct-to-Netflix variety. Elements include a hair salon and "male modeling studio" owner (**Sylvester Foster**) on the run from the Feds for fraud who has a will drawn up by a struggling lawyer (**Sylvester Turner**) which puts **Turner's** "life-long friend" (**Dwight Thomas**) in position

he would "make a lot of money" from probating the **Foster** will, set about trying to collect on **Foster's** death. Unfortunately for them, the entire mess was just too fishy for the insurance company, which disputed the presumption of **Foster's** death. Fast forward 5 years to **Wayne Dolcefino** showing up on **Turner/Thomas' doorstep**—the two are now living together, miles away from **Turner's** estranged wife and daughter—where **Dolcefino** reveals to the two that **Sylvester Foster** has been located in a Spanish prison where he landed for cocaine smuggling. Following the story, **Turner** lost the election to **Bob Lanier**. **Turner** and his supporters cried foul against **Channel 13** with accusations of, among other things, racism. It was a tactic that served **Turner** then, which is why he uses it today.

Conclusion

Sylvester Turner is one of the worst mayors in decades, and possibly ever. That is a statement that should be taken as fact after reading the preceding pages. Those pages also paint a picture of a man desperate to be elected to and retain public office; his first run was in 1983, and he hasn't stopped running since. **Sylvester Turner** has dreamed about being mayor of Houston for decades—it is unfortunate that decades of dreaming didn't prepare him to become the chief executive officer of the 4th largest cities in America. Like the little yapping dog that finally catches the car it has chased its entire life, **Turner** was ill-prepared for the office, which is why Houston has the problems that it has; and why they are only getting worse.

Houston, we have problems—and we cannot afford four more years of **Sylvester Turner**. Houstonians, Conservative, Black, Liberal, White, Republican, Hispanic, Asian or Democrat, we can beat **Sylvester Turner**, but have to get to work and do everything we can between now and November 5 to complete that mission. ★



to fan the flames of racism. The **Turner** administration then doubled down on the racial rhetoric and compared Proposition B with a move to bring back slavery. Anyone who has ever been the victim of actual racism undoubtedly finds the mayor's desperate race-baiting disgusting.

But as students of Houston political history know, this is not **Turner's** first foray into a race-card defense, or the first time **Turner** would be accused of wrongdoing. One of the most memorable cases dates back to **Turner's** first run for mayor in 1991. It was during that campaign that **Turner** was accused of participating in insurance fraud. The details of the case were revealed in a

as executor and trustee of the will. A day after **Foster** signs the will, he (although being deathly afraid of the water) takes a boat trip into the Gulf of Mexico with two men (**Keith Anderson** and **Russell Anderson**) who were business partners of **Foster's** who stood to inherit **Foster's** business interests as well as life insurance proceeds. [You really can't make this stuff up. The only question at this point of the story is if it is a drama or one of those dark comedies featuring witless co-conspirators.] As if you couldn't guess what happens next, **Foster** tragically falls overboard and is presumed dead.

Thomas and **Turner**, who told wife (at the time) **Cheryl Turner** that

FROM FORMER GOVERNOR RICK PERRY



“ I have spent my career fighting for more effective and efficient government and against waste and public corruption.

When it comes to corruption and pay to play politics, unfortunately Mayor Turner isn't the only bad apple in the mayoral field. Bill King

also has a long and sordid history of making millions off of taxpayers by influencing government regulators to be favorable to his law firm's tax collections business.

Bill King and his firm kept their racket afloat by treating council members, state reps and state senators to fancy trips, golf outings, sporting events, and even hired them as “advisors” – including Sylvester Turner. Bill King is not credible

on ethics reform, he cannot be trusted, and I urge you to join me in rejecting both Bill King and Mayor Turner.

Tony Buzbee is the clear choice for Houston Mayor. He's a Marine Recon Captain, a businessman, an accomplished attorney and someone I'm proud to call my friend. Tony's an honorable man who has served his nation and community—I trust him to deliver as your mayor.”

WHY VOTERS SHOULD CARE ABOUT CORRUPTION

Corruption is one of the hottest topics in advance of this year's mayoral election, thanks to mounting evidence that **Mayor Turner** is involved in widespread pay-to-play in the awarding of city contracts.

So why should the public care about corruption?

- **Can lead to substandard products and services:** When a vendor is selected because of either financial interest—campaign contributions, kickbacks, etc—or for a personal relationship, quality suffers because the vendor has no incentive to provide a quality product and/or service. This becomes a public safety concern when those compromised contracts involve construction projects such as

buildings, roads and bridges.

- **Leads to Bad Public Policy:** When public policy is at odds with corrupt officials, public policy often loses. For example, numerous strip club owners have backed Mayor **Sylvester Turner**; then **Turner** responded by implementing policy favorable to sexually oriented businesses.
- **Lack of Fairness:** The public and potential vendors especially, expect a level playing field and an inherently fair bid process.
- **Increased Costs:** When corruption creeps into the bid process, the lowest bid is no longer a factor, leading to higher costs.
- **Inflated Budgets:** With corruption, costs can be manipulated, leading to exaggerated costs. This was the case in the Harvey assistance contract in which **Mayor Turner's**

former law partner was awarded \$6.7 million for legal fees; when the original estimate, just two months prior was \$2.7 million, an increase of \$4 million.

- **Lack of Transparency:** When there is corruption involved in the awarding of contracts, it is in the best interest of the corrupt officials to hide the details of contracts, the scoring system used to award those contracts and the names of subcontractors involved. During his administration, **Mayor Sylvester Turner** has routinely blocked Public Information Act requests for details of city contracts by members of the public and investigative journalists. It was this same type of obstruction that led to an indictment against **Turner's** press secretary Darian Ward. ★

BILL KING: WHY HE DIDN'T WIN, SHOULDN'T WIN AND CAN'T WIN THE ELECTION AS HOUSTON'S MAYOR

In 2015, TCR did not make an endorsement in the Houston Mayor's race in the November General Election, deciding to wait instead for the runoff election, at which time an endorsement was made for **Bill King**. For TCR, it was an easy decision at the time, because hardly anyone could have been a worse choice than **Sylvester Turner**; at least from a conservative perspective. And it was conservatives who were largely responsible for getting **King** within striking distance of **Sylvester Turner** who won by the slimmest of margins—barely over 4,000 votes or just 1% of the total vote. That result proved the point that a candidate with conservative support who ran a good campaign could actually beat a Democrat in Houston, despite its blue hue. The obvious question is, “Why didn't **King** Win?”

Bill King Primer

Before exploring the question of why **King** didn't win, it is important to understand his history. In many ways **Bill King** and **Sylvester Turner** are birds of a feather; both had been running for, and sometimes winning, political office for decades—**Turner** ran first in 1984 for County Commissioner and lost, then for State Representative and won and then for mayor in 1991; **King** ran as a Democrat for State Representative in 1992 and lost before winning elections in Kemah, first to city council and then as mayor. Both were also the subjects of investigation. **Turner** for his role in the **Sylvester Foster** insurance fraud case (detailed in “Houston We Have Problems”) and **King** was investigated by the FBI for his involvement with Columbia Savings and Loan Association that he started and ultimately led into bankruptcy in 1996. Neither man was convicted of any crime in those cases.

Following his bankruptcy, **King** joined the tax collection firm Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson (Linebarger) in 1998 as manager

of the firm's Houston office. It was at Linebarger that **King** made his fortune on the misfortune of others. As a manager, **King** wasn't the one harassing single moms over unpaid toll road violations or forcing senior citizens to choose between paying for their medications or coughing up past due property taxes (plus an extra 20% tacked on for Linebarger and company.) No, he had call centers with employees to do that dirty work, but he and the other Linebarger execs certainly enjoyed the fruits of their labor. The extravagance of **King** and his cohorts at Linebarger was even chronicled in a CNN investigation entitled, “Inside the lives of millionaire debt collectors.” In that expose,

introduction of H.B. 2404, which would limit the fees that could be charged by “predatory debt collection firms” like Linebarger. If the bill had passed, it would have cut into Linebarger's government contracts to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Fortunately for **King** and his firm, the bill died; but **Turner** vowed to bring it back in the next session of the Texas Legislature in 2005. But a funny thing happened in 2005; **Turner** did not refile his bill to protect taxpayers which would have so dramatically impacted **King** and company. So what was different between 2003 and 2005? Well the answer came in 2004 when Linebarger “hired” **Sylvester Turner** as a subcontractor



King was shown sitting on his 45 foot catamaran, which he named “Hard Times.” Some have suggested that the name is a reference to the fact that **King** made his fortune on the backs of those going through hard times.

The Beginning of the Turner/King Pay-to-Play Relationship

In 2003, the trajectories of **Sylvester Turner** and **Bill King** intersected when **Turner** threatened **King's** cash cow Linebarger with the

for \$10,000 per month. Those payments continued right up to the point that **Turner** took office in 2016, earning him in excess of \$1 million.

But **Sylvester Turner** wasn't special. Those types of donations in pursuit of government contracts and political protection were common for **King** and Linebarger. State Representative Senfronia Thompson, for example, was paid over \$2.3 million while she was a Linebarger subcontractor. And there were many more of these payments to lawmakers, and other

government officials. It was a mostly sophisticated, mostly legal operation—at least two Linebarger execs were charged with bribery—which helped Linebarger grow into the largest debt collection firm in the nation of its type. And it wasn't just payments as subcontractors, it was campaign contributions, expensive gifts, dinners, trips and more. The Linebarger payments also included those close to **King** and **Turner** who were not elected officials. Marc Campos, for example, is a consultant for the **Bill King** campaign who received \$850,000 from Linebarger. Paula Arnold also received payments from Linebarger and from **King** as a member of his campaign team. Another name that is often associated with the **Turner** pay-to-play operation is **Darryl Carter**, who was paid over \$2 million from Linebarger.

Even with the spotlight on them and their systemic pay-to-play operation, **King** and his Linebarger cronies remained unapologetic. Linebarger co-founder Dale Linebarger for example said of the practice, "You pay them to basically help you gain access to the officials." **Bill King** still defends the practice as recently as this month on the campaign trail, saying, "It's just the cost of doing business. People would call and I would deliver a check."

Why King Didn't Win in 2015

It is important to understand **King's** history to understand at least one of the reasons that **King** didn't win. Knowing the history between **King** and **Turner** and the relationship they share with Linebarger—remember they continued to pay **Turner** \$10,000 per month even while the two were running against each other—it is not unreasonable to assume that **King** would pull punches with his pay-to-play partner. To that point, Rice University political scientist **Mark Jones** said to the Houston Chronicle, "It's a potential Achilles' heel for **King** and **Turner**, and therefore, I would not expect either campaign or their surrogates to bring it up..." It does not seem like a stretch of the imagination that the 2015 runoff was closer to Kabuki Theater than true political

pugilism. The insidious element within this presumption is that Linebarger would win no matter which of the two ended up being elected.

Another contributing factor in **King's** loss was his refusal to engage on the side of the forces led by conservative activist **Dr. Steven Hotze** assembled against **Mayor Parker's** Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) which would have allowed men in women's bathrooms. Despite the fact that an overwhelming number of Houstonians opposed the measure—the proposition was defeated by a margin of 61-39—and that opposition crossed all demographic metrics including race, gender and political affiliation,

"Hypocrisy is a big reason King shouldn't win. He seeks Conservative support, but despises our ideology. . ."

King simply ran from the issue. It was simply a lack of political judgment or political will or perhaps just being on the wrong side of an issue; in any case, it was a bad decision and one that many strong conservatives could not forgive, thus causing them to stay home and not come out and vote for **King** in the runoff.

One of those who did not immediately eschew **King** based on his ill-conceived positioning on HERO was **Dr. Steven Hotze**, the head of Conservative Republicans of Texas and the leader of the HERO opposition. Rather than taking a cut-your-nose-off-to-spite-your-face position, **Hotze** instead took the more pragmatic position that **King** was still better than **Turner**, an outspoken proponent of HERO, who would be more likely to bring back the proposition. With that view in mind, **Hotze**, whose support can be worth tens of thousands of votes,

offered his endorsement to **King**, who promptly rejected it. Without **Hotze's** block of votes...with conservatives uninspired by his sympathy toward HERO...without the will to win, **King's** fate was all but sealed.

Those are just some of the reasons **King** didn't win in 2015. But what about 2019?

Why Bill King Shouldn't Win

There are some voters who will support **Bill King** in 2019, just because they supported him in 2015. But rather than just giving blind support, these voters should ask themselves if **King** should win? If these voters believe that corruption and pay-to-play is one of the top issues at City Hall, then the answer is a definite "No." **Bill King** after all did lead one of the largest organized pay-to-play institutions in the state of Texas. He and his firm paid out millions to elected officials and others and received hundreds of millions of dollars of government contracts in the process. That makes **Bill King** the King of pay-to-play and the last guy in the race who we can trust to clean up the corruption at City Hall. **Bill King** can't solve the problem—he is part of the problem.

Bill King is just too close to **Sylvester Turner**. Their cozy relationship—remember **King** is the one who hired **Turner** who remained on the payroll to the tune of over \$1 million even during the 2015 campaign—demands that voters find someone who is not connected at the hip with **Turner**. We can't expect that he will do what is necessary to defeat **Turner**.

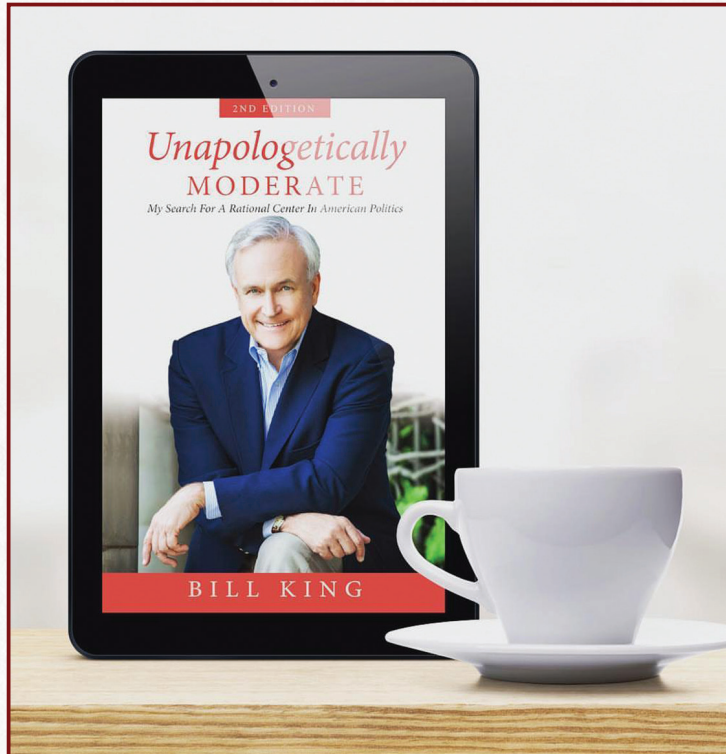
Hypocrisy is a big reason **King** shouldn't win. He seeks conservative support, but despises our ideology; his book was truthfully titled, "**Unapologetically Moderate**," a collection of columns from his time as a member of the left-wing media. In it he routinely derides conservatives and Republicans, yet he seeks our support. For example in one column he compared **Senator Ted Cruz** to a suicide bomber and said, "**Ted Cruz** is actually a Democratic Manchurian candidate sent into the ranks of the

Republican Party to blow himself up, taking as many Republican bystanders with him as possible.” He continues his attack on Cruz saying, “The GOP can thank Ted Cruz for future losses at the polls...” Not exactly the worldview of someone who is deserving of conservative support.

Where else does **King** the moderate diverge from the traditional conservative ideology? **King** believes for example:

- **Pro illegal immigration:** “Republicans ... pander to the primary electorate base by seeing who can be the most extreme anti-illegal-immigrant zealot.”
- **Pro sanctuary city:** “Sanctuary is not a dirty word.” “I find it hard to understand the scorn heaped on young women stealing into the United States to give birth to their children here.”
- **Global warming alarmist:** “Humans burning fossil fuels is a significant, if not the predominant, contributing factor to global warming.”
- **Pro choice (abortion):** “I have always found it ironic that my evangelical friends are normally among those most eager to make abortions illegal. There is no biblical record of Jesus advocating changing any law.”
- **Pro gun control:** “[I]t would not bother me to further restrict assault rifles and magazine sizes...”
- **Pro amnesty:** “Just think about it. Some young person in a village in Nicaragua is going to decide to go to America without a visa because immigrants living here now can become citizens after 13 years. Give me a break.”

- **Opposes term limits:** “Since Houston adopted term limits in 1991 it has become one of the worst managed cities in the country.”
- **Opposes public prayer:** “I have a proposal I would like to advance that I think can put this issue to rest once and for all: Let’s stop praying in public.”



No, it is clear that **Bill King** shouldn’t be elected mayor of Houston, or any other city in Texas for that matter; perhaps Seattle or Boston, but certainly not Houston, Texas.

Why Bill King Won’t Win

Fear not conservatives; there is no path to victory for Mr. Unapologetically Moderate! And here’s why...

Bill King won’t have the resources to compete. At the end of the last reporting period, **King’s** campaign finance report showed a paltry \$300,000 cash on hand as compared with \$5.1 million for challenger **Tony Buzbee** and \$3.1 million for **Sylvester Turner**. To make those figures a little bleaker, if not for \$210,000 in loans, **King** would only have \$100,000 on hand, which is about what he is spending monthly.

King raised a little over \$100,000 per month in the first six months, but can’t be expected to maintain that pace, now that his biggest donors are capped out. Finding new blood won’t be easy either; when donors realize how far behind **King** is in the race and that his donor base can’t keep up with **Tony Buzbee**, they will fear that their contribution will be wasted and back away from **King**.

King is just too far behind. The polling we have seen puts **Turner** at about 40%, **Buzbee** close behind and **King** in a distant third place spot, still in single digits. At this point, **King** can’t close the gap because he just doesn’t have the resources to compete.

As unfair as it may sound, the larger the political contest, the more important are the qualities of personality, persona and charisma. Unfortunately for **King**, he comes up lacking in these qualities. Anyone who has ever listened to the unapologetically-monotone **King** speak, has to wonder if his intent is to inform or to anesthetize. Voters want energy, passion and enthusiasm. **King**, who

didn’t have much of these in 2015, is even flatter four years later in 2019. This disadvantage is even starker when he appears with **Tony Buzbee**, who is full of youth, energy and passion.

If **Bill King** had defeated **Sylvester Turner** four years ago, the city would undoubtedly be in a better place because it doesn’t get worse than **Sylvester Turner**. But **Bill King** didn’t win. 2019 is a different race from 2015. **King** is not the strongest candidate and **Bill King** shouldn’t win. **Bill King**—as a lifelong pay-to-play culprit—lacks the moral authority to end pay-to-play at City Hall. And he lacks enthusiasm, passion, resources and a path to victory, which means **Bill King** won’t win. The only question that remains is who can beat **Sylvester Turner** in 2019. As you might have guessed, we have an idea, so keep reading. ★

2019: WILL CONSERVATIVES FINALLY WIN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OR WILL WE SUFFER YET ANOTHER HEARTBREAK?

For many conservatives, electing a mayor of Houston who at least shares some of their conservative values is their version of Ahab's "white whale." For them, the last victory was nearly two decades ago in 1991, when the incumbent mayor, **Kathy Whitmire**, was denied re-election and didn't even make it past round one. Instead, the two challengers, **Sylvester Turner** and **Bob Lanier**, faced each other in a runoff and the more conservative Lanier bested liberal foe **Turner**. Since then, there have been many heartbreakers for conservatives; some closer than others.

In 1997, conservative Republican and former **George H. W. Bush** cabinet member, **Robert Mosbacher**, squared off against former Houston Police Chief **Lee P. Brown** in a runoff election to succeed outgoing **Mayor Bob Lanier**. That one wasn't close; Democrat **Lee P. Brown** bested **Mosbacher** by a wide 53% to 47%. Four years later, Republican **Orlando Sanchez** would challenge **Mayor Brown** and would lose to the incumbent in a heartbreaker— 51% to 49%. Sanchez, undeterred, returned two years later to face Democrat **Bill White** for an open seat; but lost to **White** by a 62-38 chasm. In 2011, Republican candidates **Jack O'Connor**, **Fernando Herrera** and **Dave Wilson** managed to garner 40% of the vote; but **Parker's** 50.83% allowed her to retain her position without a runoff election.

Then of course there is 2015's contest in which **Sylvester Turner** and **Bill King** faced off in a runoff election, which was decided by 4,082 votes making it eerily similar to the result of 2001 which was decided by just 4,383 votes.

The problem that these conservative losses have in common is that these candidates repeat the same tactics while expecting a different result—what is often referred to as the

definition of insanity. Instead of using what should be the blurred lines of non-partisanship to their advantage, they erase partisan ambiguity making it a Republican versus Democrat contest, which puts them at a distinct disadvantage in a city of Houston contest. In a D versus R matchup in the city of Houston, the D's have a decided numerical advantage. These

The mistake that conservatives make is trying to identify and support the most ideologically pure candidate rather than the candidate closest to their values, who is also the most electable.

contests are reminiscent of those scenes from Revolutionary War battles in which troops—clearly identified in uniforms of blue (Continental Army) and red (British Army)—lined up against each other across the field of battle and fired volleys from their muskets until one side was decimated by either musket shot or the hand-to-hand combat that typically ensued. Each cycle Republicans, including the aforementioned King, dress in their Republican red uniforms and repeat the strategy of the previous election; all the while expecting a different result, which never comes. Some contests are closer than others, but a loss is a loss, no matter if it is 4,000 votes or 40,000 votes.

But this is not an issue that is completely the fault of the candidates. Conservative voters are complicit; one of the first questions

conservative ask of their municipal candidates is—"Are you a Republican or a Democrat?" It is at this point that the self-identified Republican is sunk. The party affiliation question has brothers and sisters that fuel the fire of the conservative candidate's incineration. These questions pin down the candidate on issues such as abortion, gun control and building the wall—all important issues to conservatives, but ones that are national in scope and have nothing to do with repairing streets, solving drainage/flooding problems or putting more police officers on the streets. Candidates who engage on these national litmus test issues will often secure the support of single-issue voters, but at the expense of the more moderate city voters who care more about local issues than national ones.

The mistake that conservatives make is trying to identify and support the most ideologically pure candidate rather than the candidate closest to their values, who is also the most electable. As much as conservatives love the idea of purity and loathe viability, they must admit that two decades provides enough evidence to prove it is a flawed approach and look for a new one if we are to win races in the city of Houston.

Any voter who has read and understood the facts about **Sylvester Turner's** performance during his first four years in office must agree that the city of Houston cannot afford four more years of incompetence and corruption at Houston City Hall. The question that must now be answered is, "What is the strategy and who is the candidate who can beat **Sylvester Turner** in 2019?"

For the strategy part, conservatives must not repeat the mistakes of the past; to get a different result, we must take a different approach. This means (1) abandoning the Republican versus

Democrat framing of the contest; (2) keeping the contest local, rather than nationalizing the election with national candidates and issues; (3) supporting the most electable candidate, rather than the most ideologically pure or the most Republican; (4) energizing voters with a non-traditional campaign and; (5) finally it means that conservative voters must turnout and actually vote.

The other half of the victory equation is backing the best candidate, in terms of background, viability, and issues. In the parlance of the Revolutionary War theme, conservatives need a “**Benjamin Martin**,” which was the character portrayed by **Mel Gibson** in the Hollywood blockbuster, **The Patriot**, which is loosely based on true events. In the film, **Benjamin Martin**—who was not an actual person, but a composite of several people including **Francis “Swamp Fox” Marion**—used unconventional tactics to score military victories.

So, who is the “**Benjamin Martin**” of the current field of candidates facing **Sylvester Turner**? In TCR’s estimation, there is no question that **Tony Buzbee** fits that bill and represents the best chance to beat **Sylvester Turner** in what will undoubtedly be a runoff contest in December following the general election on November 5th.

The Buzbee Story

Tony Buzbee grew up in the small Texas town of Atlanta, whose population at the time was just under 1,400. His upbringing is described as “modest” or “humble,” which everyone recognizes in financial terms as “poor.” His parents were working class; his father a union meat cutter for Safeway and his mother worked two jobs—school bus driver and cafeteria

worker. They worked hard to support their family of six, which included **Buzbee**, his brother and two sisters. They lived together on a small family farm, where **Buzbee** was responsible for rising early to feed hogs before climbing on his mother’s school bus. In addition to his obligations on the farm, **Buzbee** worked two jobs to



supplement the family income. He recalls lying in a bed that he shared with his brother and hearing his parents debate which bills would be paid and which could wait.

Buzbee was ambitious from an early age and vowed to himself that he would get out of Atlanta, Texas; although he wasn’t sure how. One day, one of the community’s leaders, who took a liking to **Buzbee** for his “spunk” on the high school football field, offered to take him to a Texas A & M football game in College Station, which for **Buzbee** was a world away from Atlanta, Texas. His decision to accept the invitation is one that changed his life forever, he says. From the moment he stepped on the campus, he knew that’s what he wanted. He took that desire and made his dream come true by earning an ROTC scholarship to fund his dream. Upon graduation from Texas A & M, **Buzbee** was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. **Buzbee’s** first assignment was as platoon

commander of a weapons platoon that had been six months without a platoon commander and had become substandard under its current platoon sergeant. **Buzbee** assessed the situation and requested that the platoon sergeant be transferred out so that he could locate and promote a replacement. It was a bold move, but one that showed leadership and one that he promises to apply as mayor if elected—**Buzbee** has already promised a review of all department heads and is on record saying that he will replace the current police and fire chiefs. It also demonstrates that **Buzbee** has experience leading from day one. **Buzbee’s** exemplary service record earned him an invitation to compete for a spot within the elite

Reconnaissance Battalions (RECON), a Special Operations Capable unit within the Marines. **Buzbee** tells how the class started with 59 Marines, all with perfect fitness scores, but would be reduced to just three after three grueling days; **Buzbee** was among those three who were accepted into the elite forces. During his decorated service, **Buzbee** led Marines in both Somalia and the Persian Gulf, before leaving at the rank of Captain.

After discharge from the Marines, **Buzbee** moved to Houston where he attended and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Houston Law Center. After a brief time working for a large law firm, **Buzbee** founded his own law firm where he specialized in helping workers seriously injured and killed on the job. Since he founded his firm, he has grown it to be one of the top firms in the nation. In addition to his legal career, **Buzbee** has an extensive business career in which he has helped turn around failing businesses, including restaurants and hotels. He also built a real estate

portfolio of commercial and residential properties. He's also been involved with tech startup like the mobile app Favor, which was just sold to the HEB grocery chain.

Impressively, **Buzbee** has built all of his ventures with no debt.

Take-aways from **Buzbee's** history are numerous. His modest upbringing taught him the value of the dollar, and he learned from his parents the idea of

never giving up, which are assets in a political campaign and qualities voters will want in their mayor. As a businessman, he has a perspective that **Turner** does not possess. **Buzbee** is a leader; he led young Marines in combat which prepared him to run an effective campaign; he led teams of lawyers to build one of the most successful law firms in the country and ultimately he is prepared to lead the 22,000 workers at the City of Houston out of mediocrity and into excellence.

Buzbee's Resources

Tony Buzbee is self-funding his campaign, which will be a major key to his victory. While other candidates are expending the resources of time and money to raise campaign dollars, **Buzbee** can focus on connecting with voters, not donors and special interest groups. This means that **Buzbee** is the only candidate in the race who can match or exceed **Sylvester Turner** dollar-for-dollar, despite a seemingly endless flow of pay-to-play donors looking to siphon more taxpayer dollars from city coffers.

Tony Buzbee has a number of built-in constituencies that he can count on in his path to victory. For example, **Buzbee** is the only veteran in this year's mayor's race, which

will earn him a large share of a huge veteran population. At a time when voters are getting behind veterans, like **Dan Crenshaw**, **Buzbee** is



expected to do very well, especially in Kingwood, which includes a large block of **Crenshaw** voters. Incidentally, if elected, **Tony** will be the first Marine to be mayor of Houston. In a similar vein, **Buzbee** would be the first Aggie elected Mayor of Houston, which will give Houston's substantial Aggie population a reason to get out on November 5th.

Perhaps one of **Buzbee's** greatest advantages is his ability to secure support from Republicans, conservative Democrats and Independents.

Buzbee the Independent

Tony Buzbee is not afraid to run an unconventional campaign and was quick to adopt and stick to a non-partisan candidacy. As someone who has been on both sides of the partisan aisle, he claims status as an Independent.

Buzbee remains independent of party labels and his official position regarding party affiliation is documented on his website which reads, "**Tony** is frequently asked about his party affiliation; whether he is a Republican or a Democrat. The simple answer is that **Tony** is Independent— independent of divisive partisan politics and partisan bickering...

independent of cronyism and special interests and...independent of the pay-to-play donors who control politicians with their campaign

contributions. Why are we typecasting Tony as only a conservative candidate? Why can we not, in 2019, finally help elect a candidate who will work with us to address the serious crises we face in our city? **Tony Buzbee** is THE Independent voice for all residents of Houston,

whether Republican or Democrat." **Buzbee's** independence will be a key element along his path to victory.

Buzbee on the Issues

Part of **Tony Buzbee's** success as a lawyer is his ability to rapidly absorb information and quickly become a subject matter expert. While **Bill King** routinely confesses that he has studied city issues for 20 years, **Buzbee** doesn't need that kind of prep time; he learns much faster, which is an important attribute for the mayor of a city where things are rapidly changing. **Buzbee's** command of the issues and ability to formulate solutions to Houston's problems is documented on his website with a comprehensive campaign platform that runs the gamut from corruption to waste and inefficiency.

Fighting corruption is a key plank of the **Buzbee** platform. It is the issue that launched his campaign and one that he has campaigned on continuously since he entered the race. **Buzbee's** pledge to not accept campaign contributions ensures that he can remain independent from the influence of campaign donors and special interest groups. He also pledges to seek a charter amendment that would prevent campaign

contributors from being able to enter into a contract with or work for the city for a period of one year to prevent the rampant pay-to-play that he alleges against the **Turner** and previous city administrations.

Another area where **Buzbee** is outspoken is in the area of public safety. In that regard, **Buzbee**

expenditures but also to audit city processes to identify ways to become more efficient

- Dedicating drainage fee revenues to drainage projects and ending all diversions
- Repairing and clearing the existing drainage system to move water faster



promises to give firefighters passage of Proposition B, which nearly 300,000 voters have already approved. He also promises to end HFD's All Hazards Response policy that rolls fire trucks and ambulances to every call, regardless of type. **Buzbee** is also critical of **Turner's** handling of policing and the rising crime and low clearance rates attributed to **Turner's** policies. Under **Buzbee's** plan, the city would add another 1,500 police officers and adopt "anticipatory policing" drawn from the CompStat concept that utilizes statistics to prevent crime before it happens, rather than the current model that is focused on reacting after crime occurs. The CompStat model was used in New York City to drastically reduce crime there.

Other **Buzbee** planks include:

- Implementation of Zero-based budgeting to rein in city spending
- Full online disclosure of all spending for the public and the media
- Appointment of an independent auditor not only to audit

- Reward developers who invest in flood abatement with dollar-for-dollar offsets to drainage taxes in the year of the investment to encourage drainage-friendly construction

The Buzbee Campaign—Anything But Typical

Tony Buzbee is implementing many of the tactics of a traditional campaign—he was up early on television, is a prolific social media advertiser, already has three pieces of mail out the door, has over 1,000 4' x 8' signs in every corner of the city, participated in five parades and over a dozen candidate forums. He has also recruited a grassroots army of over 1,000 volunteers who have knocked 125,000 doors, made over 100,000 phone calls and placed over 12,000 yard signs, all according to a recent email to supporters. As many as 75 volunteers routinely show up to his Saturday volunteer days to phone bank and block walk. These astounding metrics, perhaps above

all others, are indicative of the fact that **Tony Buzbee's** campaign is in no way ordinary. He has tapped into a burning desire among the electorate for change and leadership. His groundswell of support is clear at the meet-and-greet events he holds in every neighborhood across the city—he has held over 60 thus far—that pack restaurants and event halls with crowds averaging 100+ people, but have reached as high as 1,500.

The Kingwood 4th of July Parade served as a perfect microcosm of the difference between **Buzbee** and his guerilla-style campaigning and that of his nearest, albeit distant, third place challenger, who is running a safe, traditional campaign. **Bill King's** entry into the parade was a faded green 1990's pickup truck, too new to be considered classic, but too old to be considered contemporary. It was...well...old. **Buzbee's** entry was a different story. He rolled in with three massive military vehicles that served as a reminder of his military service. The crowd reaction was immediate; as was that of King's supporters who tried to hide their consternation at being eclipsed, again. In the parade itself, King looked comfortable waving from his golf cart. **Buzbee** also looked comfortable; working the crowd on foot without motorized assistance. He moved fast, but so many in the crowd wanted to shake his hand or take a selfie with him that he often fell behind his convoy of giant metal war machines; at which point he took to the double-time, running to bridge the gap, so that he could once again work the crowd.

It is events such as these that have created a **Buzbee** following normally reserved for rock stars and athletes; and when he enters a room, the atmosphere changes. It becomes more electric. Then the camera flashes start to pop—leading to selfie after selfie. In fact, fans have waited in the photo line as long as an hour for their turn with the man they know in their hearts

will be the next mayor. **Buzbee** supporters have called his campaign a “movement.” And they just may be right. The **Buzbee** phenomenon even drew the attention of Texas Monthly magazine, which featured **Buzbee** in their October edition.

Buzbee claims that, when he is elected mayor, he will leverage the enthusiasm for him and his movement to create a new era of volunteerism that will inspire people to donate their time and resources to improving the city. Among his ideas, he proposes a citizen police academy that will provide auxiliary police officers—much like the Harris County Reserve Officer program—to back up full time officers. When he criticizes **Mayor Turner** for spending millions of dollars on bands at the airport, a homework help hotline and Christmas lights at City Hall, he quickly offers an alternative—partnering with corporations and individuals to provide these services on their dime, not the city’s.

The Final Key

The excitement surrounding **Tony Buzbee’s** campaign for mayor of

Fighting corruption is a key plank of the Buzbee platform. It is the issue that launched his campaign and one that he has campaigned on continuously since he entered the race.

Houston hasn’t been seen in decades, if ever. **Buzbee** is a phenomenon. His campaign is a movement. **Buzbee** breaks the rules and breaks the patterns that have left conservatives broken hearted for at least two decades. A **Buzbee** loss would likely

be the biggest heartbreak of all, since hopes are so high for this unique candidate. **Turner** and his Democrat machine are roadblocks to a victory. But the biggest roadblock is ourselves. In 2015, conservatives stayed home in droves. Had they turned out to vote, **Sylvester Turner** would still be in the State House, collecting \$10,000 a month from his pay-to-play buddies at Linebarger. Instead, he has spent the last four years running the city of Houston into the ground, going on taxpayer funded junkets and rewarding his pay-to-play donors with millions in city contracts. Conservatives are the key to putting an end to **Sylvester Turner’s** political career and electing a real leader who can turn the city around. We have the best opportunity in decades to put a responsible leader into the mayor’s position. The only question is whether or not conservatives will turn out and vote and thus make this dream a reality. ★

ABOUT TEXAS CONSERVATIVE REVIEW EDITOR

Gary Polland



The pugnacious and always outspoken Gary Polland is one of the leading conservative voices in Texas. Whether it’s through the popular TCR internet newsletter and website, regular radio appearances, his TCR voters guides, or as co-host of *Red, White and Blue* - the popular political roundtable show on Houston Public Media (PBS Channel 8), now in its 18th season (visit www.houstonpublicmedia.org for past episodes) - Polland is a force for tough, thoughtful conservatives.

Polland has been a practicing attorney for more than 43 years. His practice is a mix of trial work in family, civil and juvenile courts. He is Board Certified in Civil Trial law and has a reputation as a tough and skilled advocate for his clients.

Human Events described Gary Polland as the most successful County Chairman in America.

Polland served as Harris County Republican Chairman from 1996 to 2002 and was overwhelmingly

returned to office every time he ran. As Party Chairman, he earned national recognition for his leadership and has been featured in publications like *Human Events*, *The American Spectator*, the *Houston Chronicle* and *Inside Houston Magazine*.

Gary also appears regularly as a commentator on KTRH, KPRC and KSEV radio stations.

Gary was named one of the 15 top civil trial lawyers in the Houston area in 2018 by *Houstonia Magazine*.

Whether it’s on the web, in books, on television and radio or at the forefront of the latest political battle, Gary Polland is a thoughtful pragmatic conservative leader that voters have come to trust for insight and accurate information. ★

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