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San Diego City Council
District 1

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Response to the Mayor's Five-Year Financial Outlook

San Diego— San Diego residents have good reason to be concerned by the mayor's five-year financial outlook because:

- it projects four straight years of deficits
- it relies on one-time revenue resources to balance these budgets, leading us straight into a structural deficit
- this mayor inherited a balanced budget in 2013, yet will leave a structural deficit behind as his legacy.

After the City of San Diego's response to the Hepatitis A health emergency, the Independent Budget Analyst (IBA) repeated that the level of spending for homeless services was not sustainable. In response, the mayor proposed the Navigation Center to efficiently direct homeless to appropriate services. It was subsequently disclosed that the Council was given incorrect information about the value of this real estate, and it became clear that it would never be the promised one-stop shop for homeless with co-located partners like SSI and the DMV. As a result, I voted against the contracts. I've said it before and I'll say it again, "a laptop is a navigation center." The center is yet to open its doors and it's time to transfer precious resources to effective interventions.

This administration operates opaquely. This year alone brought some major and troubling revelations:

- after the mayor reported the remodeling of the 101 Ash Street property as "on-time and on budget," it was shut down due to asbestos contamination. How did we find out? I walked past the shuttered doors with a Do Not Enter warning displayed.
- the mayor approved a "no-bid multi-million-dollar contract" for short term vacation rental (STVR) tracking services. We know this because an ethical employee reported it to the fraud hotline.
- a news article informed us that, after allocating funds to test a backlog of rape test kits, the kit testing policy had been changed. In response to this expose, it was changed back.
- the city auditor reported that San Diego taxpayers are subsidizing trash pick-up for up to 16,000 visitor accommodations, in part, because the mayor has refused to enforce our zoning ordinance.

These and other jaw-dropping examples have contributed to the financial straits that we find ourselves in, and I am painfully aware that the surprises will likely keep coming.

As your Budget Chair, I will lead the Budget Review Committee by continuing to demand transparency, honesty, and data. Once we know definitively what the City of San Diego spends and where it spends it, I'm prepared to make the tough, and perhaps even unpopular decisions, required to serve our citizens, become an employer of choice, and restore financial stability and accountability to our city.

Council President Pro Tem Barbara Bry represents San Diego City Council District 1, which includes the communities of Carmel Valley, Del Mar Heights, Del Mar Mesa, La Jolla, Pacific Highlands Ranch, Torrey Hills, Torrey Pines, and University City.

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