

City of Los Angeles Needs ‘Unpolitician’

OP-ED By DAVID W. FLEMING and LEE KANON ALPERT Monday, August 22, 2011

The 2013 L.A. mayor’s race is going to have a wide-open field of candidates, populated mostly by political insiders from city, county and state government.

In addition to career politicians, there is someone who LA Magazine dubbed “The Unpolitician.” That man is civic leader and former First Deputy Mayor Austin Beutner – and knowing Austin as we do, “unpolitician” is an apt description.

When Beutner announced his candidacy, there were some who questioned his viability and experience. They clearly didn’t know him very well. Beutner is a job creator. He founded the firm Evercore Partners, which he built into an international powerhouse, employing thousands. He also has a global perspective stemming from his time in President Clinton’s State Department, where he led the U.S. team tasked with transitioning Russia to a market economy. In addition, he has a proven track record of getting things done in City Hall during his short tenure as L.A.’s first deputy mayor for economic and business policy.

Beutner recently answered doubters about his financial viability by delivering first quarter fundraising numbers totaling more than \$405,000. The sum was gathered in just 11 weeks from 579 contributors despite L.A.’s \$1,000 per-person fundraising cap. That’s an average of \$36,000 a week, outpacing the seasoned political insiders in this race. Not bad for a first time candidate.

Teddy Roosevelt

People connect with Beutner’s vision to remake Los Angeles into a great 21st century city – a city that works. Beutner embodies the Teddy Roosevelt model of “speak softly but carry a big stick.” Sure, he’s quiet, but he has demonstrated the intelligence, creativity and perseverance to get things done. According to the Downtown News, in just 15 months as deputy mayor, Beutner’s accomplishments exceeded what most people in city government have been able to achieve in five years.

For starters, Beutner engineered the enactment of L.A.’s Business Tax Holiday, which will create 55,000 jobs. He brought in companies such as Mission Foods to the San Fernando Valley, Google to Venice and BMW to West Los Angeles. By leveraging the city’s assets, he lured the Microsoft Partners Conference to Los Angeles and away from Houston, resulting in \$48 million in attendee spending, 50,000 hotel room nights rented and millions in tax revenues.

A true political independent, Beutner will not be held hostage to partisan politics or ideological special interests. As mayor, he will seek out the best ideas from the public and private sectors, regardless of politics, and will lead from the center.

L.A.'s next mayor needs to reduce unemployment, rein in budget deficits, reform the pension system and tackle a whole host of challenges. Beutner will shift the conversation from what city government can't do to what it can do. That means doing more with less, building new coalitions and making Los Angeles a great city again – the envy of the world.

That's why we support Beutner as our next mayor.

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