



VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET

2020 GENERAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD

Proposition #16

The arguments for or against a ballot proposition are the opinions of the authors.



PROPOSITION # 16

PROPOSITION #16 TEXT:

Shall Section 2.04.030 (Governing body) of the Grand County Plan for County Government be amended to change the composition of the Commission from seven members to five, as follows: "The governing body of the county shall be a five- member county commission (the Commission), which shall ..."

- FOR
- AGAINST

Argument FOR Proposition #16:

It is understandable for a community like Moab to realize the need and value for a representative board that is larger than three members. Lessons from our past have taught us that expanding our board of representatives beyond three has created a more inclusive and diverse collection of community members to serve as our legislative and executive authorities in Grand County. Our more immediate history and current exercises in County government have also clearly proven that while three members is too few, seven members is too many. The pursuit of increased transparency and a more representative board taken too far can harm the ability for a board to work efficiently and effectively through issues and challenges. Far too long have we witnessed a lack of effort and engagement from one or more board members while four to five members do most of the work for the board and subsequently the county. A five-member board of elected representatives allows for a diversity in membership without sacrificing efficiency and productivity of the board through excessiveness and an over-abundance of members. Boards of seven members and greater are common in Utah's urban areas, yet they still generate concerns and frustrations pertaining to their ability to legislate and govern with efficiency. While we are a very diverse community, we remain a rural class 5 county that will greatly benefit with a reduction to a five-member board.

A YES vote on Prop 16 is a vote for an elected body that can work with efficiency and productivity, while allowing for transparency and a diverse membership of community members.

Sponsor:

Curtis Wells

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Argument **AGAINST** Proposition #16:

A Yes vote on Proposition 16 is a vote to reduce diversity on the County Commission. Changing the number of seats from seven to five would mean fewer voices and fewer points of view on the commission. **Vote No on proposition 16.**

Grand County is a very diverse place, and the County Commission should reflect that diversity. It's much easier to do this with seven seats than it is with five.

For the past 28 years, Grand County's legislative body has had seven members. This has allowed for increased ideological diversity, age diversity, income diversity, and geographic diversity on the council/commission. **More seats means more points of view are represented, and more points of view means better decision-making.** Vote No on Proposition 16.

The arguments offered in favor of five seats don't add up:

* "Fewer seats mean fewer commissioners who don't pull their weight." There is no guarantee that only hard-working commissioners will win elections. Fewer seats is just as likely to result in fewer hard-working commissioners. More seats means more opportunities for hard-working, committed commissioners to be elected.

* "Seven seats is unwieldy." With seven seats a commissioner needs to persuade at least three of his or her colleagues to pass an ordinance. With five seats, a commissioner would need to persuade only two others to pass an ordinance. **Seven seats makes it harder for bad ideas to become law.**

* "Five seats would save money." In counties throughout Utah, fewer commission seats typically means higher salaries. Fewer seats means a higher workload for each commissioner, which creates pressure for higher salaries. Commissions can review and set salaries each year, whether there are five seats or seven.

To repeat, Grand County is a very diverse place, and the County Commission should reflect that diversity. It's much easier to do this with seven seats than it is with five.

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Rebuttal against Argument for Proposition #16:

Mr. Wells admits that a **7-member commission would be more inclusive and diverse**. But then he suggests two reasons why we should not choose a more diverse commission. Both reasons are flawed.

It is claimed that a 5-member commission would be more efficient. I have attended numerous meetings of both the 5-member Moab City Council and the 7-member Grand County Commission over the years. The 7-member GCC meetings are usually more efficient than the 5-member MCC meetings. **Five members is no guarantee of efficiency**. We should not sacrifice diversity for imaginary efficiency gains that will not actually happen.

It is also claimed that with five members the county commission will have a higher percentage of hard-working members. There is no evidence in recent elections that this is true. Hard-working candidates often lose to less-hard-working candidates at the ballot box. **Reducing the number of seats is just as likely to reduce the number of hard-working commissioners** as it is to reduce the number of not-hard-working commissioners.

A 7-member commission increases the chances that we will have a diverse commission with at least five hard-working commissioners. Vote **NO** on Proposition 16.

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