



VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET

2020 GENERAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD

Proposition #17

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



PROPOSITION # 17

PROPOSITION #17 TEXT:

Shall Section 2.04.040.A (Election qualifications, terms and nominations of commission members) of the Grand County Plan for County Government be amended to remove districts seats and elect all commission members at-large, as follows: "All Commission members shall be elected from the county at large. "

- FOR
- AGAINST

Argument **FOR** Proposition #17:

Districts are commonly defined as a "distinct unit with a particular characteristic." Grand County's current districts have been widely deemed unconstitutional and are merely antiquated boundaries from past Grand County School District boundaries. As we move towards a more improved and clearly defined County Government, it only makes sense to restore At-Large voting in Grand County Government. While Grand County is a diverse and unique geographic and demographically populated region, these diversities are not concentrated or reside in specific areas of our county. Every street and road in Grand County hosts friends, family, and neighbors with differing views and opinions on issues both local and national. Historical districts in Grand County that were premised on inappropriate boundaries have no place in our future. At-Large districts will allow for the most qualified candidates to become elected to represent their community, regardless of their address in Grand County.

A YES vote on Proposition 17 is a vote for electing the most qualified candidates for local government.

Sponsor:

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Argument **AGAINST** Proposition #17:

Proposition 17 would require that all County Commission seats are elected at large. Exactly the same pool of voters would elect each of the County Commission members. This proposed change makes it more likely that each of the County Commissioners would hold similar views. **If you want a more diverse County Commission, vote NO on Proposition 17.**

The Grand County Commission currently has a mixture of at-large and district seats. Voting NO would retain this mixture.

Moab City elects all of its council members at large, and consequently there is less diversity on the Moab City Council than there currently is on the Grand County Commission. A Yes vote on Proposition 17 would make Grand County government more like Moab City in this respect.

A large fraction of the important decisions the County Commission makes are planning and zoning decisions: whether or not to endorse a highway bypass on the west side of the valley, where to locate future high density housing projects and commercial development, etc. If one of the commissioners lives in or near your neighborhood, the interests of your neighborhood are more likely to be understood and protected by the County Commission.

Electing a majority of county commissioners by district ensures that there is geographic diversity on the commission. More geographic diversity means better planning and zoning decisions -- decisions that take everyone's interests into account.

If all seats are elected at large, it could easily happen that **all of the commissioners live within a few blocks of each other within Moab city limits**, and yet they would be making planning and zoning decisions for the unincorporated parts of the county.

The arguments offered in favor of all at-large seats don't add up:

* "I want to be able to vote for all of the commissioners." — You might be able to cast more votes, but each of those votes will have less influence. At-large elections have more voters than district elections, which dilutes and reduces the influence of each individual vote. On balance, Proposition 17 will **not** increase your influence in County Commission elections.

* "It's easier to recruit candidates if all seats are at-large." — There may be some truth in this, but one pays a heavy price in loss of diversity to gain some ease in candidate recruitment. On balance, the costs of all at-large outweigh the benefits.

Grand County is a diverse place, but if exactly the same pool of voters elects each of the county commissioners, the commission is less likely to reflect that diversity. **Vote NO on Proposition 17**

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Liz Thomas

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Rebuttal against Argument for Proposition #17:

Under Prop 17, all seats on the County Commission would be elected by **exactly the same pool of voters**. This would likely result in a **less-diverse County Commission where all commissioners hold similar views**.

The Moab City Council elects all of its member at large; all seats are elected by exactly the same pool of voters. And, unsurprisingly, all five members of the City Council hold similar political views. Prop 17 would make it more likely that Grand County commissioners would be less politically diverse and resemble Moab City in this regard.

Prop 17 would reduce geographic diversity as well as political diversity. Under Prop 17, we could have all County Commissioners living within the city limits, but they would be making zoning decisions for the unincorporated parts of the county in Spanish Valley. **We will have better planning and zoning decisions if County Commissioners live in many different parts of the county.** Prop 17 makes this less likely.

The county is required to redraw district boundaries every 10 years to reflect new census data. The current district boundaries will be redrawn in 2021, which will fix the problems of unequal district populations.

Prop 17 will reduce both geographic and political diversity on the County Commission. Vote NO on Proposition 17

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