

COMMISSIONERS ORTIZ, GRIEGO CENSURED, REMOVED FROM COUNTY DEM CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Over efforts to recruit and elect Republican Candidate to join them on County Board

OFFICIAL STATEMENT:

(July 19, 2022)

Representing a political party as a candidate or officeholder is a privilege, not a right. Unless choosing to seek election as an Independent, our current process for selecting individuals to seek an elected position demands consensus among affiliated voters who believe their candidate best represents their values.

County Commissioners Garrison Ortiz and Epimenio Griego have betrayed the trust of thousands of Democrats who granted them the ability to carry the banner of the Democratic Party."

Garrison Ortiz and Eppie Griego are not Democrats. They are not Democrats in spirit or practice. Their endorsement of the Republican candidate for County Commissioner was not borne of concern for their community or their party. Rather, it is a product of arrogance, ambition and self-interest.

On the evening of July 7, 2022, Ortiz and Griego gave speeches in support of their hand-picked Republican candidate at his campaign launch party. Ortiz and Griego's speeches, as quoted in the Pueblo Chieftain, were both disappointing and disingenuous. Ortiz and Griego's suggestion that their support for the Republican was because he is the "best candidate for the job" at a minimum is confusing and more accurately dishonest. Based on his own comments, it is clear that Ortiz recruited and encouraged the Republican to run long before he even knew who the Democratic nominee would be. The Republican is not the best candidate for the job; he is the best candidate to fuel and validate Garrison Ortiz's personal agenda. "I only have two years left, maybe. I really want to ensure that all of the hard work, the pain, the sweat that all of that does not go to waste," Ortiz said.

In short, Garrison Ortiz's premeditated plan to anoint a Republican was designed only to secure his own legacy, to own the Board of County Commissioners. It was not based on a contrast of platforms of candidates that were unknown to Mr. Ortiz. To you, Garrison Ortiz, the Pueblo County Democratic Party says, District 3 is not your seat. District 3 and all seats on the Board of County Commissioners belong to the voters of Pueblo County. Your legacy, while apparently important to you, is not in the best interest of the citizens of Pueblo County; particularly since your legacy includes the expenditure of more than one hundred million dollars on a jail that the voters of Pueblo County repeatedly told you they did not want.

As candidates for County Commissioner Ortiz and Griego bamboozled the Democrats of Pueblo County by touting their Democratic values. There is nothing Democratic about hand-picking a Republican to sit next to you on the Board of County Commissioners because you believe he will ensure that your egos are stroked and your legacy preserved. "The best candidate for the job" is the one who reflects Democratic values. There is no Democratic value in endorsing an anti-choice candidate who would oversee the budget of our Pueblo County Health Department. It is not a core Democratic value to endorse a candidate that supports the anti-labor platform of the Republican party. No, the Ortiz and Griego endorsements of a Republican candidate who was already rejected by the voters of Pueblo County in 2020, were a betrayal of Democratic values and the Democrats and Unaffiliated voters that worked so hard to elect these two men. Mr. Ortiz and Mr. Griego, the "hard work, the pain, the sweat" of the loyal and united Democrats who elected you to office is what has indeed gone to waste.

Therefore, as a result of their betrayal of the principles, values and rules of the Pueblo Democratic Party, the Executive Committee and the Chairperson of the Pueblo Democratic Party, hereby issue a public censure of Garrison Ortiz and Eppie Griego and hereby remove them from their seats on the Central Committee of the party.

Mary Beth Corsentino
Chairperson, Pueblo Democratic Party