

OPINION

BAGLEY'S VIEW » "SCENTS AND INSENSIBILITY"



I'm no fan of Mendenhall, but a mayor of Salt Lake City should be paid more

In my assessment, the mayor's salary has always been too low, which eliminates top-tier leaders in the middle of their careers who have the leadership expertise to serve but cannot settle for the low compensation for the position. Instead, these qualified individuals who could bring their business acumen to the public sector stay within the security of the private sector.

If we want experience in the mayor's office, we must be willing to pay for it.

Salt Lake City has a history of electing first-term mayors who spend nearly their entire first term learning how to run a complex capital city with over 3,500 employees and a nearly \$2 billion budget. A constituency budget and staff that large sets Salt Lake City apart in the state and requires managerial expertise. These first-term mayors, in my opinion, often lack the skills, talent or wisdom to lead effectively from the start. Many past mayors have been elected to a second term, where their on-the-job training begins to show results. In almost every case, their performance in the second term is vastly improved over their first four years.

Wouldn't it be wise for Salt Lake City to elect mayors who have the leadership experience of managing teams of people right from the beginning?



Salt Lake City Hall, the location of the mayor's office.

Inexperienced first-term mayors can cause millions of dollars in lost opportunities due to poor decisions or no decisions being made at all. Failing infrastructure, safety concerns and homelessness issues handled by inexperienced leadership have already driven businesses and young families out of our capital city. Without a vibrant business community, we will lose millions of dollars in tax revenues. Salt Lake City needs experienced leaders, and proper compensation will help achieve that, as outlined in this 2008 study

that found "increases in salaries not only attracts more candidates, but more educated ones." Any private sector company with 3,500 employees and a \$2 billion budget would certainly pay its top executive more than \$168,000 salary. Even at the mayor's requested increase of 26%, it would still be very low. We should strongly consider the old adage that you get what you pay for. Without proper compensation, Salt Lake City will not attract the talent our city deserves. I have not been a big proponent, as many know, of Mayor



DAVID IBARRA

Erin Mendenhall. But I am a big proponent of Salt Lake City, and it deserves the best leadership. Having a proper compensation plan will go a long way to achieving that. This mayor is entering her second term, and I don't believe for a minute that she hasn't learned a lot and gained valuable experience that should help her in her second term. I know the negative thinkers — and there are a lot of them — will say no one merits a 26% increase. But again, you get what you pay for, and our city deserves and needs experienced leadership from day one. I believe we should approve this increase for the mayor's office and all future mayors.

David Ibarra is a leadership consultant, entrepreneur, speaker and author with a background in the hospitality, automotive and talent development industries. He lives and works in downtown Salt Lake City, and he ran for mayor in 2019.

THE PUBLIC FORUM

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Fauci should be honored

I am sickened by the GOP legislators who are shamelessly attacking Dr. Anthony Fauci over his role in valiantly leading our country through a disastrous global pandemic.

Dr. Fauci is a true American hero. During the AIDS crisis in the 1980s, Dr. Fauci called for rational responses to this terrifying pandemic. At this time, AIDS was primarily affecting gay men. The Reagan administration did not acknowledge or offer support to help understand this disease and how to combat it. Dear friends of mine were dying of this disease at an unfathomable rate. The gay community was isolated and under attack by ignorant political and religious zealots. We were terrified.

Dr. Fauci was already a preeminent physician and expert scientist of infectious diseases. In his role as chief medical advisor to President Reagan, he presented facts to counter the growing national hysteria. Dr. Fauci's expertise led to the discovery of how HIV is transmitted. His efforts resulted in the development of treatments that have stopped HIV illness from being a death sentence.

Can you imagine how vulnerable it felt to be a gay man in the 1980s? If so, you may be able to appreciate how much we were relieved and aided by the presence of Dr. Anthony Fauci. You may also understand why this amazing man is a hero

to people like me. Countless people are alive because of this man.

Dr. Fauci is arguably the most important figure in the fight against HIV. He is also one of the most effective and successful figures in protecting us from the catastrophic covid pandemic. He deserves to be honored and revered, not insulted and demeaned by ignorant political grandstanders.

Dale Palmer
Sandy

Like people, juries are biased

There has been a great deal of contention recently about possible jury bias in the case of Donald Trump. I suggest that the answer is quite simple: Of course the jury was biased! So was the jury that acquitted O.J. Simpson. So were the all-white, racist juries that acquitted the men who killed Emmett Till, and twice acquitted Medgar Evers' killer. Just as all humans are biased, so too are juries.

Biases often reflect our experiences; they can be favorable or unfavorable. Biases only mean that we have "blind spots," or distortions, in our perceptions of reality. They are distortions because one's experiences never capture everyone's reality. If I were a conservative, straight, cisgender, devout Latter-day Saint, it's likely I would have a different experience of life in Utah than I would if I were a queer person of color, someone of another faith, or someone who identified strongly as liberal.

When Gov. Spencer Cox declared June a month of "Bridge Building," instead of honoring Pride Month, I was offended. My reaction

was that those in power in Utah, who too often oppress others who do not believe and look like them, can build bridges with people like me anytime they want. Until then, I have no interest in building bridges with those who repeatedly ignore my voice and my values. My biased reaction reflects my experiences in Utah.

I presume that the vast majority of those who serve on juries do so with the sincere intent of impartially considering the evidence. Alas, juries are composed of fallible humans. It is therefore inevitable that they, and our justice system will be biased. Alas, "life is not always fair."

Ken Roach
Salt Lake City

Four questions for Sen. Lee

Dear Sen. Lee: Is it acceptable for a political candidate to pay someone off to suppress a news story about that candidate?

Is it acceptable for a political candidate to fail to report campaign expenses, and instead falsify business records so that his pay off to suppress the news story isn't traced to him?

If these acts are acceptable, have you or will you do the same?

If they are not acceptable, why shouldn't they face criminal prosecution?

I believe that a free press, a citizen's right to know about candidates, and a transparent election system are crucial to a democracy. Let's elect people who agree.

Linda F. Smith
Salt Lake City

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