

Lawrence, Sharon

Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL]: Seat replacement

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From: Robert Stevens [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 22, 2022 8:57 AM
To: Luzerne County Council Meeting Public Comments <LCCMPC@luzernecounty.org>
Cc: editorial editorial <editorial@standardspeaker.com>
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Members of Council,

Please read at the upcoming meeting.

I am writing in regard to the vote to replace the recently vacated seat on county council as a result of the election of Robert Schnee. I would like to offer my opinion as a citizen of the county, the Greater Hazleton Area, and a constituent.

First and of most significant concern is the issue of his replacement by a member of the Democratic Party or Republican Party. I served previously as the 1st District Democratic Chairman. Mr. Schnee was a Registered Democrat, and a Democrat Committee member.

In his campaign for County Council, he ran as a registered Democrat as well as a write in on the Republican line. That said, he was supported in that campaign by the Democratic Party. That included party money, infrastructure, committee and volunteer assistance, as well as poll workers. He was endorsed by the party and appeared on Democratic Party "tickets" used at the polls on Election Day.

In short he was elected as a Democrat despite the Republican write in and assumed office as a Democrat. Voters had an expectation that he would serve as a Democrat. His subsequent decision to switch party allegiance was a personal choice and irrelevant to the issue at hand. The seat is clearly and by all logic a Democrat seat and should remain so until the end of the term. If voters, who make the choice of representation choose at that time to elect a Republican then so be it...but it's the voters choice, not a Republican majority on County Council who would essentially be overturning the will of the voters when Mr Schnee was elected.

I would also strongly recommend that the choice of his replacement be selected from within the 1st District from which he was elected. This would also reflect the will of the voters.

I know Mr Schnee well and congratulate him on his victory as a member of the State Legislature. That said, the logical, fair, and I believe legal path is to fill his seat with a registered Democrat.

Perhaps in order for Council to avoid the appearance of party bias, they might consider allowing the courts to make a determination based on their understanding of the law and interpretation of the County Charter on this matter.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my views on this matter. In the final analysis, this appointment will not change the balance of power on council as there is an overwhelming Republican majority. Doing the right thing will show that council is interested in maintaining the essence of the democratic process.

Respectfully,

Bob Stevens

██████████ Hazleton, PA 18201

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Bob

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