

Mayoral candidates offer stark differences

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Published: Saturday, October 21st, 2017 at 11:42pm
Updated: Saturday, October 21st, 2017 at 11:54pm



Mayoral candidates Tim Keller and Dan Lewis

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When Albuquerque voters go to the polls to elect a new mayor next month, they will have a choice between two very different candidates.

State Auditor Tim Keller, a Democrat, supports sanctuary cities, opposes the Santolina development and says he would work with business owners and employee rights groups to come up with a workable sick leave policy for the city.

City Councilor Dan Lewis, a Republican, opposes sanctuary cities, supports Santolina, advocates for breaking up the Albuquerque Public Schools district and wants to judge the judges through scorecards.

Those are just some of the issues that set the two candidates apart.

Keller and Lewis were the top two candidates in the Oct. 3 city election, with Keller receiving 39 percent of the vote and Lewis getting nearly 23 percent. But because no candidate walked away with 50 percent, Keller and Lewis will now go head-to-head in a Nov. 14 runoff. Early voting starts Wednesday.

Among the fundamental differences between Keller and Lewis are their philosophies on tackling the city's problems. On the campaign trail, Keller has made it clear that he will embrace fixes that the city can implement on its own – not solutions that require state lawmakers or others to act.

"We're going to spend time listening and learning, and then we're going to take action," Keller said, pointing to such things as his plan to bolster after-school and summer activities for APS students.

"We are not going to wait any longer for the county or judges or anyone else to deal with our issues. And that kind of urgency and ownership and taking responsibility has been the hallmark of our campaign and will be the hallmark of our administration."

KELLER VS. LEWIS

Here is a summary of where the mayoral candidates stand on several issues:



Albuquerque Police Department

KELLER: Wants

LEWIS: Wants 1,200

Supplemental programs for APS students

KELLER: The city should retool its Parks and Recreation Department so that it's providing arts, science and sports programs for all kids after school and over the summer break.

LEWIS: The city should reconsider subsidizing APS-related programs, given that APS has a \$1.3 billion budget compared with the city's \$530 million budget. APS should pick up the tab for such things as school crossing guards, and the city should channel

Santolina

A planned 21-square-mile development southwest of Interstate 40 and 118th Street

KELLER: Calls it subsidized sprawl. Says he has a long history of fighting subsidized sprawl and would continue to do that.

LEWIS: Says he is pro-growth and is open to sustainable communities with a focus on job creation, such as Santolina.

Public financing for city candidates

KELLER: Is running a publicly financed

LEWIS: Has previously used

1,200 to 1,400 officers.

officers, or 25 officers for every 10,000 residents.

Scorecards on judges

KELLER: Says he will stand up and own Albuquerque's challenges and won't pass the buck to judges or anyone else when it comes to the solutions for attacking crime.

LEWIS: Notes that judges are elected and says his administration would develop a scorecard by which voters can "judge the judges" on their decisions to release or keep "dangerous and repeat criminals" in jail.

Gun policies

KELLER: There are sensible things that can be done to curb gun violence, including clamping down on the sale of unregistered guns through Craigslist-type sites and throwing the book at convicted criminals caught with illegal firearms.

LEWIS: The Legislature should tuck on a 10-year sentence for violent felons who use guns.

Breaking up APS

KELLER: Opposes breaking APS up into smaller school districts, saying the city has no power to make that happen and arguing that breaking it up would create even more bureaucracy.

LEWIS: Favors breaking up APS into smaller, accountable districts. Says the city loses millions of dollars every day because of the reputation of APS, which he calls a "massive failing school district."

funds currently being spent on APS-related programs to APD.

Sanctuary city

KELLER: Supports making Albuquerque a sanctuary city, although he notes that there's no broad agreement about what a sanctuary city is. The term generally applies to cities that vow to protect immigrants or bar using local resources to enforce federal immigration laws.

LEWIS: Opposes sanctuary cities, preferring a "common sense policy that protects the constitutional rights of people, that welcomes people in this city and also complies with the law of the land."

Allowing ICE agents at city's transport centers

KELLER: Opposes current policy of giving Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents space at the city's transport center to check the immigration status of people who have been arrested and about to be booked into the county's detention center.

LEWIS: Supports giving Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents access to those who have been arrested and are about to be booked into MDC.

Raising taxes

KELLER: Would support it as a last resort for public safety, but only with voter approval.

LEWIS: Opposes raising taxes, saying the city doesn't have a money problem, it has a priority problem.

mayoral campaign. Says public financing is critical to provide an alternative to special interests and big donor campaigns, which he calls a root cause of many government challenges. He would, however, like to see changes to the city's campaign finance system, including making the amount of public dollars participating candidates receive more competitive, and allowing candidates trying to qualify for public financing the ability to collect their \$5 donations through the internet.

Mandatory paid sick leave

KELLER: Says he would work with both sides to create a sick leave policy that works for all.

LEWIS: Says he will not propose any kind of mandated paid sick leave.

Death penalty

KELLER: Voted to repeal the death penalty while he was a state senator.

LEWIS: Says the death penalty should be brought back for child murderers and cop killers.

Abortion

KELLER: Is pro-choice.

LEWIS: Is pro-life.

the public finance system but says it's not viable in a mayor's race unless a candidate also has a political action committee supporting them, which Keller has. "Nowadays, taking public financing in a mayor's election exposes the hypocrisy of a candidate that also has a PAC in their name raising money with all these other people who have given to their campaigns in the past," he says.

By contrast, Lewis has proposed fixes that would require action from the Legislature or others.

He has argued for breaking up APS, calling it a "massive failing school district." He said the district's reputation costs the city millions of dollars every day. But splitting up APS would require action by the state Legislature.

Lewis has also advocated for reinstating the death penalty for child molesters and cop killers, something that would require action from state lawmakers and the governor. Same goes for his desire to tuck on 10 years for violent felons caught using a firearm and his call for a three-strikes law targeting repeat offenders.

"I'm going to put the families and the people of this city before the criminals in this city," Lewis said. "I'm not going to allow criminals in this city to have more rights and freedoms than law-abiding citizens."

Keller and Lewis also come from very different backgrounds.

Keller, 39, was born and raised in Albuquerque and attended Catholic schools here from kindergarten through his senior year in high school. He earned his bachelor's degree in finance and art history from the University of Notre Dame and later obtained a master's in business administration from Harvard Business School.

He served as a business economist for various companies before becoming state auditor in 2015. He also served in the state Senate for about six years.

Lewis, 47, is an ordained Baptist minister who was born in San Jose, Calif., but moved around a lot as a kid. He earned his undergraduate degree at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix and later earned his master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

He moved to Albuquerque with his wife and daughter in 1996 to work with First Baptist Church. He and his wife, Tracy, later started Soul Rio Church.

Lewis also started two small businesses and has served on the City Council for eight years. He currently serves as vice president of Desert Fuels, a wholesale fuel supplier, and president of Desert Fuels Transport LLC., a division he started.

"Tim Keller, I believe, wants the best for this city and he cares about this city. And we're friends," Lewis said. "We just have vastly different records on crime and jobs and our vision for how this city can thrive. We have very different visions for how our city will look in the next few years and how we get there."

Keller said he and Lewis agree that addressing the city's crime problem is the priority.

"I've been working with folks in law enforcement and in fire," Keller said, "and thanks to their endorsement for our campaign, we are coming in with a plan that has some teeth to it and that folks are already aligned around . . . and I think that's going to allow us to move fast as opposed to having to start from scratch."