

EPISO has candidate accountability session ahead of early voting for midterm election

By Eloiso De Avila and Jessica McKay, Guest columnists

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In these days of concerns over issues at the national level such as immigration and threats to health care, it is refreshing to see democracy in action at the local level.

The El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization and Border Interfaith will be doing just that — bringing democracy to life at the local level on Sunday.

These two organizations will hold an accountability session at 3 p.m. at Christ the Savior Catholic Church, 5301 Wadsworth Ave., in Northeast El Paso.

EPISO and Border Interfaith have invited and will host candidates for four City Council offices — Districts 1, 5, 6 and 8 — and County Commissioner, Precinct 4. The questions have been generated by our parishioners at house meetings held in our institutions. Yes or no answers will be required of all candidates so that their answers are clear and there is no misunderstanding as to where they stand on the questions/issues asked. Candidates will be given time to explain their answers.

The questions that will be asked are issues that have come from our member institutions, such as a safe environment for all residents and support for comprehensive immigration reform. From our research in talking to county officials, we learned that domestic violence reporting was down by approximately 25 percent. We heard about the need for economic development so our graduates from the University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College can stay in the city. Again and again, the people voiced their frustration with streets in dire need of repair. Potholes, nonexistent sidewalks and inadequate lighting, we were told, made for unsafe conditions in our communities, which negatively affected their lives.

The election Nov. 6 will be the first city and county election held during the November election cycle.



(Photo: David Burge/El Paso Times File)

Up until last year, city and county elections were held in the spring. People voted for the change in order to increase voting. This will be democracy in action. We tell our people to come to our session, get to know the candidates, listen carefully to their answers and then go out and vote.

So, come to the session, inform yourself on the issues affecting our families, then vote your conscience. Make your voice be heard through the power of your vote. Please come and join us.

Eloiso De Avila is co-chair of EPISO. Jessica McKay is co-chair of Border Interfaith