



For Immediate Release  
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Thursday December 8, 2010

## **BASTA Leadership Announces Comprehensive Community-Driven Process for Candidate Evaluation**

***BASTA leadership calls March 8<sup>th</sup>'s election the most important in Bell history and says only a community-based candidate evaluation process will guarantee accountability and transparency.***

Today, **BASTA** leadership announced that it has devised a comprehensive evaluation process for the March City Council Recall and General Election. The process will include a detailed candidate questionnaire and public forum process to grade the quality of potential new council members.

The process will include examining candidates' criminal and financial background and work history, their plan for creating transparency, improving access to government and information, fostering civic engagement, and creating financial stability for the City of Bell. Additionally, candidates will be asked about their views on public safety, work protections and appropriate workplace behavior.

The grading will be done by community members based on the questionnaire and forum participation. All candidates participating will receive a grade of very qualified, qualified, not qualified, or did not participate. There is no limit to how many candidates can receive a qualified/very qualified score.

"The Bell scandal would have never happened if more qualified and more ethical councilmembers would have been elected. So, we cannot fix Bell unless we fix the quality of candidates in terms of a commitment to ethics and their knowledge of local government. That's what an open community-driven process is all about," said **BASTA** representative Denisse Rodarte.

The **BASTA** questionnaire and evaluation process was created through expansive community input that was conducted in an open forum at **BASTA** meetings. The process is meant to measure the quality of candidates and **not** to create a **BASTA** slate of candidates. In fact, it will be mandatory for any current members of **BASTA** leadership to resign their positions prior to announcing their candidacy. In addition, **BASTA** coalition partners the Bell Police Officers Association (BPOA) and AFSCME District Council 36 will be conducting a **separate** process.

**BASTA** candidate questionnaires will be available on December 13 at **BASTA** headquarters (4027 Gage Ave.) and now available online at **BASTA4bell.com** (Attached you will find a copy of the questionnaire). They will be due January 7, 2011 so all candidates have an opportunity to participate. Dates for community forums with candidates and details of the process will be announced shortly, but the forums will take place in early 2011 and they will be open to all. All candidate information will be made public online and at the forums.

All **BASTA** representatives are unpaid volunteers. **BASTA** remains committed to financial transparency and believes it is crucial to leave the ugly, divisive politics of the Rizzo regime behind. That only worked to divide us, not make us a strong, vibrant city capable of local control. We invite anyone who has a difference of opinion with us to sit down with us and discuss it. We remain committed to doing all in our power to **Take Back Bell**.

**BASTA** is a coalition of Bell residents, the Bell Police Officer's Association and AFSCME Council 36 who are committed to restoring ethical and honest governance to the City of Bell.

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