Rebuttal For the Council-Mayor Form of Government

The best evidence against opponents’ sky-is-falling rhetoric is the success of neighboring cities like Murray, Sandy, and Taylorsville who already use the Council-Mayor form with better results and less dysfunction.

EXPENSE: The new form moves the development of the city budget from the appointed bureaucracy to the elected mayor. With budget responsibility, a mayor’s office can end runaway staff expenses such as $760,940 in golden parachute money paid to departing city managers since 2008.

BUREAUCRATS v. ELECTED OFFICIALS: The notion that representative government is inferior to government-by-bureaucrat is just flat false. The city can still employ a professional administrator, but ultimate accountability rests with someone who answers to voters. Both executive and legislative branches are strengthened at the expense of the bureaucracy.

MANAGEMENT BY COMMITTEE: Our current form allows everyone to pass the buck. The Council can blame the city manager. The city manager can blame the mayor. The mayor can blame the staff. But no one can really be held accountable. We need a strong executive who can take responsibility for successes and failures of city government.

REVERTING TO OUR FAILED FORM: We cannot return to the current form because the legislature has outlawed government-by-bureaucrat. It doesn’t work. Why would we want to return to a structure that has failed us for 30 years?

Opponents characterize our current form as tried and true. We call it tried-and-failed. Council-Mayor governments have a strong track record of success. Our current form of government does not. It’s time for a change.

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