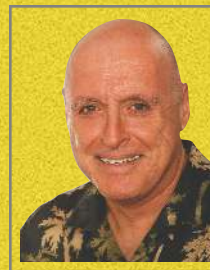


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1123 Vote For Who I Say You Should Vote For

Saturday night, Kandit News reported that Vanessa Williams, the attorney for Guam's Democratic Party, posted her choices for the upcoming primary election on Instagram. The post has received a lot of attention, as she blotted out the names of nine senatorial candidates, one congressional candidate, and one team running for Adelup. She urged Democrats to take a screenshot of her sample ballot and go vote early. My take on this might be a little different than most. I'm Jerry Roberts, and we'll dig into that next, on The Extra Point.

Attorney Vanessa Williams said no to: Jonathan Savares, Chris Barnett, John Ananich, Dave Duenas, Franklin Meno, Armando Dominguez, Senators Joe San Agustin and Amanda Shelton, as well as Speaker Therese Terlaje. She also crossed out Sen. Telenia Nelson from the congressional race, and the gubernatorial team of Mike San Nicolas and Sabrina Salas-Matanane.

I won't get into the backdoor political stuff that goes on in Guam. Ray is much better equipped to deal with that. I have two points to make this morning, that go a bit further.

First, is it effective when someone in a position of authority comes out publicly with a preferred list of candidates? Do voters actually respond to such a thing?

Unless Williams: A) Was out to make sure she'd be on the lips of everybody in talk radio on Monday morning; or B) Was sending a message to those people whose names were crossed out that the Democratic Party will go after you if you don't support who they want you to support; could she actually believe people would do the screenshot and take her suggestions to the polls?

Will her effort be successful, or will it cause turmoil within the party? What will be the

reaction and possible actions taken by the 11 candidates she publicly kicked to the curb?

Second point. Should businesses be active in bringing information to their employees, in an effort to influence how they vote?

My introduction to Guam politics was in the 1970s, when I was told by a friend that the owner of a major business apparently closed his operation, huddling all employees in a mandatory meeting to hear the views of one particular candidate. This owner gave the candidate a glowing introduction, and at the end made an impassioned plea for his workers to vote for this individual.

I wasn't there, I had a friend who worked for the company and got the information on what had taken place. I was curious, so I asked if this kind of partisan activity would work. Would the employees follow the owner's suggestion?

The answer I got was a giggle, followed by a strong "I doubt it! People in Guam vote for a lot of reasons, but what the boss wants isn't likely to be one of them."

I know that most CEOs and business owners wouldn't even think of trying something like that today. It would almost surely alienate a number of their workers. So, what can they do? Here's what I suggest.

1. Don't think that the Chamber of Commerce, Guam Contractor's Association, or any other organization can carry the entire load, to get pro-business candidates elected. Companies need to be involved.

2. Don't worry, you won't have to blot out the names of candidates, while pushing the rest. What you will need to do is to engage your workers, and talk about what policies and positions will be beneficial. (Con't.)

Let them know what hurts business, and how continuing ineffective methods and strategies will make it tougher to be profitable — and make it tougher to increase wages and benefits.

Let them know that it's in their best interests to elect representatives who don't ignore Guam's private sector most of the time.

Let them know that the federal gravy train is not going to run forever. One of these days the pandemic funds will run out. One of these days there will be a lot fewer military dollars flowing here. If we don't grow this economy, where will we be when Uncle Sugar tells us, "Sorry Guam, but the check is in the mail...and it's a lot smaller than before"?

Educating workers in this way won't insult them, and won't make the talk radio shows, but it may result in a slate of elected officials who finally pay attention to the needs of the island's largest sector, the one that pays most of the bills.

I have friends and family who work for GovGuam, and I want them to be continue to prosper. without a community of strong and vibrant businesses in Guam, that won't be possible.

Let Vanessa Williams' actions over the weekend — regardless of her reasons — help motivate everyone to get more involved to see that the winners of the 2022 election are us.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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