

“Your Vote – Your Birthright”

By Søren D. Simonsen

Just over 220 years ago, in September 1787, the authors of the Constitution of the United States began a great experiment in participatory government. Today, every person born in the United States and every person who immigrates and becomes a naturalized citizen inherits the right to participate in this birthright—the right to vote! Countless lives have been paid as a ransom in securing this right, defending this right, and expanding this right. I hope that you will join with me in *using* this right and visiting the polls on or before Election Day, November 6.

For residents of Sugar House, four important issues are on the ballot, including local government races and two important ballot initiatives. Voting in off-year elections is typically lower than in national races—less than one in three registered voters participated in the September primary election—and yet of all the things that impact our lives each and every day, these items on the ballot in November may be of far greater consequence.

Mayor’s Race

Who will replace Rocky Anderson as the next mayor of Salt Lake City? Voters will choose between two candidates, Ralph Becker (www.ralphbecker.com) and Dave Buhler (www.daveformayor.org). Recent debates have focused on leadership style, environmental policy, downtown development and neighborhood preservation, education, and public safety.

City Council District 6 Race

Some Sugar House residents—living north of 2100 South and east of 1300 East—will decide between two candidates for the District 6 City Council seat, J.T. Martin (jtmartin4citycouncil.com) and Roger McConkie (www.rogermconkie.com). Whomever is elected will face immediate and pressing challenges in land use policy, transportation funding, public safety facilities, and city-wide capital improvements.

Public Safety Facilities Bond

Voters will decide on whether to authorize \$190 million for five critical public safety facilities—a downtown emergency operations center and administration building, consolidated evidence storage, a combined east-side Sugar House police precinct and fire station, and a combined west-side fire station and fire training facility.

School Vouchers

The school voucher initiative is a state-wide ballot referendum, made possible by thousands of Utah residents who signed petitions circulating throughout Utah following the 2007 state legislature in early spring. The outcome of this referendum will have far-reaching impacts for both public and private schools in Salt Lake City.

The Salt Lake City Recorder and the Salt Lake County Clerk have worked hard to make voting as simple and accessible as possible. Although most people will still visit the polls on Election Day, early voting is possible at the Salt Lake City & County Building (451 South State Street, Room 415), and the Salt Lake County Complex (2001 South State Street, South Building) from October 15 through November 5. Polling locations and other election information is available from the County Clerk (www.clerk.slco.org), including how to register by October 22 to participate in the November general election.

With so much at stake and so much to gain by making your voice heard, there is no excuse not to vote.