

August 15, 2022

David Stahlke
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Grand Junction, CO 81501

Candidate Stahlke,

Restore the Balance is a 501(c)4 organization that educates the public about the danger political extremism poses to a healthy democracy. We urge citizens to learn about candidates running for public office and to support those who best put public interest first and work to bring citizens together.

To help citizens learn about candidates, we have created a questionnaire for you and your opponent running for Colorado State Senate, District 7.

We will share your responses, question by question, along with those of your opponent with our 2,300 members and supporters. We will also share them with various media outlets which we believe will help Mesa County citizens make the best decision about whom to support.

You will notice that we have also provided you with a set of seven political principles we believe should guide political conduct in Western Colorado. Please review them carefully. Some of our questions will be about these seven principles.

Please have your answers completed and sent to Restorethebalance@outlook.com by Tuesday, September 13 at 6PM. Please meet the deadline. We want voters to learn about your views. It would be a disservice for the public to see only your opponent's answers and not yours.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please send them to me at restorethebalance@outlook.com.

Thank you,

Steven Mandell
Restore the Balance

Restore the Balance

Seven political principles to guide political conduct

We must do more than simply be against extremism. We must embrace an alternative set of political principles. We believe these seven principles should guide us.

- **We believe** that political parties should vigorously compete over values, principles, and ideas, but also find common ground to solve problems and pass needed legislation. Gridlock is not an option.
- **We believe** facts, supported by irrefutable evidence, are the basis for what to believe and how to act. No civilization can endure when its citizens believe there is no such thing as objective facts or truths.
- **We believe** that no one has a monopoly on the best public policy proposals. That means the ability to listen to and understand both sides of a debate are a prerequisite to finding practical solutions.
- **We believe** public interest must come before party interest. This means putting what is right ahead of loyalty to a party or an individual party leader.
- **We believe** that problem-solving is more important than fund-raising. Extremists line their pockets then use the funds to amplify division instead of producing solutions.
- **We believe** citizens should be free to run for office or volunteer to support the candidate of their choice without being threatened or harassed. Extremism uses intimidation because it cannot stand up to independent, open-minded thinking. Instead, it relies on the mentality of the mob.
- **We believe** it is time to expect citizens to embrace individual responsibility. Extremists always talk about “freedom,” but never mention the responsibility to the community that comes with it.

Colorado State Senate, District 7
David Stahlke (D)

By now, you have read and considered the seven political principles we feel should guide political conduct in Western Colorado.

1. Do you believe that political extremism poses a threat specifically in Western Colorado? If yes, please explain why. If no, please explain why not. **Yes, indeed. I believe that because I have personally experienced it while working as an election judge. And then there's Lauren Boebert, Tina Peters, Stand for The Constitution, and so on.**
2. Do you endorse each of the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Western Colorado? If you endorse them all, please explain how you will work to execute these principles. If there are one or more principles you do not endorse, please identify them and explain why. **Yes, except for this part of the third principle "That means the ability to listen to and understand both sides of a debate". On some issues there are only two sides – right and wrong. There is nothing to be accomplished by listening to or trying to understand Lauren Boebert, or any of the other wannabe fascists and election deniers she hangs out with. I honestly don't care what Ted Cruz thinks and I have no interest in wasting any time trying to understand him.**
3. We believe that public interest must come before party loyalty. It is important our elected officials have the courage to stand up for what is right even when their party puts pressure on them to "go along."
 - a. Is there any current policy of your party you disagree with? If yes, what are you doing to bring about change? **I can't honestly say that there's anything I flat out disagree with, but I have mixed emotions about student loan forgiveness, and I consider myself more of a conservationist than an environmentalist. As for what I'm doing, I became more active in party politics. In particular, I joined the platform committee where I was able to at least influence the direction of the local party. In that same light, I became the precinct organizer for my precinct and a caucus delegate to all the local assemblies. Now I'm running for office.**
 - b. In the past, have you disagreed with a policy or piece of legislation your party has endorsed or supported? How did you stand up to get your point of view across? What actions did you take? **I wasn't very keen on NAFTA and I never trusted China, so I thought rapprochement should be done very cautiously, if at all. Honestly, I can't say I did stand up in those cases. The actions I finally took would be the same as the ones above.**

4. Can you provide some examples of how you worked with members of the opposing party to craft legislation as an office holder or in developing your policies as a candidate? Please be specific. *I've never been an office holder or crafted legislation. In my professional life as a computer programmer, I worked on a great variety of large and small projects that involved many different stakeholders, each with their own agenda and desired timeline. My working model has always been one of collaboration and consensus. On the other hand, I'm not sure how I could work with an opposing party that, at the national level at least, just wants to say no. How does one "work with" the Lauren Boeberts of the world? If you dance with the devil, you will be the one that gets burned.*
5. There is much concern about mass shootings taking place across the country. Congress has passed by bi-partisan legislation on the subject.
 - a. Do you support the legislation that was passed this year? Why or why not? *Yes, I do. As modest as it was, at this point anything helps.*
 - b. What other changes you would like to see in gun legislation? *Reviving the ban on assault weapons, making open carry in public places illegal, creating national standards for who can buy what, and at what age they can do it, including a national requirement for a background check on ALL gun purchases.*
6. The legitimacy of 2020 election has become a point of contention between 2022 election candidates. Do you agree that the 2020 election results were legitimate? If you do not feel that President Joe Biden was fairly elected, why do you feel that way and what factual evidence supports your belief? *I'm sorry but this is kind of the dumbest question ever. Absolutely I agree. Anyone who doesn't is either delusional or hypocritical and simply isn't worth ten seconds of anyone's time.*
7. What are the three biggest issues facing citizens in Western Colorado? Briefly describe your proposed solutions to two of these three issues. *I'm tempted to say water, water, and water, but that doesn't really answer the question. Still, water is the first and most important issue here on the West Slope. Unfortunately, there's not much we can do on the supply side, so we must work with the demand side. To me this means conservation and efficient use, and we need to get serious about it. The time for half measures is over. I would support prohibiting grass lawns in new residential, commercial, and public building construction. I would enhance and aggressively pursue the state "Cash for Grass" program, partly by providing a property tax break for locations that removed grass. I would require the use of low flow water appliances, including showerheads, in all new construction. I would prohibit the sale of any water appliances, including*

showerheads, that don't meet low flow standards. I would require farmers to use the most efficient watering techniques available and I would subsidize the equipment necessary to comply with that. I would consider imposing a surcharge for residential or commercial water usage above a certain level.

The next issue here on the West Slope would have to be affordable housing, much like everywhere else. This is a tougher nut to crack. Affordable housing just doesn't usually generate enough profit to interest most developers, but the reality and history of government housing projects isn't special either. How can either the market and/or the government create the necessary incentives to provide places to live that working people can actually afford and want to live in? Honestly, I'm not sure how to answer that question, and so this would be an area where I would be actively seeking and evaluating ideas from virtually any source.

After that there are any number of issues that need to be addressed. Good access to medical care, rural broadband, protection of public lands, cost of living, voting rights, gun control, abortion rights, and so on. It's difficult hard to say which of these is more important than the other.