

Restore the Balance Q&A
Paul Black for La Plata County Commissioner District 3

1. Why are you running for La Plata County Commissioner? What qualifications do you bring and how are you preparing to serve if elected?

I think we need to bring a culture of value and balance back to La Plata County. Local government and government at large, should not be controlled by a single political party. Our system was designed to have equal representation, and we need to get back to that.

I have lived in La Plata County my entire life. I've served on the Pine River Conservation District for 6 years. I own multiple small businesses with my wife. I understand the struggles residents in our community face. I believe, if elected, I will bring a much-needed perspective on ways to improve the process and efficiency of the county operations.

2. Do you agree with the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Colorado. If you do not agree with one or more of these principles, please identify and explain why.

Yes, the principles align with my values. It is very important to have cohesive and cooperative political conduct. We all live here together and for the most part share similar goals for our community. It's the County Commissioners responsibility to adopt policy that upholds the health, safety, and welfare of the county. For a long time, our BOCC has only been represented by one party to create policy that affects us all, leaving a large portion of the county unrepresented.

3. Do you believe Colorado's current election laws and procedures provide for secure elections and encourage voter participation? Please explain the reasons for your answer.

I had the privilege of observing the process during the Primary with our local La Plata County Clerk, Tiffany Lee, and I learned a lot about how the process works. I believe they have a very well thought out and smooth process. I feel that we need to do a better job as a State to ensure voter rolls are accurate. Ineligible voters should be removed from rolls in a timely manner.

4. If elected, what actions will you take to help find common ground with your fellow elected officials on both sides of the aisle.

It has been my experience that we have more in common than we think. It is important to listen to other perspectives and experiences. We need to focus on things that better our community as a whole. We can agree on some issues and disagree on others. Finding a solution through discussion and working collaboratively, we will find common ground and solutions all parties can live with.

5. If elected, how will you listen to and represent the concerns of constituents who don't agree with you?

If elected, I will be representing all residents, not just those who voted for me. Our problems and solutions should be addressed as a community. We all use the same roads, the same bridges, the same fiber optics. We shop at the same local businesses, and we share the same goals for bettering our county, our tax dollar value, and our way of life. I believe we can see things differently based on different life experiences and still find compromise by working together.

6. What are the top three issues facing La Plata County and briefly how do you plan to address these issues if elected?

1. Every direction we look we see the cost of living rising. Some of those expenses are out of our control, but some we can work to decrease. I believe sales tax, county fees, and the permitting process to build a home can all be adjusted to help with the cost of living.
2. I believe we are experiencing the consequences of adopting a Land Use Code and Policies without understanding the true impact of what it can do to a community. It's hindering the ability for small businesses to operate which limits job growth, makes it difficult and expensive for a family to build or purchase a home, and it limits a landowner's right to use their property in a way that makes it sustainable.
3. We have an aging infrastructure that needs to be updated and maintained. I believe the citizens need to be getting the value out of their tax dollars, and that funds should be focused towards the infrastructure needs.