

# A Republican would improve City Council

If you're a Columbus voter, statistics say that you're probably not a Republican. Maybe you're a truly independent swing voter. Or maybe you're a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat who has one of those bumper stickers that says, "Somewhere in Texas a village is missing its idiot." Maybe you're even a Unitarian.

Either way, what I'm proposing isn't going to be easy. Especially for the Unitarians.

On Nov. 6, you should vote for a Republican for City Council. There are four of them—Paul Bingle, Bill Brownson, Jim O'Grady and Larry Thomas—running in the eight-candidate field race. A fifth, Heidi Samuel, is running in a separate race to fill an unexpired term.

You can vote for all five of them if you want, but you need to vote for at least one of them. You could go with Samuel, a no-nonsense community activist. You could pick Brownson, a smart lawyer who would be the first openly gay council member since—well, since Mary Jo Hudson left earlier this year. Or you could vote for Bingle because it's fun to say "Councilman Bingle."

City Council simply needs a Republican.

This isn't because there's anything wrong with the Democrats. They all seem like good people. Council President Mike Mentel might a little high-strung, but then, so is my mom. And I love my mom.

It's just that they could use someone to offer a differing point of view now and again. And it would be healthy to have someone who was chosen by the electorate rather than by the other council members through an appointment.

For about a decade, the role of City Council Republican was played ably by Jennette Bradley. She occasionally served as a refreshing antidote to the self-congratulation that takes place among City Hall Democrats.

Bradley wasn't always right and, in fact, she didn't always disagree with her fellow council members. But you felt like she did her part to keep them honest.

But then Bob Taft snapped her up to make her Ohio's lieutenant governor—a post with even less influence than that of City Council Republican. On the other hand, they

put her name up on those "Welcome to Ohio" signs on the freeway, and that had to be pretty cool.

When Bradley left in 2003, council replaced her with a Democrat, and City Hall has been duller for it.

Single-party rule is never a good thing—not even for the single party that's in power. It didn't work out for the Ba'ath Party in

Baghdad or for the Republican Party at the Ohio Statehouse.

It's unlikely City Hall Democrats will face an outcome as bad as either of those did, but why take the chance?

I asked City Councilman Kevin Boyce if he agrees that council would benefit from some new, Republican blood.

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I don't," he said. "At this stage I think we have a great working council."

I tried a different approach and asked him which of his fellow Democrats he'd like to see replaced if council had to add a Republican.

"You're kidding," he said.

I wasn't, but he still wouldn't answer.

"I wouldn't want to replace any of them," he said.

That's a little hard to believe. Wouldn't everybody love the opportunity to be rid of one of their co-workers? Preferably the one who always says, "Working hard or hardly working?" at the water cooler. Or the guy who's always showing you photos of his kids.

I mean, what are you supposed to say? "Wow, Steve, you and your wife must be very proud of having unlocked the secret to human procreation."

Anyway, even if Boyce won't vote for a Republican Nov. 6, you should.

Voting for a Republican doesn't mean you have to *become* a Republican. Just because you pull the lever for Bill Brownson or Heidi Samuel doesn't mean

you have to start watching *Fox and Friends* or saying nice things about John Boehner.

In fact, nobody needs to know. This can be your little secret, like the time you downloaded Billy Ocean's "Get Outta My Dreams, Get into My Car" from iTunes.

Don't even think of it as voting for a Republican. Think of it as giving Kevin Boyce the chance to meet new people.



DAN WILLIAMSON

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