



# NEW MEXICO BUSINESS COALITION

March 5, 2018

Dear Councilors Sanchez and Jones:

On behalf of the New Mexico Business Coalition (NMBC), I am very disappointed in your proposal to increase the city's Gross Receipts Tax (GRT).

As a nonpartisan grassroots association, NMBC had higher expectations of your leadership on the City Council. Both of you are business professionals who surely must understand how detrimental an increase to GRT will be to our city. If you truly want to raise revenue, your first requirement should be to cut the abundance of waste in the city budget. Secondly, you should be doing everything possible to broaden the tax base by making the city a place where local businesses thrive and prosper. This will create more tax payers rather than increasing taxes on a dwindling number of taxpayers.

The worst solution to the deficit before you is exactly what you've proposed: a tax increase. This will only worsen the burden on those who live and do business in the city. And the people hurt most by this tax increase are those who are low income or living on a fixed income: the unemployed, underemployed and retirees.

You have both been serving a very long time on the City Council. Perhaps you've grown weary from previous battles that end with you making tough decisions and doing what is right for your constituents. We understand. But you've chosen to serve and we ask that you renew your commitment and fortitude to do the heavy lifting your constituents elected you to do.

Yes, we need more police, but it has been clearly communicated that the city has the budget to pay for the police force it needs. Unfortunately, the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) is currently paying a tremendous amount of overtime to cover the shortage of officers. If focus is placed on hiring officers, APD can stop paying the overtime!

The City is also looking at a \$25 million gap between projected and actual revenue and baseline budgeted expenditures. The biggest reason for that gap is the number of business that are closing and leaving this city – or downsizing – because it's too difficult and costly to do business here. As the president of NMBC, I hear of business closings on a regular basis. Passing this legislation only exacerbates that situation.

Councilors Sanchez and Jones  
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Your introduction of this legislation does not address the root problems and is simply taking the easy way out of a challenging situation by taking more money from the people who live, work and do business with the City of Albuquerque. I urge you to stop this bad move and vote against it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla J. Sonntag". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Carla J. Sonntag  
NMBC president and founder

Cc: Mayor Keller  
Councilor Benton  
Councilor Pena  
Councilor Winter  
Councilor Borrego  
Councilor Davis  
Councilor Gibson  
Councilor Harris