

## The Sheriff provides the rest of the story...

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### **1A gave too much money to jail, not enough to deputies**

Yes, I voted against the 1 percent county sales tax. But it wasn't the money; it was how they wanted to distribute the funds, with the lion's share going to a new high-tech, high-security jail. Now the areas I find important will get trimmed back because the powers that be will build the jail anyway. Do they not get the clue that we voters apparently have other priorities?

For instance, there was only a small percentage going to firefighting and sheriff's deputies. If they had earmarked more for operations and firefighting instead of more jails, I'd have voted yes. Having more patrols and firefighters is proactive, it's protection. Having comfy new places to lock up more criminals is locking the barn after the animals took off.

Our officials need to get in touch with what those who put them in office want, not make their own agenda.

Susan Stephens

Peyton

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### **Sheriff Maketa's response...**

In response to Susan Stephens letter titled, "1A gave too much money to Jail," the content of this opinion is simply not true. First, the claim that the county will just build the jail anyway is simply inaccurate. The County does not have the revenue stream to fund the expansion nor do they have the revenue to staff the current facility properly, let alone a proposed expansion. I am confident someday down the road, the County will be forced to build a new jail but that is not the case now or in the near future. The operation, funding and construction of a jail and the courthouse is a state statutory requirement placed on the county. This is clearly an unfunded mandate and not open for discretion. For clarification purposes, the ballot initiative was not for funding a new jail but an expansion of the current jail. Half of the revenue collected from 1A during the first two years was to pay cash for the expansion. The remaining revenue was to staff the expansion and hire additional personnel to properly staff the current facility, which is not adequately staffed. To make assertions that too much money went to the jail is not true. The jail plays a vital role in the criminal justice system and more importantly in our quality of life. We can hire all the additional police officers and deputies we want, but if there is no facility to take apprehended criminals, what purpose does having additional police officers and deputies serve? El Paso County jail does not have Maximum Security wards and as a result is forced to hold maximum-security inmates, who are extremely violent, in less than optimal wards. This situation creates an unnecessary risk to the staff that work in the facility. The jail expansion would have been designed to meet current code and federal laws with the technology incorporated only to the extent of making it more efficient and secure. Making it

comfortable was not the motivation behind the expansion because the design is dictated by industry standards based on building codes, federal regulations and court rulings. The expansion would have been efficient and constitutional.

Additionally, \$3.4 million was allocated to the District Attorney's Office. The District Attorney's Office is responsible for the prosecution of offenders that law enforcement officers arrest. If the D.A.'s Office is not properly funded and staffed, then who will prosecute these cases? 1A would have funded the DA as well as provided approximately \$1.3 million for the County Coroner's Office. The Coroner plays an important role in determining the cause and manner of death. This is a critical component in all homicide investigations.

1A would have also set aside \$7.6 million for the Sheriff's Office Law Enforcement function. This would have increased patrol deputies by 60% and provided the much needed civilian support for those Deputies, such as personnel to process reports and dispatchers to take calls from citizens and dispatch the patrol units. Additionally, another \$1.6 million was to fund and purchase equipment for our volunteer Wildland Fire Team and a Deputy County Fire Marshal, who would have been responsible for wildland fire prevention, mitigation and planning, as well as an arson investigator. Eight municipalities, besides the City of Colorado Springs, would have received a share back totaling \$1.7 million by the third year. The City of Colorado Springs would have received \$22 million annually through this share back. The revenue shared back with the municipalities was statutorily dedicated to Police and Fire. Detox would have received \$1.7 million and this service is needed to provide an alternative to incarceration or hospital emergency rooms.

The cutbacks and reductions to jail and patrol staffing are due to increasing costs, lawful mandates and inadequate revenue sources to address this growing community's public safety needs. I believe elected officials are in touch with citizen needs and their priorities, but elected officials also understand the statutory mandates that must be met to properly serve their citizens. Jails are never popular, and I am convinced that is why the federal legislators, state legislators and federal courts have mandated the requirements they have to the counties because they know they would not be popular with the citizens. Many of these mandates, especially those concerning the jail, are driven by the US Constitution and to ensure the preservation of the Constitutional Rights of our citizens. They can be costly and conflict with the wishes of a society; however, it is the price we, the citizens, must pay for the freedoms, safety and quality of life we have and enjoy.

Sheriff Terry Maketa

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