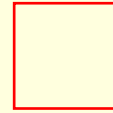


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Friday, May 15, 1998

COLUMN: Barbara Robinson

**BARBARA
ROBINSON**[MORE COLUMNS](#)

Adelson can't buy seat

The Citizens for Responsible and Ethical Government, headed by Charles Bennion, turned in more than 7,400 signatures in an effort to force a recall election of Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates. Enough signatures proved questionable as to stymie the effort.

The failed attempt cost at least \$35,000. Much of that went to those West Las Vegas residents who were paid \$5 per signature to get people to sign the recall petition. Bennion, who moved into Atkinson Gates' district in January, has admitted that Sands Inc. Chairman Sheldon Adelson heavily financed this recall effort. Many people are chuckling over Adelson's failed attempt to buy Atkinson Gates' seat. Imagine the nerve of people who don't even live in the community attempting to remove Atkinson Gates. I wondered when Adelson or his associate, Nevada Republican Party Finance Chair George Harris, last visited West Las Vegas or participated in activities for its residents.

The Sheldon Adelson Workfare Program was a success for some West Las Vegas residents, but a failure for Adelson as he continues his quest to control the Clark County Commission. One must remember that Adelson contributed at least \$74,000 to Commissioner Lance Malone's successful campaign, and he offered to sponsor the campaign of Nevada Highway Patrolman Steve Harney if he would move and challenge Myrna Williams.

Adelson has proved that the residents of West Las

Vegas will work if work is available. In addition to paying residents to gather signatures against Atkinson Gates, Adelson was paying an extra dollar to get signatures on a petition supporting the Paycheck Protection Act, heavily endorsed by the state Republican Party.

Many have misunderstood the residents of West Las Vegas. West Las Vegas is a community. The residents are not stupid nor are they disloyal. They ask the same question everyone else does: "What have you done for us lately?" Unfortunately, the Republicans, Adelson and his operative, Harris, had done little for the community before this workfare program.

But Atkinson Gates, a former Clark County School District trustee, has worked for her constituents for many years. Among her many successes in her five years as commissioner, Atkinson Gates has brought between \$8 million and \$10 million to her district, including three Early Childhood Development Centers (one is built and two have been funded) and one Senior Citizen Housing and Justice Center.

Chiropractor Terry Akers, who had announced he'd challenge Atkinson Gates in the recall, left his mother's home in Lance Malone's district and moved into an apartment in Atkinson Gates' district only last January. Many sources have alleged he, too, was funded by Adelson. Surprisingly, Akers picked Stan Washington, a paroled federal felon who himself can't vote, as his campaign manager. Washington had been the cause of much of the recent upheaval at the local NAACP.

The Republican Party did itself no good with this effort. The black Republican round table under Akers' leadership has lost what little credibility it had been able to establish. Many are wondering what black Republicans are about. They didn't speak up to support or denounce their fearless leader Akers as he pursued his ill-conceived campaign against Atkinson Gates.

Atkinson Gates' district extends outside of West Las Vegas. Its population is more sophisticated than Adelson had imagined. Adelson and the Republicans have demonstrated that even in a capitalist society some elections can't be bought. West Las Vegas residents hope Adelson will remember their hard work when he starts employing people for his new Venetian resort.

Barbara Robinson is a retired attorney living in Las Vegas. Her column appears every other Friday.

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