

May 28, 2019 City of Lompoc Budget Workshop Statement of Edwin R. Braxton

Good Evening Mayor Osborne and Councilmembers:

I am Ed Braxton, a member of the Public Safety Commission. I come before you this evening to advocate for the safety of the people that live, work and own businesses here in the City of Lompoc.

Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of California states, and I quote, "All people are by nature free and independent and have inalienable rights. Among these are enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining safety, happiness, and privacy."

It is no mistake that this verbiage has been set as Article 1, Section 1. It sets the foundation upon which all other sections of the California Constitution are built. It establishes the rights of the people and the duty of government to protect those rights. Without this foundation, nothing else really matters.

Within this section, it clearly states that the people have the right to acquire, possess and protect property as well as to pursue and obtain safety. Again, the government has the duty to protect these rights.

We currently find ourselves in a challenging fiscal environment as you consider this City's next budget. There has been pronouncements made by members of this Council that are troubling to me regarding the role of our fire and police departments and the budgetary cuts these departments may be facing.

So, here's what I would like to say...

Without a strong foundation of public safety, there is no economic development. There is no economic expansion. We need strong a strong fire department and a strong police department. For example, if you cut funding to the fire department and have no plan to replace equipment and vehicles, there could be a detrimental effect to property owners in the form of higher property insurance premiums. The same could happen if crimes against property increase. If the perception that this City increasingly unsafe, who will invest in existing property and that under development? Public safety and all it entails is the primary service any City must maintain for its people.

To conclude, Councilmembers have taken an Oath, in part, to uphold the Constitution of the State of California. I ask you to read Article 1, Section 1 for yourselves and make your decisions accordingly. What you do with this budget will have far-ranging consequences, many of which are unforeseen, for many years to come. I hope you have the foresight, courage and wisdom to do what is right for the safety of our City's people.

Thank you.

