

**Survey results of candidates for the Arizona Corporation Commission
Information & Opinion by Warren Woodward
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Two Democrats and two Republicans are running for two open seats on the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC). There are no Green, Libertarian or Independent candidates this election.

The short story is that, based on news reports, the candidates' public statements, answers (and non-answers) to my survey as well as their performance in the PBS debate (seen here: [Vote 2014: Corporation Commission Debate](#)), I will unenthusiastically vote for the two Democrats, Jim Holway and Sandra Kennedy.

I ask you to consider doing the same. Here's why:

Via email, all of them were asked 7 simple questions by someone unknown to them. Neither Tom Forese nor Doug Little, the two Republicans, bothered to reply. They were asked twice and given many days to respond each time.

I'll add that neither Forese nor Little responded to another friend of mine who sent them some questions before the primary election. He emailed them via their website and they did not respond. I was able to get their personal email addresses for my friend and he emailed them again. They did not respond at their personal email addresses either.

While I'm sure running for office is a time consuming hassle, I think candidates who do not respond are arrogant. It took two queries but at least Democrat Kennedy had someone at her campaign respond. That's better than nothing and, if Forese and Little were considerate, that's the least they could have done.

If the Republicans are that unresponsive when they *want* our votes, how responsive does anyone think they'll be after they *have* our votes?

You may know, millions of anonymous dollars have been funneled to the Forese/Little campaign. It is strongly suspected to be APS money, and Forese and Little are widely considered to be "the APS candidates." In the PBS debate, Forese and Little tried to distance themselves from APS but did a poor job of that in my opinion.

Little insisted that no ratepayer money of APS's went to supporting their campaign, just shareholder money (profits). I have heard this same ludicrous argument from ACC staff. Obviously there would be no shareholder money or profits without ratepayers! So if APS has enough left-over money to blow on donations (political or "charitable") then clearly rates are too high. And high or not, why is a regulated public service monopoly even allowed to influence elections? If the individuals who work for or own shares in APS want to throw their own money at politics that of course is their business, but allowing the monopoly public service

utility to do so itself is another story entirely.

To add to Little's sins, I received a report from one of my contacts who heard Little at a campaign event. When asked a question about removal of smart meters, Little said that removal of smart meters already installed would be too expensive to undertake.

Almost all politicians make vacuous, largely meaningless feel-good soundbites but Forese was a standout in that regard during the debate by twice stating emphatically, "I believe in Arizona." What exactly does that mean? Did the other candidates *not* believe in Arizona?

Forese also treated viewers to a story of his grandfather coming to the US with nothing and living the American dream. Great for grandad, but that told me nothing about how his grandson, Forese, would vote as a commissioner, and only that his grandson would use faux-patriotic cornball sentimentality for all it was worth.

Democrat candidate Sandra Kennedy was an ACC commissioner 2 years ago. She was fairly useless on the "smart" issue then. She missed the first workshop meeting and left early at the second one after looking bored and out of it and not saying much.

Below are the answers someone on her staff provided to my questions. Overall, the answers are good. The answers regarding "smart" meters could be better however. My comments are in brackets and in **red**.

Q - Do you think monopoly public utilities should be allowed to spend money on advertising?

A - Sandra opposes it, and when she returns to the Commission, she will subpoena APS to determine if the utility is a source of the dark money in the race and if APS is using ratepayer money to do this.

Q - Do you think they should be allowed to make political donations?

A - Sandra does not think so.

Q - If elected, would you raise, remove or leave as is the new monthly fee solar customers must pay?

A - Sandra has pledged to rescind the APS solar tax and refund the money to folks who paid it.

Q - If elected, would you be for or against utility rate increases during your term?

A - Sandra has a history of voting against rate increases when she served on the Commission. In 2012, she voted to give APS a zero rate increase.

Q - What is your opinion on APS's plan that would add an extra charge to ratepayers not wanting a "smart" meter?

A - When Sandra served before, she put in an amendment that allowed folks to opt out. This was removed after she left. **[While I appreciate the sentiment behind this response, I have no knowledge of any such "amendment". Since the commission took no vote on "smart" meters while Kennedy was a commissioner, I don't know how she could have proposed an amendment to anything. Also, note that the person responding did not actually answer the question.]**

Q - What is your opinion on automated (AKA "smart") metering in general?

A - Skeptical. There have been documented incidents in some state where there have been fires caused by them. Again, if folks want to opt out, they should be allowed to do so. **[Again, not a bad answer but not the best either since it shows a lack of comprehensive understanding of the issue. Fires are a reason to recall all "smart" meters, not a reason for just allowing people to "opt out". Also, not mentioned are the toxic pulsed microwave emissions which according to APS have a mile range so no one can really and truly "opt out" anyway. Additionally, according to the federal energy act that got the "smart" grid rolling, utilities were supposed to invite their customers to "opt in", not go on an installation binge then make people pay to "opt out". And how can anyone "opt out" of something they never "opted in" to in the first place?]**

Democrat candidate Jim Holway did not answer all the questions but instead chose to send in his lengthy list of Frequently Asked Questions (found here: <http://holway2014.com/faq/>). He also wrote the following note. The "smart" meter statement he mentions in his note is also reproduced below. Like Kennedy's

response, it shows a lack of comprehensive understanding of the issue but is still better than nothing, nothing being the Republicans' response.

Thank you for your questions. I'll attach a list of FAQ that I put together from many of the questions I have received from voters like yourself ... as well as questionnaires from various organizations. Also ... I recently fielded some questions about smart meters so that is attached as well.

You have another question here about advertising that is probably not in the attachment. In terms of utilities involvement in political campaigns... at a minimum we must require them to report that funding and not let it be secret. I think they should stay out of political campaigns (in particular the elections of their own regulators), however ... I expect in nearly all cases they are spending funds out of their "allowable profit" (what some might call the shareholders funds .. though of course this money all came from our rates originally) ... and in this case I don't believe the ACC has any authority over how those funds are spent. Though this is an issue I would look into.

I have taken a public position that one of my first acts as a commissioner will be to order the reporting of all political expenditures by regulated utilities.

Smart Meters

I have written about smart meters a few times because I hear a number of concerns about them as I travel around Arizona. These have included 1) privacy and whether household power use information is available to others 2) what utilities themselves will do with additional information on our power use or with the ability to remotely control household energy use 3) whether individuals can opt out of smart meter programs and if so at what cost, and 4) whether the operation of the meter creates any health hazards. In general, I believe if we are truly serious about increased energy efficiency and much greater utilization of renewable energy then this will also require us to become much more sophisticated about managing our energy demands. Some form of smart meter will probably be essential to achieve these goals. **[That is simply not true. See my ACC letter here <http://images.edocket.azcc.gov/docketpdf/0000151238.pdf> in which I quote Northeast Utilities, MA's largest, extensively. According to Northeast, "An Advance Metering System is not a "basic technology platform" for grid modernization and is not needed to realize "all of the benefits of grid modernization.""]** Having said this, any health impacts must be solved and safeguards must be in place to prevent access to

information generated by smart meters. **[Impossible dreams. The only way health impacts can be solved is by removal of the offending devices. Pulsed microwaves make people sick. Period. The ACC docket is filled with reports, both scientific and anecdotal, which attest to that. And the only true "safeguard" of information generated by "smart" meters is for that information to not be generated in the first place. Once information is taken from someone it is no longer private. Period. "Safeguards" do not work in a world fraught with corruption, governmental overreach and hackers.]**

I also support individuals being able to opt out of smart meter programs and to stick with traditional meters and I support programs that would allow self-reporting of energy use with only a periodic utility check to verify energy use to keep the costs of opting out low. **[Support for self-reporting is to be commended, but Holway exposes his ignorance by saying the reason is "... to keep the costs of opting out low." In actual fact, the "smart" grid is costing us all much more than the tried and true analog system. People who refuse "smart" meters are not creating costs. It is the utilities' binge spending on expensive, unproven, harmful technology that is driving up costs. Again, see my ACC letter linked above. According to Northeast, "... the costs associated with AMI are currently astronomical, while the incremental benefits for customers are small in comparison.]**

Our ability to provide cleaner, more efficient and reliable energy services will require that we also incorporate advanced information technology into energy management. A number of individuals have been providing me research on the pros and cons of smart meters and after the election I will have time to go through this material and ask the necessary questions on the Commission. **[Clearly, educating himself on this issue should have started well before campaign season.]**

Full disclosure: I am a registered Republican. However, it takes more -- a lot more -- than just the Republican label for me to vote for a Republican. I am not wild about Democrat candidates Holway and Kennedy, but I do see them as a better choice than Republicans Forese and Little.