

## EDITORIAL: Vote for Renteria, Hill, Catalano and 'yes' on Z



Shaunzi the Asian elephant meanders towards the water in her Chaffee Zoo exhibit on Thursday, May 8, 2014 in Fresno. The zoo's board of directors has voted to pay to put Measure Z on the November ballot for renewal to pay for additional exhibits.

ERIC PAUL ZAMORA — Fresno Bee Staff Photo [Buy Photo](#)

We acknowledge that many voters are not enthusiastic about Tuesday's ballot. It's a mid-term election, Gov. Jerry Brown, despite barely campaigning, is expected to steamroll to victory, and congressional gridlock is causing folks to question whether their vote will make a difference.

But voting is fundamental to democracy and the freedoms that we enjoy as Californians and Americans. And your vote will make a difference — sometimes in ways you might not think about, such as punishing candidates who seek office with attack ads, smear campaigns and half-truths instead of standing on their own credentials and ideas.

Today we are summarizing four of our key recommendations in this election.

### **21st Congressional District**

This race once was viewed by the pundits as a certain victory for incumbent Rep. David Valadao. But challenger

Amanda Renteria has narrowed the gap and made it competitive.

We are not surprised. Renteria's life experiences, education, knowledge of agricultural issues and compassion for people who are often ignored by politicians make her a better choice for District 21 voters.

Renteria, a Sanger Democrat who grew up in Woodlake, says that if she is elected, she will reach across the aisle to Republicans, identify common interests and forge strategies to move ahead with ways to secure water for the Valley, complete California's high-speed rail project, improve educational attainment and diversify the economy.

Her campaign has largely emphasized her can-do attitude and fairly contrasted her positions with those of the incumbent. Valadao, however, has resorted to smearing his challenger as an "outsider" and a pawn of environmentalists. The she's-not-one-of-us tone of his campaign reflects his willingness to do whatever he thinks is necessary to hold onto to his seat. Most of all, it reflects the dearth of original ideas he has for leading.

We recommend Amanda Renteria for this congressional seat.

### **Fresno County Superior Court Judge No. 15**

Rachel Hill clearly is the better choice to succeed the retiring Judge Robert H. Oliver. Not only has Hill been endorsed by the highly respected Oliver, but she is backed by many other Fresno County judges.

Lisa Gamoian, the other candidate, has been a highly successful prosecutor during her career. However, the desperate over-the-top tactics of Gamoian and her campaign team suggest that she lacks the temperament to impartially sit on the bench in judgment of others.

Throughout this campaign, Hill has shown that she will take a broad approach on the bench, treat people fairly and be a strong advocate for progress that would reduce jail crowding and the backlog in the courts.

We recommend Rachel Hill for judge.

### **Fresno City Council District 1**

Voters in the west central Fresno area have two highly qualified candidates from which to choose a successor to termed-out incumbent Blong Xiong.

We give the edge to business owner Cary Catalano over Esmeralda Soria, a law professor and policy adviser to Assembly Member Henry T. Perea.

Catalano knows this district like the back of his hand and is a proficient problem solver. He advocates proper planning for growth west of Highway 99 and strengthening public safety. Catalano has served on the boards of the Fresno Housing Authority and Girl Scouts of Central California, and has done consulting for Central Unified School District.

Catalano's collaborative style and enthusiasm for the district make him a great fit for the City Council. We recommend him for the District 1 seat.

### **Measure Z sales tax**

For 10 years, Measure Z has demonstrated the incredible power that is generated when people align for a common purpose.

The Z sales tax — which adds just a penny to the bill for every \$10 spent on taxable goods —has transformed the Fresno Chaffee Zoo into a gem that captivates and educates visitors of all ages.

Before Measure Z was passed with 73% support in 2004, the zoo was in disrepair, losing animals and in risk of losing accreditation. Now it's winning awards, attracting 700,000 people yearly and boosting community pride throughout

Fresno County.

Those opposed to Measure Z's renewal fall generally into three camps: people philosophically opposed to zoos, the anti-tax crowd and folks concerned about zoo expansion within Roeding Park.

We believe that zoos are vital to understanding and preserving wild species, this sales tax is beneficial to county residents and the economy, and there is ample room for the zoo and picnickers at Roeding Park.

We recommend “yes” on Measure Z.

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