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Official Statement on the Passing of Longtime Taxpayer Advocate & Former West Covina Mayor Mike Spence



Rancho Cucamonga, CA, April 13, 2019-- The San Bernardino County Republican Party and Central Committee expresses our deep sadness upon hearing of the sudden death of longtime conservative activist, tax-fighter and Mayor Mike Spence. We offer our heartfelt condolences and prayers to his wife, Marilena, his daughter, Reagan, his son, Nathaniel, his parents and two sisters.

“Mike Spence was a dear friend,” said San Bernardino County Republican Party Chairwoman Jan Leja. “I had the honor of serving with him in numerous capacities over the years and while Mike and I may not have agreed on everything one thing is for certain; he was honest in his convictions and genuinely had the best interests of voters and taxpayers at heart. You knew where Mike stood on an issue. He told it to your face. One thing that is rare in politics is finding a public servant who actually does what he says and means. That was Mike Spence.”

Mike Spence began his involvement in politics since his college days attending UCLA. He took his fight against government waste and increased accountability to the West Covina Unified School Board where he served multiple terms. When he took office the district was in bankruptcy and schools were closing. He took pride in the fact that upon leaving office schools that were closed were open and the district’s loan was paid back early.

Spence made it his mission to serve as a taxpayer advocate for the people in West Covina. In 1998, the City of West Covina sued Mike over his refusal to pay the city’s utility user’s tax. The city lost their challenge with Spence and the tax was ultimately eliminated.

In 2014, Spence was elected to the West Covina City Council in one of the closest elections in Los Angeles County history. Being true to his tax-fighter reputation, Mike initiated the state audit of West Covina’s budget that uncovered hundreds of thousands of dollars in mismanagement. During Spence’s tenure the council voted to cut council member compensation, saving city taxpayer dollars. In 2018, Mike served as West Covina Mayor.

Mike Spence helped shape San Bernardino County policy through his role as chief of staff to Supervisor Curt Hagman. Spence had a hand in the success of many local elected officials

throughout San Bernardino County. He was a sharp, brilliant, political strategist and brought with him a wealth of institutional knowledge of the political landscape statewide and throughout Southern California. Many owe their political victories to the role Mike Spence played in their campaigns.

“Mike Spence was a force to be reckoned with,” Leja added. “Whether you were a Republican or Democrat, Mike commanded your respect. He was a straight shooter. He made you defend your position and challenged you. But he did so in way that wasn’t personal, vicious or destructive. You left a tense political debate genuinely appreciating Mike. Make no mistake, Mike Spence will be missed.”

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