

EDITORIALS OCTOBER 21, 2016 7:30 AM

Miami Herald recommends Carlos Gimenez for Miami-Dade mayor



MIAMI HERALD EDITORIAL BOARD

When school board member Raquel Regalado jumped into the mayor's race early this year, she accepted the implicit challenge of every candidate who runs against an incumbent: Make a strong case for replacement. Now, with the election only 16 days away, it's clear that she has fallen far short.

Not that she didn't give the mayor and his friends a run for their money, which they had in abundance compared to her own relatively meager funds. Her campaign has consisted of a relentless series of attacks accusing him of everything from responsibility for Zika to making up phony crime-fighting statistics — neither of which had merit.

In one debate, she even accused him of having "daddy issues" because of his frequent criticisms of her father, Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado. Even in the bizarre world of Miami-Dade politics, that seems to be a new low in terms of personal animosity between candidates.

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As for the issues, the two managed to disagree on just about everything. He negotiated the deal for the American Dream mega-mall coming to Northwest Miami-Dade; she's against it. She wants to kill the Beacon Council, the economic-development arm of the county; he supports the group. He backed a \$14 million county grant to Tri-Rail and she didn't. As we said, just about everything.

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Mayor Carlos Gimenez speaks to the Miami Herald Editorial Board

Mayor Carlos Gimenez speaks to the Miami Herald Editorial Board Aug. 10, 2016.

The mayor has his faults: Too thin-skinned at times. Won't listen to legitimate criticism. And sometimes he's been slow to pick up on the problems facing the county, including traffic congestion and the threat posed by climate change and rising seas.

But these are hardly cardinal sins, especially for a politician — particularly when compared to what he has accomplished during his time in office:

- He has run an effective government and ably managed the county's \$7 billion budget (whereas Ms. Regalado has had well-publicized problems with her personal finances). He brought the county back from the economic mess he inherited and he's managed to balance the books without imposing undue hardship on the taxpayers.
- Crime is down, regardless of what Ms. Regalado claims.
- Remember when the recession left the county so broke it had to close some libraries? Well, now they're open.
- The county's main economic generators, PortMiami and Miami International Airport, are producing record traffic and income.
- He's met unforeseen problems capably, like the long overdue fix to our decrepit sewer system — a hugely expensive overhaul. Ms. Regalado has accused him of raising water rates without giving him credit for solving a problem he inherited and that the federal government abruptly tossed into his lap. And he led the way on police cameras for county officers.
- When he's been late to recognize some challenges, he's been quick to recover. Finding ways to alleviate traffic congestion has become a priority; with the help of the County Commission, a plan is moving forward. And he's fully on board on the issue of doing whatever the county can do to combat the effects of climate change.

As for “vision,” Mayor Gimenez had the wisdom and confidence to see how the county could avoid bankruptcy after the recession — when others couldn’t. As a former city manager of Miami, he possesses the problem-solving skills that have served the county well.

For mayor of Miami-Dade County, the Herald recommends **CARLOS GIMENEZ**.



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