AGENDA MATERIAL
DATE 8-11-26 ITEM NO. RA26

Ellie Martin

From: Andrew Kunsberg [redacted]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 3:30 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: District1
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT FOR 8/11 MEETING

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AUG 10 '26 PM03:38 PC CLK OF BD

EM

Dear Pima County Supervisors,

I would like for my statement to be included in public comments on the agenda for tomorrow.

Chair Allen and members of the Board:

My name is Andy Kunsberg. I'm a retiree here in Pima County, and I care deeply about this community. I have continued to serve my community through my local legislative district board and through service to the state Democratic Party.

I'm speaking today because I believe deeply in public service—and because I believe elected officials have a special responsibility to make sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.
That responsibility matters even more when public money is being used to fund an organization and an executive whose circumstances raise legitimate questions about whether taxpayers are getting the value they deserve.

This Board is being asked to renew a $122,000 contract with an organization whose CEO spent much of the past year running for state Senate against Alma Hernandez and lost that primary on July 21.
His campaign launched in December 2025. His CEO compensation was made retroactive to December 2, 2025, right as that campaign was getting underway. And the contract authorizing that retroactive compensation was not signed until January 26, 2026.
That timeline deserves an explanation.

Taxpayers should not be in the position of effectively funding someone's salary while that person is spending a substantial portion of the year campaigning for another public office.
And now that the campaign is over, this Board is being asked to continue funding the position as though nothing happened. The compensation itself raises another serious question and the fact that he gave himself a raise and even changed his own rules.

I reviewed this organization's public tax filings going back more than a decade. The Executive Directors who came before Mr. Perez were paid between $36,539 and $70,937 a year.
June Webb-Vignery served for years on compensation ranging from $37,500 to $70,937, including a year when the organization reported $605,340 in revenue nearly twice what it brings in now.
Her successor, Arlene Benavidez, was paid between $36,539 and $50,000.

Mr. Perez is being paid $91,770 more than double what either predecessor ever earned—in a year when the organization's revenue has declined and its flagship 30-year Teen Town Hall program did not happen.

That is a significant disparity, and I don't think this Board should simply accept it without asking why.
I also want to say something as someone who has spent years participating in Democratic politics.
This isn't about whether someone is a Democrat, Republican, or anything else.
Elected officials should be especially sensitive to the appearance that political connections can lead to cushy jobs or taxpayer-funded opportunities after someone loses an election.
That perception damages public trust regardless of political party.
If public officials are going to ask taxpayers to fund a six-figure contract, they should be able to explain clearly what the taxpayer is receiving in return.

So I am asking this Board to pause the renewal and require SAEC to provide a full accounting as Supervisor Scott has raised concerns I do not believe his questions were answered and we too have question!
What were the specific deliverables that are set?
How many hours were actually worked? I am assuming he is considered a full time employee. Why is he being paid to launch a PAC to just troll 3 elected officials who he spent the last year attacking and how will he keep that separate from his publicly funded position?
What programs were delivered?
What programs were not delivered?
Why was compensation made retroactive?
And why is the current CEO being paid so substantially more than the people who held the same position for years before him?
I am not asking you to punish anyone for running for office.

I am asking you to make sure that losing an election does not automatically result in a taxpayer-funded landing place or at least that the public has enough information to know exactly what it is paying for.
You are elected to represent the taxpayers of this County. I believe you should hold this contract to the same standard you would expect taxpayers to apply to your own decisions.

Please withhold renewal until these questions are answered on the record.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

AGENDA MATERIAL
DATE 8-11-26 ITEM NO. RA26

Ellie Martin

From: Becky Vargas [redacted]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 4:04 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: District1
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT FOR 8/11 MEETING

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AUG 10 '26 PM 04:04 PC CLK OF BD
EM

Dear Pima County Supervisors,

I would like for my statement to be included in public comments for tomorrow's hearing for the item regarding the contract renewal of SAEC.

Dear Pima County Supervisors,

Chair Allen and members of the Board:
My name is Becky Vargas, and I have been a public school educator in Pima County for over 20 years. I want to talk about credentials, because that word matters in my profession.
To stand in front of a classroom, I had to earn a degree in my field, complete supervised training, pass state certification requirements, and maintain that credential year after year. That is the standard we hold educators to because our students deserve qualified professionals. So I have a hard time understanding the compensation being proposed here.
The CEO of the Southern Arizona Education Council does not appear to hold an education degree or a teaching or school-administrative credential. Yet he is paid $91,770 a year—a figure his contract ties to 95 percent of an elected official's salary rather than to educational expertise, professional credentials, measurable outcomes, or program performance.

That is roughly twice what many classroom teachers in this county earn—teachers who have earned degrees, completed certification requirements, spent years working directly with students, and continue to meet professional standards every year. And this is not what this position has historically paid.
Public tax filings show that the two prior Executive Directors, June Webb-Vignery and Arlene Benavidez, ran this organization for most of a decade while earning between $36,539 and $70,937 a year. That includes years when the organization had substantially more revenue than it has today.
Neither of those leaders needed a compensation formula pegged to a politician's salary.
They were paid to do the job.

And now, at a time when our classrooms are stretched thin, we are being asked to continue funding a CEO at a salary dramatically higher than the historical range for this position.
Meanwhile, teachers are buying supplies with our own money. We are managing larger caseloads with fewer support staff. We are being asked to do more with less every year.
And the one program this organization is specifically expected to provide directly for students—the Teen Town Hall, with a 30-year history—did not happen this year.

I truly wish I could organize a Teen Town Hall and earn $91,770 for doing it. Sadly, that is not the reality for me or for my colleagues.

If a teacher failed to deliver an entire year's worth of curriculum, there would be consequences. If we failed to meet our professional responsibilities, we would be held accountable.
So I have a direct question for this Board:
Why should someone without the educational credentials we require of our teachers, whose compensation is tied to an elected official's salary rather than a professional standard or the historical compensation for this position, be paid substantially more than his predecessors while the organization fails to deliver its core student program?
I am not asking you to hold SAEC to a higher standard than educators.
I am asking you to hold it to the same standard.
Before renewing this contract, demand accountability for what was actually delivered, what was not delivered, and why this compensation is justified.
Our students deserve qualified professionals.
Our teachers deserve adequate resources.
And taxpayers deserve to know that public money is paying for results.
Please do not renew this contract as written.

Thank you.

Becky Vargas

Sent from my iPhone

Ellie Martin

From: Randi Levin [redacted]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 4:23 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: District3; District2; District4; District1; District5
Subject: Question about transparency

Chair Allen and members of the Board:

My name is Randi Levin. I am a resident of Pima County, co-chair of the Social Action Committee at Congregation Kol Ami, and a board member of the Catalina Foothills School District Foundation.

Through my work with the Foundation, I see firsthand how hard our community works to provide supplemental support for teachers and students. We raise private funds because public education and our educators need more support—not less. Teachers are doing more with fewer resources, and families and community members are constantly being asked to step up to help fill the gaps.

That is why I am deeply concerned about how the County is being asked to spend taxpayer dollars on this contract.

Look at the numbers side by side. This organization's own decade of tax filings shows that its two prior Executive Directors were paid between $36,539 and $70,937 a year, including years when the organization's revenue was significantly higher than it is now.

The current CEO makes $91,770—more than double the historical rate paid to previous leaders—in a year when revenue has fallen and the organization has not even done what it was expected to do from last year and despite that the CEO gave himself a raise and is asking for our dollars to be sent his way again with no accountability. I know none of the teachers I work hard to support would even have the luxury of doing this.

As someone who works to raise supplemental dollars for our public schools, I find that especially difficult to reconcile. We ask our community to contribute because every dollar matters. We ask teachers to stretch limited resources. We ask families and taxpayers to trust that public money is being used responsibly.

That same standard should apply here.

I also want the Board to consider SAEC's own reporting. Its quarterly report described a Peer Coach Program operated in partnership with AmeriCorps and Arizona Serve. The new memo says that partnership has ended, but provides no explanation to the County about why.

When an organization's reporting raises questions, when a promised program does not occur, and when compensation has increased dramatically compared with historical precedent, the appropriate response should be closer scrutiny—not automatic renewal.

I am not here to argue that students and educators do not deserve investment. Quite the opposite. I believe they deserve more.

But when we are working so hard through our schools and our community to find additional resources for teachers and students, I cannot understand why the County would approve a six-figure contract without first demanding clear accountability for what was delivered.

Before this renewal is approved, I urge the Board to freeze it and require SAEC to provide a complete accounting: line by line, what students in Pima County actually received for the $122,000, what programs were delivered, what was not delivered, and why the current CEO is being paid substantially more than the organization's previous leaders with little to no change in the amount of work he is set to do. None of this makes sense and should be seriously considered before giving our money away.

Our teachers, our students, and our taxpayers deserve that level of accountability.

Thank you,

Randi Levin