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

Ellie Martin

From: Kent B [redacted]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 4:33 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: District1; District2; District3; District4; District5; Steve Christy; Beth Borozan; Rex Scott
Subject: Statement of Kent J. Blumenthal to Board of Supervisors @ 8/11/26 Meeting
Attachments: Ltr to Pima Co. BOS from KJ Blumenthal re-Funding for SAEC Contract 8-10-26.pdf

Thank you for providing my statement (attached) to the Pima County Board of Supervisors at their August 11, 2026 public meeting.

I have also pasted the statement within this email, below.

Kent J. Blumenthal

August 10, 2026

Chair Allen and Members of the Board:

My name is Kent J. Blumenthal. I reside in Green Valley and have served on the Pima County Small Business Commission since 2015, including two terms as Commission Chair, in 2020 and 2021.

I am co-owner of Consequential Consulting, a local consulting firm established in 2020 to help associations, corporations, organizations, and nonprofits turn goals and strategic priorities into measurable business success. Much of our consulting work is provided at no cost because I believe strongly in giving back to our community.

I also bring more than 40 years of executive leadership experience with nonprofit organizations. My career includes executive positions with the National Recreation and Park Association, serving as CEO of the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association in Oregon, and serving as CEO of Green Valley Recreation, Inc., here in Pima County.

During those years, I never ended a fiscal year with a deficit. Even during economic downturns, including the Great Recession, I never had to lay off an employee because the organization could not afford to pay them. I learned early in my career that responsible stewardship of an organization's resources is not optional. It is a fundamental responsibility of leadership.

I hold a Ph.D. in Recreation Administration from the University of Maryland and am a Certified Association Executive. I have also served as a volunteer on several boards, including the Friends of Tubac Presidio State Historic Park & Museum and the Recreation Management Advisory Board at George Mason University in Virginia. My professional and volunteer work has consistently focused on effective nonprofit management, accountability, sustainability, conservation, and community well-being.

It is from that perspective that I take seriously how the Pima County Board of Supervisors spends taxpayer dollars.

Let's be plain about what is before you.

The Board is being asked to renew a $122,000 contribution under a contract with the Southern AZ Educational Council (SAEC). That is a substantial commitment of taxpayer money—and, notably, more than the City of Tucson intends to contribute.

That should prompt a basic fiduciary question: <u>Is this taxpayer money being well spent?</u>

Based on the information available to the public, I believe that question deserves a clear and documented answer before this contract is renewed.

Consider the circumstances surrounding SAEC's executive compensation.

SAEC's CEO, Mr. Perez, spent much of the past year campaigning for the state Senate against Alma Hernandez. His campaign was launched in December 2025, and he lost the Democratic primary on July 21, 2026.

According to the organization's records, his compensation was made retroactive to December 2, 2025—the same period in which his political campaign was getting underway. The retroactive compensation was not authorized by a signed contract until January 26, 2026.

That raises an obvious question for taxpayers: <u>To what extent did public funds support compensation during a period when the organization's CEO was engaged in an extensive political campaign?</u>

I am not suggesting that campaigning for public office is itself improper. It is not. My concern is whether SAEC's compensation and contractual arrangements appropriately accounted for the CEO's availability, hours worked, responsibilities, and actual delivery of services during that period.

Those are reasonable questions for a public body to ask before committing another $122,000 in taxpayer funds.

There is another issue that warrants examination.

I reviewed SAEC's publicly available tax filings and found a striking difference between the compensation paid to Mr. Perez and that paid to his predecessors.

June Webb-Vignery led the organization for years at salaries ranging from $37,500 to $70,937. During one of those years, SAEC reported $605,340 in revenue—nearly twice the organization's revenue this year.

Her successor, Arlene Benavidez, served as executive director at salaries ranging from $36,539 to $50,000.

Mr. Perez is now being paid $91,770—by far the highest salary paid to either predecessor—despite an apparent decline in organizational revenue, the disappearance of SAEC's longstanding 30-year Teen Town Hall program, and Santa Cruz County not participating as previously anticipated.

Those facts, taken together, warrant scrutiny.

The 37-page report prepared by County Administrator Lesher does not, in my reading, provide a satisfactory explanation for this substantial increase in executive compensation under these circumstances. I am therefore encouraged to see the questions Supervisor Scott has raised. They are questions that many taxpayers—and I—are asking.

This is not simply a question about an education contract.

It is a question of fiduciary responsibility, stewardship of public funds, and accountability for results.

When government commits taxpayer dollars to an organization, the obligation should not end with approving a contract. The County has a responsibility to determine whether the organization is delivering the services promised, whether the amount being paid is reasonable in relation to those services, and whether the public is receiving a fair return on its investment.

That responsibility becomes even more important when an organization's revenues have declined, a longstanding public program has not been delivered, executive compensation has increased substantially, and the organization is relying heavily on public funding.

Accordingly, I respectfully ask the Board to withhold renewal of the SAEC contract until the organization provides a full accounting that includes, at a minimum:

1. **Itemized deliverables** required under the existing and proposed contract, together with documentation showing what was actually delivered;
2. **Hours worked and services performed** by the CEO during the period in question, particularly from December 2025 through the present;
3. **A detailed explanation of the CEO's compensation**, including the rationale for making compensation retroactive to December 2, 2025 and the basis for compensation that is more than double the historical rate paid to previous executive directors;
4. **An explanation of the reduction in program delivery**, including the discontinuation of the Teen Town Hall program and the absence of Santa Cruz County participation; and
5. **Confirmation from the City of Tucson regarding its financial commitment**, so that Pima County taxpayers are not being asked to disproportionately subsidize a program that is intended to serve a broader regional constituency.

These requests are unreasonable. In fact, they should be routine when public dollars are involved.

I have spent my professional career managing nonprofit organizations and being accountable for their financial performance. I know firsthand that responsible management sometimes means asking difficult questions before spending money—not after.

The Board's fiduciary responsibility is to the taxpayers of Pima County. Those taxpayers deserve to know that every dollar committed to an outside organization is supported by a legitimate need, reasonable compensation, measurable performance, and demonstrable public benefit.

Before Pima County commits another $122,000 to SAEC, I respectfully ask you to make sure those standards have been met.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Kent J. Blumenthal
1044 W Placita Quieta
Green Valley, AZ 85622

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[redacted]

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DATE 8-11-26 ITEM NO. RA26

Ellie Martin

From: Carmen Lamas [redacted]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2026 4:58 PM
To: COB_mail
Cc: District1
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [redacted]. Learn why this is important

CAUTION: This message and sender come from outside Pima County. If you did not expect this message, proceed with caution. Verify the sender's identity before performing any action, such as clicking on a link or opening an attachment.

AUG 10 '26 PM 04:58 PC CLK OF BD
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Dear Pima County Supervisors,

My name is Carmen Lamas, and I am a proud public school educator who has served students in Pima County for 30 years. For 30 years, I have watched teachers and schools do more with less. Every year, budgets get tighter. Field trips are reduced or eliminated. Tutoring opportunities disappear. Paraprofessional positions go unfilled. Teachers purchase supplies with their own money. And we are repeatedly told that there simply isn't enough funding to provide everything our students need.
That is why I am asking this Board to take a hard look at how it is spending taxpayer dollars.
You are being asked to renew a $122,000 contract with an organization whose CEO is paid $91,770 a year. Money that I would never see even after all my years of service. Please look at the numbers side by side. The organization's own public tax filings going back more than a decade show that the two prior Executive Directors were paid between $36,539 and $70,937 a year for doing this same job. That includes years when the organization's revenue was significantly higher than it is today.

The current CEO is being paid more than the historical high for this position more than double some of his predecessors in a year when the organization's revenue has declined and its flagship student program, the 30-year Teen Town Hall, did not happen at all. From my perspective as an educator, that is extremely difficult to justify. When I ask for resources for my students, I have to demonstrate why those resources are needed. When a program is funded, we are expected to show that it is working. When something doesn't get done, there are consequences.

The same standard should apply to an organization receiving $122,000 in taxpayer funding.
I also want this Board to look closely at SAEC's own reporting. Its quarterly report described a Peer Coach Program operated in partnership with AmeriCorps and Arizona Serve. The new memo indicates that partnership ended, but does not provide the County with a clear explanation of why.
That should not be brushed aside. Also, important to note that only half of these "board positions" are filled, meaning he rewrote his own rules and gave himself a raise did he even have quorum to do this? His raise is supposed to include Santa Cruz County which is clearly not going to be a part of this project so why would he be paid for this?

In education, when the documentation doesn't line up with what was actually delivered, we stop and ask questions. We review the records. We determine what happened before we authorize additional funding.

We don't simply renew the funding and move on. And that is especially important when the organization's core student program did not take place. Our children are experiencing real consequences from limited resources. Teachers are being asked to stretch every dollar. Schools are making difficult choices about what they can and cannot provide. So I have a simple request for this Board:
Freeze this renewal until SAEC can provide a complete, line-by-line accounting of what students in Pima County actually received for the $122,000.

Tell taxpayers what programs were delivered. Explain what happened to the Peer Coach Program partnership. And explain why the CEO is being paid substantially more than the historical compensation for this position while program delivery has declined. After 30 years in public education, I know what accountability looks like. I also know what happens when we tell teachers and schools that there isn't enough money. Taxpayers deserve to know that their money is being spent on programs that actually serve students not simply on salaries that have no clear connection to performance or results.
Please hold this renewal until those questions are answered.

Thank you,

Carmen Lamas