



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

IVY R. TAYLOR  
MAYOR

**Mayor's Statement on Union Negotiations (12/1/14)**

For the past ten days I have been meeting with my colleagues on city council, with staff, community leaders and representatives of the police union to create a way forward toward a new police and fire contract. Let me stress that these are difficult issues: while we are not facing a financial crisis today, the notion that we can kick the can down the road yet again is dangerous and irresponsible.

We cannot delay taking action any longer. We, the City Council and the mayor, must provide, consider and act on facts, facts that we and the unions understand and agree on.

I am joined here by my council colleagues to show our resolve to be united on this issue, moving forward.

My colleagues and I want to emphasize that we will continue to refuse to engage in mudslinging and personal attacks that have characterized the union negotiations during the past week, and we have expressed our concerns about these tactics to the unions.

Whatever your position on these difficult issues, we can all be civil. No cause justifies vilification of our hardworking and dedicated city staff. The ends do not justify the means.

All of us must act to dispel the cloud of mistrust and accusations that hangs over this process. This is not about us vs them--**there is only us**, the employees and officials and taxpayers that make up the City of San Antonio. We don't need a political football used to

score points; this isn't Washington DC where partisan posturing substitutes for governance.

It is truly regrettable that the contracts are up for renewal during last-minute campaigning for the police union elections and the first blush of campaigning for the city's mayoral and council races.

Regardless of upcoming political races, **all** of us, whether municipal or union officials, must live up to the trust that our members and constituents have placed in us.

We need to focus on facts and on our future, and we need to hold on to the spirit of cooperation and collaboration that defines our great city.

As Mayor, today I am asking for a cooling off period or a holiday truce. I have spoken to Mike Helle of SAPOA and have asked for the negative advertising to cease. On the City side, I am requesting a moratorium on City Council consideration of all issues related to Police and Fire contracts and benefits, including changes to the Police and Fire Pension fund benefit formulas, until January.

Additionally, I am announcing significant progress on our strategy of providing an actuarial review of both the COSA and SAPOA healthcare proposals and the potential changes to the formulas and benefits of the Police and Fire Pension Fund. The union and the city team have agreed to have their actuaries validate actual cost of negotiated healthcare.

I want to be absolutely clear here—we are not disrupting the negotiation process. We are not re-booting. I have confidence in the City Manager and in City staff, and I have confidence that SAPOA wants to reach a resolution rather than allow this conflict to further divide and distract us.

We are not starting from square one—we will be making full use of the findings of Bartel & Associates, the Legacy Task Force recommendations, and the existing actuarial reports made for the Police and Fire Pension Fund.

When Council convenes in January, we will receive an integrated third party report on healthcare costs and pension formula and benefits.

I am asking the union to be a strong and helpful partner and to help us reach this ambitious goal and timeline.

During this season of thankfulness we should feel blessed to live in a free and democratic country where public policy can be openly and civilly debated without intimidation or fear of reprisal.

Each of us, taxpayer and elected official, civil servant and uniformed officer, has the opportunity and obligation to make government work.

Name-calling and political games will get us nowhere. Only thoughtful consideration of the facts, guided by expert advice will

carry us forward to a solution. Our books are open, we have always been committed to transparency and will continue to be.

In closing, I do want to remind everyone that all of city staff, uniformed or not, do a great job for us. Our police and firefighters put their lives on the line to protect our families, and, at this time of the year, our families and our homes are especially important to us.

Happy holidays.