

# FEEDBACK | Time for 'let 'em go' Alonzo to go

- Mar 23, 2022



Re: [BIDLACK | Alamosa shouldn't recall DA on taxpayer dime, March 18](#)

Though I agree with Hal Bidlack that most recall campaigns are unwarranted, unnecessary and a waste of money, there are exceptions — as with everything in life. You have heard one opinion about using taxpayer money on a recall effort. I now offer mine.

The matter at hand is a proposed recall of 12th Judicial District Attorney Alonzo Payne, who many locals refer to as, “Let ‘em go Alonzo.”

Take the case of a man driving his vehicle when shot in the back of the head. The original charges against the shooter were second-degree attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, second-degree assault resulting in serious bodily injury and reckless endangerment. DA Payne allowed the plaintiff to plead down to a charge of “tampering with the body of a deceased person,” even though the victim survived and is still alive. The tampering charge resulted in a much lighter sentence.

Police Chief Kenny Anderson states there were at least 40 narcotic cases the police referred to Payne's office, but none had gone to trial. All dismissed or plead to less-

serious offenses even though some cases involved possession of heroin, crystal meth and “cop killer” weapons taken from drug dealers.

Under Payne the situation has become so bad the police chief stated: “Our officers have literally had arrestees laugh as they’re handcuffed, and I’ve had to watch this as the chief.”

Alamosa Mayor Ty Coleman offered: “I get phone calls from people with terror in their voice because the person standing in line next to them at the grocery store is the person who victimized them. They feel there’s no hope. They feel the system is broken.”

You might ask why I, as the executive director of an animal welfare organization, have a dog in this fight. It’s because Payne’s inexplicable actions extend beyond humans as well. Consider a puppy-mill case involving abused and neglected animals, and resulting in 107 felony counts, 104 counts of aggravated animal cruelty, one felony count of theft, one felony count for cybercrimes, and one felony count for violation of probation. Every one of them was dismissed by Payne.

Democracy First Colorado spokesman Curtis Hubbard once opined recalls are brought by “grifters, extremists and sore losers looking for opportunity.” However, the recall-Payne campaign is not about any of these, it’s about victims whose rights have been ignored at best and abused at worst. The Valley Courier noted this is the first time in 30 years that a referral was submitted to the governor that involved multiple justified complaints under the Crime Victim Rights Act. No, this is not a matter of grifters, extremists or sore losers.

At a recent council meeting, City Manager Heather Brookes summed it up thusly: “Attorney Payne, as the district attorney, is a direct threat to the safety of our residents.”

I can understand those who oppose the use of taxpayer money for a recall — I’m not a big fan of recalls either. However, I think if you ask those same taxpayers being victimized, they will say there is no better use of their money. And though the citizens of

Judicial District 12 could raise the necessary funds for a recall on their own, it would take time — time during which more crimes would be plead down or dismissed, more criminals would be back on the streets, and more citizens would be scared to walk in their own community.

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