



Tresser for Cook County Board President

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Tom Tresser tops his business cards with the message "Unbossed and unbought" in his quest to become the first third-party candidate to head the powerful Cook County Board of Commissioners.

"I'm the guy nobody sent," said Tresser, who lives in Chicago. "I'm going to drive a stake through the heart of the Democratic machine. Taxpayers are being ripped off. We've forgotten the county can be a center of excellence."

Tresser, 58, may be a political neophyte, but he's no stranger to activism and coalition building. Tresser's crafted a thoughtful and detailed plan we believe truly could transform Cook County government into a "center of excellence."

He earns our endorsement for Cook County Board president in the Nov. 2 election. Also running are Democrat Toni Preckwinkle, alderman and committeeman of Chicago's 4th Ward, and Republican candidate Roger Keats.

Tresser, an instructor at the DePaul University School for New Learning, has a vision for the county that goes beyond the familiar and oftentimes empty refrain "end corruption" and into areas such as trimming property tax bills, improving suburban home ownership levels and encouraging small business growth.

Tresser most recently led the all-volunteer coalition No Games Chicago, which worked successfully to defeat Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.

"Through this work alone, I estimate I saved each taxpayer in Cook County \$1,000," he said.

It's hard to verify cash savings of an event that did not take place. However, we find it impressive - and rare - that someone with energy and fresh ideas will work to save Cook County taxpayers' money on his own volition and without compensation.

No Games Chicago is one of 10 nonprofit organizations Tresser has built or led, and through that work he has developed a reputation as an individual focused on efficiency, progress and innovation.

Key ideas in Tresser's plan include phasing out county tax increment financing districts, working with community banks to set up rescue programs for distressed homeowners and allowing labor contracts to expire and not be renegotiated until a "sound strategic plan" is in place.

He advocates for mass transit innovation and to expand Chicago Transit Authority lines into the suburbs.

Tresser's the clear underdog with little name recognition and a paltry amount of campaign cash. While we endorsed Preckwinkle in February's primary election and believed at the time she was a progressive Democrat hell-bent on reform, since then she's endorsed Cook County Democratic Party chairman and Board of (Tax) Review Commissioner Joseph Berrios, who's seeking election to become Cook County assessor.

Preckwinkle cites party loyalty for backing Berrios, which makes us skeptical of her claim to be an independent voice.

If Southland voters truly want to see change at the top of Cook County government, we urge them to back Tresser for Cook County Board president.

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