



For Immediate Release

Oct. 13, 2008

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## **Sherri Lightner Calls on Opponent to Get Pension Facts Straight**

*Thalheimer Demonstrates Lack of Understanding of Pension Issues*

Sherri Lightner, candidate for San Diego City Council District 1, today questioned opponent Phil Thalheimer's understanding of the City's pension programs based on inaccuracies in his mailings to voters.

"I think Mr. Thalheimer may need a lesson on pension issues," said Lightner. "His mailers indicate that he does not understand the complexities of our pension problems."

Of particular note is Mr. Thalheimer's repeated statement that Lightner would continue DROP, or Deferred Retirement Option Program, and he would eliminate it. "Mr. Thalheimer should know that the DROP program was eliminated in 2005 for future employees. How can he eliminate something that no longer exists?"

Lightner says that employee unions ceded DROP in their 2005 negotiations. The City, however, failed to codify the language in the City Municipal Code, and it is unclear whether new employees who were hired in the 19-month period before it was codified are eligible.

"What is crystal clear is that DROP no longer exists for new employees," Lightner commented. "And the courts have repeatedly ruled we can not take away vested pension benefits."

Lightner says it is time to look forward on pension issues and for the City to do a better job in negotiating benefits and establishing pension programs. "The answer to our pension problems is not going to be found in political campaign rhetoric," she said. "It lies squarely at the feet of our elected leaders who must do a better job at determining what the City can and can not afford."

For more information about Sherri Lightner and her campaign for San Diego City Council, please visit her web site at [www.sherrilightner.org](http://www.sherrilightner.org).

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