



February 2020

Candidate for Election: City of Gainesville Commissioner

Note: Responses Will be Made Public. Please limit your responses to 100 words (the published response will be cut off at the limit).

1. Candidate's Name: **Reina Elisa Saco**
2. Email Address: **VoteReinaSaco@gmail.com**
3. Campaign Website: **VoteReinaSaco.com**
4. Education:
BA in English Literature- University of South Florida
BA in Russian Studies - University of South Florida
MA in Russian Studies - University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Juris Doctor - University of Florida Levin College of Law
5. Occupation: **Civil Rights Attorney**
6. Employer: **Florida Legal Services, Inc.**
7. Previous Employment:
Office of the County Attorney - Alachua County - Legal Extern
Intimate Partner Violence Assistance Clinic - Certified Legal Intern
Children's Legal Services - Legal Intern
Three Rivers Legal Services - Legal Intern
Kalitta Air, LLC - Jumpset Coordinator
8. Three Qualities Leaders Must Possess and Why:
 1. **Listening skills to understand what it is that speaker is actually requesting.**
 2. **Humility. A good leader shouldn't care about receiving credit; achieving goals that help people should be the priority.**



3. Conviction to stand by decisions that might not satisfy everyone but are necessary to improve life in our city.

9. Civic Involvement:

I have served as counsel and ally to groups like the Alachua County Labor Coalition and the Human Rights Coalition of Alachua county to improve housing rights, access to IDs, emergency response practices, and safety in our community. I have directed legal clinics throughout North Central Florida.

10. Board(s) I've Served On and What Prompted Me to Serve On Them:

I was a constant participant of the City's Rental Subcommittee where I gave feedback and suggestions for the six months the committee met.

11. Have you ever served in elected public office? If yes, how many years total have you served in elected public office? **No**

12. Why are you running for this office?

My work as a lawyer helped me bring stronger housing rights to my community. At the same time, as a private citizen, I spent twice as long fighting our local law enforcement offices to comply with federal law and reduce discriminatory practices. I saw that there was a need to represent underserved communities who don't feel comfortable voicing their needs or who simply aren't included in the conversation. This seat in local government would give me - and therefore the underserved communities I have worked for - access to accountability and attention from their city government. I come from a professional background of transparency and deadlines, where everyone has to answer accordingly and on time or meet consequences. I want to employ my listening and management skills to bring together citizens and staff in order to make our city an efficient and responsive powerhouse.



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13. What do you perceive are the three most important concerns facing the City of Gainesville and what would be your top priorities, if elected?

- 1. Adequate, sustainable housing for a workforce**
- 2. Government accountability and transparency**
- 3. Investing in renewable energy and preservation efforts**

14. Significant achievement and opportunity gaps exist in our community. Recently, the City Commission and the Alachua County School Board agreed to a county-wide goal to achieve 100% reading proficiency for all children by the end of third grade within three years. Do you support this goal? Do you have other ideas to help close the gap?

Yes, I support this goal. I think ensuring that the city offers a living wage and that homes are safe for families will help achieve the goal. Financial stability is a contributing factor in a child's education. If families know that their jobs and homes are secure, then they can focus on educational efforts.

15. The City of Gainesville has worked to reduce homelessness by emphasizing rehousing. Soon, Dignity Village will be closed. Do you support the City's recent efforts? Why or why not?

I believe that rehousing is one part of the solution, however, we also need to address the root causes of homelessness and this needs to be done through a case management system to monitor causes.

16. The City restructured its Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) last year in its ongoing efforts to revitalize Gainesville's urban core. What steps do you think are necessary to encourage live-work-play downtown?

I think we need to invest in our transit system to help make these opportunities and businesses accessible to more of our residents.

17. What do you feel the City's economic development priorities should be over the next four years?

We should focus on using every opportunity to place city jobs in the east side and south west side of town. These are areas in which I think the city could help create



incentives for jobs, which would then be followed by small businesses who provide support services.

18. Why should members of the business community support your candidacy?

As a young professional, I see Gainesville struggle to keep graduates here after they finish their degrees. Our biggest export as a city shouldn't be our talent. We need to create and cultivate ways for young entrepreneurs to stay in the city to create small businesses and growth and we need someone who has chosen to see the potential work a career in Gainesville to be part of that work.

I hereby certify to the veracity and completeness of the information herein and that no other party other than myself completed this questionnaire.

Original or Electronic Signature

s/Reina Saco