



**Bold and Accountable Leadership for Cleveland Heights**

## **An Elected Mayor = Citizen Empowerment + Opportunity**

By Rob Rivera

As a high school history teacher, I teach my students to find parallels between the world around them and the world in which we live. Brent Larkin, in his Plain Dealer column of 8/1/19, wrote something that resonated as voters approach the November ballot, where they'll be asked to decide if they'd like to directly elect a mayor. Larkin stated, "Perhaps more than ever before, Cleveland needs leadership that can articulate and inspire a vision of what needs to be done. It needs a mayor who can explain in detail how government will partner with corporate and civic leaders to make it happen."

Cleveland Heights deserves leadership that can articulate and inspire a vision too. To get there, we need to start by empowering our voters with this one simple choice: do you want to elect your mayor? The wealth of talent and creativity available in our city is rightfully the envy of many communities around us. The stagnation and frustration many of us feel with our local government and the lack of focused leadership we've seen in recent years, is not something our neighbors envy. Citizens for an Elected Mayor's campaign to change our form of government is rooted in hope for our city's future, faith in our citizens, and the need for more direct accountability and citizen-driven direction through a directly elected mayor.

We ask the voters to consider the opportunities in an elected mayor, instead of the fear and cynicism presented by those who oppose change. The opportunity to have a more direct voice in our government, gives us more control over the direction of our city. A campaign for an elected mayor would afford us the opportunity to shape a vision for Cleveland Heights by requiring potential Mayors to sit down with our engaged and informed citizens to lay out a vision and identify collective priorities for our city and then empowers citizens to vet these, providing a voice from the outset.

Once in office, an elected mayor can act as a singular voice to make the citizens' vision for our city happen. This choice gives us the opportunity for a mayor that serves as a catalyst to bring meaningful change and address issues in a more immediate way. Further, as a city that prides itself on our progressive values and history, we deserve the opportunities that come with a citizen-empowered mayor who serves as the face of Cleveland Heights across the region and state to advocate for our growth and our progressive values - and to do so as a peer among the other directly elected mayors across Cuyahoga County..

Citizens for an Elected Mayor believes in the residents of our city and knows that the people of Cleveland Heights will challenge those visions presented by candidates in a mayoral campaign, will offer their voices to help those visions evolve, and then hold that person accountable while in office. We all know that the residents of Cleveland Heights are leaders across our region, state, and nation. It's time for our city to have that type of political leadership in an elected mayor.

*Rob Rivera, a 16-year resident of Cleveland Heights, is on the committee for Citizens for an Elected Mayor.*