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# Public safety unions announce Austin council endorsements 📺

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KVUE News

For the first time, the city's largest public safety unions have joined together to stand behind the same candidates for Austin City Council. The announcement on Tuesday could have a big impact on the May election.



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Newcomers Randi Shade and Cid Galindo got a head-start in the Austin City Council race Tuesday. They and Councilmember Lee Leffingwell are being endorsed by Austin's largest public safety unions.

"We're not looking for candidates to run on a public safety platform," said Wuthipong Tantaksinanukij, Austin Police Association. "We need candidates that perform on a public safety platform."

Members from the Austin Police Association, Firefighters Association and EMS Employees Association jointly announced they stand behind three candidates for city council.

"They've either shown a willingness to understand our issues or make a commitment to meet those issues," said Mike Bewley, Austin Firefighters Association.

EMS union members say their response time of nearly 10 minutes to "priority one" calls isn't being met.

"The answer to that is more resources," said Brian Fitzpatrick, EMS Employees Association.

Firefighters say they need a candidate who will help them meet the challenges of an ever-growing Austin.

"My goal for this campaign and for this city is for us together to build the safest city in America," said Galindo, candidate. Galindo is running for the place four seat being vacated by Councilmember Betty Dunkerley.

"When we talk about quality of life in this community, there's no question in my mind that that starts and ends with public safety," said Shade, who is challenging incumbent Jennifer Kim for the Place 3 seat.

Both the fire and EMS unions supported Kim in the past.

"She was not as responsive as we would have hoped," said Bewley.

"I was disappointed to hear that, but I'm not surprised," said Kim.

Kim believes the associations are not supporting her because she didn't support an increase to the firefighters' pension.

"We're facing another budget shortfall and we have to watch our spending," said Kim.

"I guess it must mean I'm doing something right because here they're willing to endorse me again," said Leffingwell.

Councilmember Lee Leffingwell, the son of an Austin firefighter, said he was proud to once again receive the support of all three unions

The three unions met last week to discuss who they would endorse.

They said pay raises and benefits were not discussed - however the contracts for all three agencies expire in September.