

Faulconer's first year praised

Credited with stabilizing city, criticized for some moves; poll shows 61% approval

By [David Garrick](#) 5 A.M. MARCH 1, 2015

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- “He’s really established that San Diego is open for business and he’s shown the local business community he’s willing to work with them,” said Sanders, who also praised the mayor for fostering stronger economic ties with Tijuana.
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The mayor also tackled an issue that threatened to alienate the business community, a bold climate action plan inherited from Gloria when he served as interim mayor.



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Faulconer struck a compromise by eliminating a proposed requirement that property owners make their homes and commercial buildings more energy-efficient before they could sell them.

Councilman Alvarez credited the mayor for not following the advice of some business leaders who wanted him to blow off Gloria’s plan. “He could easily have just decided not to move the plan forward,” Alvarez said.

Faulconer said that was never an option.

“Our environmental quality of life is hugely important to who we are as San Diegans,” Faulconer said. “I will guard that very zealously.”

Environmental groups agree the mayor deserves praise, but stressed that the plan still must be adopted.

Kayla Race, a policy analyst for the Environmental Health Coalition, said some crucial appendices haven’t been completed and that Faulconer hasn’t yet hired a sustainability manager to oversee the plan.

Race also criticized Faulconer for helping business leaders overturn by referendum the Barrio Logan Community Plan, which she said would have led to a healthier environment for thousands of low-income residents living next to shipyards.

Barrera, the labor leader, said Faulconer's opposition to the Barrio Logan plan and the minimum wage increase shows he needs to separate himself more from the business community if he wants to be viewed as a moderate.

"It was an entirely reasonable proposal to go to \$11.50 an hour over three years when you look at Los Angeles debating between \$13.25 and \$15," Barrera said of the minimum wage hike, which will be on the June 2016 ballot because of a successful referendum that Faulconer supported.

Faulconer said he's striven to avoid partisanship when possible, but that sometimes it's unavoidable.

"When we have key differences I will speak up and hold true to the direction I think the city needs to go in," he said.

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Councilwoman Zapf said partisanship is much less pronounced under Faulconer than Filner.

"We still disagree sometimes, but we're much more civil about it," she said.

Sanders said Faulconer had no other choice but to oppose the Barrio Logan plan, which he claims jeopardized 42,000 middle class jobs, and the minimum wage hike, which could have threatened the local economic recovery.

Mitrovich, the civic leader, said Faulconer should be criticized for another instance of partisanship: allowing Democrat Sherri Lightner to

replace Gloria as council president in December.

While Faulconer has declined to comment on what role, if any, he played in the leadership change, Mitrovich said it's impossible to believe the council's four Republicans would vote to give Lightner the job without clearing the move with Faulconer.

"The take-away for many people was that the mayor was concerned Todd might oppose him in 2016, but Todd was doing too good of a job to be removed," said Mitrovich, longtime president of the San Diego City Club.

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