

## **Longmont Times-Call August 5, 2009 Open Forum letter from Karen Benker**

The Times-Call ran an article about me that elevated a non-issue taken from an obscure Republican Web site and turned it into a false issue. A former employee of Rep. Marilyn Musgrave has been hired by one of my political opponents to "investigate" me. His name is Greg Burt. According to one of his e-mails: "I'm doing some consulting work for a client in Longmont who is upset with Karen Benker...My client has asked me to catalog the frustrations that Longmont developers have with Karen Benker...He hopes to use this information to persuade voters to vote against her." It appears that Mr. Burt is on a fishing expedition.

I was a previous unpaid board member of HOPE, which is a non-profit organization in Longmont that provides street outreach to our homeless. Each night, HOPE volunteers seek out the homeless and provide them with food and clothing and, in cold weather, transport them to one of three churches in Longmont that will open their doors to keep them from freezing to death.

I did not vote on the HOPE contract nor have I voted on their appropriation while I served on the board as a City Council member. I resigned from the HOPE board last year, but I still volunteer with HOPE because I feel that it is important for elected officials to serve all people and remember how hard it is to survive if you are mentally ill, jobless or are fighting addictions.

So Longmont residents, please be wary of what you read in this newspaper and flyers that will soon hit your mailbox. Don't always believe what you read. If you have any doubt about any issue, please feel free to call me and find out the truth.