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## An unquestioned city at last

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East Palo Alto citizens' determination to run their city has been validated

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**P**EOPLE have the right to control their own destiny and run their own lives. Such is the American tradition, and such is the meaning of the 1983 vote for incorporation in East Palo Alto.

Validating citizens' determination to run their own city, the state Supreme Court unanimously has upheld the vote.

Cityhood has been a long time coming and bitterly contested. Opponents argued that there was an inadequate tax base; the area was dependent on San Mateo County for survival, they said.

Supporters of incorporation countered with a study that showed East Palo Alto actually paid more in taxes than it received in services. Subsidy was occurring, but not the way it was thought.

Still, the difficulties are daunting. There is little industry. The tax base is meager by municipal standards. East Palo Alto's 18,000 residents, mostly minority members, suffer from a range of social ills — high unemployment, low income, illegal drug trafficking and other problems.

And there are still cynics who claim the new city cannot succeed.

When cityhood was on the ballot, this newspaper acknowledged the problems but supported incorporation on the principle of self-determination. With the state Supreme Court ruling, there's more reason than ever to believe East Palo Alto should — and will — succeed against the odds.