

## **Candidates' Answers to League of Women Voters Questionnaire**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

**Categories :** [Government & Politics](#)

**Date :** November 2, 2020

The Darien League of Women Voters compiled this 2020 Voters' Guide by questioning candidates for local, state and federal offices and compiling their answers.

The election takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

Responses were limited to a specific word count and are published exactly as submitted by the candidates, the League said. The order of offices on the Voters' Guide is the same as on the ballot.

The League of Women Voters of Darien compiles similar Voters' Guides each year. All offices appear in the order in which they appear on the ballot.

### **About the League**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that encourages the informed and active participation of all citizens in the process of government. The LWV of Darien is a local group of both men and women who strive to improve the quality of democracy by increasing voters' knowledge of candidates and issues. Visit [lwv.darien.org](http://lwv.darien.org) to learn more.

### **About the Ballot**

For every ballot position, a voter may write in the name of someone who is not listed as a candidate on a separate line at the bottom of the ballot for “Write-In Votes.” In the State of Connecticut for those votes to be counted, the individual whose name is being written in, must have registered with the Secretary of State. In the case of write-in candidates for the RTM, a write-in candidate must have previously filed a petition with the Town Clerk signed by at least 25 electors within their District.

## **Candidates for Board of Education**

Vote for any two. The term runs from Jan. 6, 2021 to Nov. 7, 2023.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. This past year BOE members had to make difficult decisions regarding line items that directly impacted our students. How do you weigh the benefits to the students v. the financial costs going forward?
2. How can the district make up for lost instructional time and ensure equitable opportunities for all students now and in the period after the pandemic?

150 words per question

### **MICHAEL BURKE**

\*Michael J. Burke Democratic Party 15 Lake Drive

1. It has been my experience scrutinizing budgets over the past six years as a member of the BOE, each line item directly impacts students. If it were not an impactful expenditure, I would not have supported it. In this 2020-2021 budget cycle, we were mandated by the Board of Finance to reduce our budget. In order to meet that mandate, I prioritized delaying construction work that would not impact safety or educational needs. I then advocated use of available funds from the 2019-2020 budget to “pre-buy” educational materials which enabled us to enact the mandated cuts without loss of educational services. Going forward, I will continue to advocate for our children and work with my colleagues to create budgets that deliver the level of educational services we expect in Darien. I will always be mindful of economic conditions, while being guided by the notion that education delayed, is education denied.
2. The short answer is through superior teaching and Social Emotional Learning. Since last March and the advent of remote learning, through our recent hybrid opening, to our September 29th full time return (which I fully endorsed), safety and loss of educational opportunity has been my greatest concern. I believe parents, teachers, administration, and the Board must work in concert to identify and address any inequalities and/or any educational deficits. Currently, I read hundreds of much appreciated emails from well-motivated parents and teachers to help identify these issues. At our meetings, I question our educational leaders exhaustively to ensure that any inequities or deficits are fully identified. As a member of the Board’s finance committee, I work to see that all necessary and proper resources to resolve any inequities or deficits are marshaled.

Schools are never perfect. It is in the endeavor however, where achievement and progress occur.

**SARA PARENT**

Sara Parent Democratic Party 227 Hollow Tree Ridge Road

1. I will always advocate for Darien's children and their well-being ahead of all else. The school budget should reflect a commitment to ensuring Darien's schools provide the finest technology, pedagogy, systems and personnel to provide an exceptional education and appropriate support for all students in all areas.

Darien's residents should expect nothing less. Responsible budgeting includes looking forward. The District faces significant expenses in the coming years due to years of deferring capital projects and initiatives.

My education background will be invaluable in finding innovative and efficient ways to address these expenses. Additionally, Darien is in excellent financial health. Despite the global pandemic, the town's general reserve fund grew in Fiscal Year 2020 and exceeds the Board of Finance's own minimum guideline by approximately eight million dollars.

Even with the considerable expenses due to Covid, Darien can do what is right for our children and our schools without overburdening the taxpayer. 2. We must first focus on the emotional well-being of Darien's students.

As an educator, I know children can not fully access their learning when anxious or unsettled. Thankfully, Darien's Administration also understands this and is emphasizing social-emotional learning in the first weeks and months of school.

It is important to establish this foundation so our students are able to learn in the current environment. Remote learning has meant that some children have lost momentum in their education, but more importantly, some have lost their love of learning.

Assessments must be done on an ongoing basis to determine where each student is academically, but it is equally important to ensure learning is enjoyable again. Only then can the educational experts adjust curriculum to move our children forward as best they can and accommodate any gaps that may exist.

Darien's educators are tremendous. I am confident our children will thrive once again.

**DAVID DINEEN**

\*David P. Dineen, Republican Party, 20 Bayberry Lane

1. We should always start any conversation around our Board of Education philosophy, schools exist for children. I believe if we look at any challenge with that guiding point we will continue to be a highly performing district and prepare all students for the future. The Darien community has always supported and

invested in its schools and takes pride in the school system and the achievements of its students. Our community commitment to quality education is visible each year during the annual budget process. The zero based budget process gives the Administration and Board the opportunity to ensure we are delivering a fiscally responsible budget. My priority is always prioritizing our investment in curriculum and delivering the educational experience our students deserve. The current economic challenges brought on by the pandemic will continue. Our work around the budget table must focus on executing for our students, prioritizing and being efficient.

2. We have opened our schools in the Hybrid model with the goal of full time in school learning September 29, 2020. We need to take a breath and realize, our schools are open. We are learning and adapting each day, the process is fluid and there is no playbook.

As a very fortunate town, we need to keep the perspective that as I write this many schools have not opened, many have little or no technology and many have not been able to find teachers for the classrooms. The goal of the district does not change through this pandemic in delivering education goals and creating equity for all students.

The Board role through governance and oversight will work with district leadership to understand the scope of what our students needs are through the year. Our role is to understand the programmatic needs, resources and funding to maintain our high performing schools.

**DENNIS MARONEY**

\*Dennis Maroney, Republican Party, 113 Leeuwarden Road

1. The guiding principle is to protect student learning. Schools exist for children. I have always been a strong advocate for education, but we have to strike a balance with the needs of the larger community. From this spring's budget discussions there were areas where we could adjust without difficult tradeoffs.

Well over half of the cut was addressed by the fantastic work of the administration finding efficiencies. I would follow a process similar to what we did in the spring — focusing first on efficiencies and back office functions.

If we need to go further, working first to defer expenses or initiatives; working productively with the BoF to ensure we have maximized all funding options; and dialoging with the great community assets we have to see if they can assist. Lastly it would be look at the impact on student learning. Education and core curriculum items should be sacrosanct.

2. I have been a driver for enhanced and enriched SRBI and mental health since my time on the RTM, these will be the lynchpins to support all students to make up any lost education. As we assess and respond to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the Board has an important oversight role.

It will be our job to monitor the district's response and ensure our schools have the resources needed. The

work we have done over the past few years to strengthen curricular supports, academic assessment, intervention programs, social and emotional learning, and technological capabilities positions us well to respond.

We will need to provide academic remediation at grade and individual levels as well as social emotional support. Our remote learners may need additional support. Overall, the district response needs to be cohesive, data-based, and inclusive and it will be our job to ensure this occurs.

## **Candidates for Representative Town Meeting**

The Representative Town Meeting is determined annually by elector apportionment and cannot exceed 100 members. Legislative powers for the town are vested in this body.

Members serve two-year terms, do not get compensated and are not elected based on party affiliation. Its responsibilities include passing laws and ordinances, appropriating money and approving collective bargaining contracts involving town employees.

Though any Darien registered voter is eligible for election, it is unusual for any of the vacancies on the RTM to be contested. To win the election a candidate must receive at least one vote.

Ballots will vary depending on the voting district. There may be write-in candidates in some of the districts, but you must ask at your polling location.

Write-in candidates must receive a minimum of 25 votes to serve on the RTM. Attendance records for incumbents have been provided by the Town Clerk's office for your information. Incumbents are noted with \*. Please note the polling location of your District.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What town issue is of most concern to you?
2. Should all RTM members be required to have a government email address upon assuming office? 100 word limit in total

## **DISTRICT 1**

Poll Location: 35 Leroy Avenue Vote for any eight

\*Sarah M. Baldwin 17 Maywood Road No Response

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<https://darienite.com>

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\*Amy Barsanti 16 Sunset Road No Response

Reed W. Barthold 34 Richmond Drive

1. Education - beyond that of current undertow within the Board of Education. Darien is known for many things, with our education system being one we can be proud of. Properly & diligently educating our youth is the first stopgap against ignorance, intolerance, & apathy. This extends beyond budget or posture and into how we're educating, what we're teaching, & how we support the teachers who see that through.
2. Elected members need secure & publicly supported platforms to communicate in order for the public to be able to hold them accountable. Yes.

\*Curtis A. Butler, 106 Stephen Mather Road

1. The town issue closest to my heart this year is Darien's handling of the current health scare in our country. Specifically, I am most interested in the policies related to our schools. My role on the Education committee of the RTM affords me the opportunity to contribute to the solution in a small way.
2. A town-issued email address makes sense, as a dedicated inbox for town business would both support privacy and reduce the likelihood that messages from constituents and town officials get lost in the mix of the hundreds of other emails each of us receives every week.

\*Diane Conologue, 216 Leroy Ave.

1. My concerns are: 1) Providing a safe environment and educationally sound experience in schooling our children, and 2) Managing safe practices at our town parks, beaches and other facilities in order to provide outlets to our residents in this time of uncertainty with Covid.
2. RTM representatives should list an email address. Constituents should be able to contact their representatives. There is less personal risk in having a separate government email but individuals should have the right to choose.

\*Cassie Mecsery 29 Indian Spring Trail

1. The town issues of the most concern to me personally are; The development of Darien's downtown, education initiatives and enhancements within our parks and facilities. All while maintaining a keen eye on budgetary goals.
2. I believe it is important that all RTM members have their contact information accessible to their constituents. I agree that an email address should be included as a means of communication. I would be open to a government email address but have not had an issue receiving communications to my personal account.

Holly S. Mitchell 24 Overbrook Lane

1. Maintaining the quality of our public schools, both from an academic and facilities standpoint, is of chief concern to me. Attracting and retaining the most qualified, diverse and passionate teachers, school psychologists, principals, superintendents and Board of Ed representatives is fundamental to preserving the excellence in education our town is known for — and giving them and our kids safe facilities to operate in is central to this. I also believe budgeting for anything related to our schools and kids' education should be made on a non-partisan basis and in a system of transparency, collaboration and trust.

2. Yes.

**DISTRICT 2**

Poll Location: Town Hall

Vote for any eight

Based on the ballot this is a contested race

\*Vincent Arguimbau 69 Salem Straits

1. With a view of Scott Cove and the waters and shores of Tokeneke, Delafield Island, Salem Straits and Long Neck Point and an active paddle boarder who likes to casually stroll through the nooks and seagrass I have a unique perspective on what makes living in Darien such a pleasure. The waters are improving but more can be done. I wish my Delafield and Tokeneke neighbors would consider installing sewer lines to let my beloved cove's seagrasses grow and scavenging channels redevelop as they were in 1960 when I could find a starfish at Tokeneke Beach Club.

2. No

\*Elisabeth C. Bacon 59 Delafield Island Road

1. Protecting our extraordinary quality of life here in Darien is my primary concern. For me, that includes ensuring a safe and caring environment, the integrity of our educational system and the beauty and health of our natural surroundings. It means making thoughtful planning & zoning choices and allowing for respectful, honest communication among ourselves. Darien's leadership needs to stay focused on being efficient, compassionate and innovative in that effort.

2. Yes to government emails.

\*Michael A. P. Casolo 29 Contentment Island Road

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1. From my perspective, the most important issue facing the Town of Darien is maintenance of local control. Our schools, our zoning and our parks and beaches are provided for and maintained by our tax dollars. While Darien should be inviting and welcoming to all that want to live here, I believe that it is then our collective responsibility to provide for the best environment that we can for each and every one of our residents.

2. With regard to [darien.gov](http://darien.gov) email addresses, I do believe that these should be strongly encouraged of all RTM members and other elected officials.

\*James H. Howe 52 Old Farm Road

No response

\*Cheryl Russell 18 Fitch Avenue

1. The Town of Darien is facing exceptional challenges due to the Coronavirus. Our schools must be kept safe for our teachers and our children's learning experience. It has affected our elderly population, I hope our Senior Center opens so senior can interact with others. As a member of the Pear Tree Beach Building Committee, I look forward to making improvements that our community supports and can afford. We must keep our beaches, parks and open space safe for all of us to enjoy outdoor activities.

2. R T M should have a choice regarding an email address, personal or government.

\*Clara C. Sartori 161 Old Kings Highway South

1. Maintaining and improving Darien's services, facilities and recreational space with sensitivity to preserving natural surroundings will be essential as families spend more time working, learning and relaxing at home. With participation from the community and collaboration among Town officials, goals can be accomplished effectively. My experience in community service and as chairman of RTM District II and chair of the Education Committee will be valuable in fostering collaboration.

2. Keeping a separate email for RTM business is advisable. I use gmail for this purpose. I will switch to a government email if I can accomplish the transition successfully.

\*Barbara L. Thorne 37 Dickinson Road

1. An issue of concern to me is that all town residents follow the protocols re Covid 19 to insure safety so we can return to more in person activity. This action will foster a sense of community, cooperation, and unity as we together deal with all Darien's issues, including school reopening.

2. I am in favor of a town email address to foster and facilitate communication.

\*Michael C. Wheeler 8 Tory Hole Road

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1. My major concern is that it will be some time before we know the additional economic implications of the Coronavirus. With the tenuous state finances, we need to look harder for efficiencies to balance our investments in education and infrastructure. We need to continue to manage our finances conservatively to prioritize the things we need versus the things we might want As Chair of TV79. I'm proud our coverage brings complete transparency to the process of Town governance as priorities are openly debated for all to see live or On Demand.

2. Yes.

\*Penelope Wilson

Serving on the RTM for District 2 has been an honor, and a privilege that I take very seriously. Topping my priority list are continued efforts to protect our fragile coastal community, including making good common sense decisions around expansion and environmental realities. I favor the delay of the Pear Tree Point Beach development project, support full transparency of costs and planning, and believe residents' concerns around environmental accountability be fully addressed before proceeding any further. Funding programs which help the town's most vulnerable citizens is very important to me. Finally, I fully endorse RTM members having government email addresses.

### **DISTRICT 3**

Poll Location: Noroton Heights Fire Department. Vote for any seven

\*Jack H. Davis, 197 Hoyt Street

No response

\*Eric D. Golus 4 Chester Road

1. With the obvious choice being COVID-19, I'm going to address something that also merits attention: the rise of partisanship in town affairs. As any regular follower of the various sources of information (e.g., newspaper, Facebook) about all things Darien would tell you, it seems that what is happening on the national political level has worked its way down to town affairs. This is disturbing as the people of a small town like Darien should be driven by what is best for the town rather than fulfilling a political agenda.

2. Absolutely! It would be easier to respond to constituents' questions/concerns.

\*Petr Marousek 36 Lake Drive

1. Fiscal sustainability while maintaining and thoughtfully improving the quality of both our town services and our public-school system is paramount for the future of Darien. Such continuous process comes hand-in-hand with commitment and personal accountability of all paid and volunteer elected officials as well as all

town and school employees.

2. I view all town-related correspondence to be a matter of public record. And while I appreciate that separating personal and town email may be important in case of any future discovery process, one can perhaps create a separate, safe, town-matters-only, email address on her/his own if so needed.

\*Marcy A. Minnick 417 Hoyt Street

No response

\*Edward A. Washecka 7 Leeuwarden Road

1. Ensuring our kids are being afforded the education they deserve in the midst of the pandemic.

2. NO. Requiring someone to "have" an email address doesn't guarantee they will "use" it.

\*\*Lisa Yarnell 15 Kensett Lane

1. Greatest concern is how to provide high quality ongoing education and infrastructure in a prudent manner that does not risk the health/safety of students, teachers, families or residents. Specific issues needing careful attention include space constraints, K-2 and special needs students' difficulties learning remotely, if needed and safely carrying out athletic and social activities.

As a member of the RTM Finance & Budget committee for four years, our committee works to influence these issues proactively to provide excellent schools and community services while maintaining reserves in our capital budget to keep our mill rate low and taxes from increasing.

2. Yes.

\*Scott Zimmerman 14 Hillcrest Avenue

No response

#### **DISTRICT 4**

Poll Location: Precinct 4 – 1 Hindley School. Vote for any 10.

\*Werner Domittner 25 Nearwater Lane

1. I believe an important town issue is managing our budget more efficiently to keep property taxes low. We have seen tax increases over the past years whilst house prices are eroding and need to start better distinguishing between needs and wants. Within Fairfield County only Darien offers the combination of a top

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school system, a short commute to NYC, location at the Long Island Sound with beach access and one of the lowest mill rates. We need to balance our expenditures to maintain our high standards with the goal to keep tax increases low and property values high.

2. Yes

\*Lucy Fiore 31 Harbor Road

1. Property taxes and education are the most important issues to me. Darien is a great community to live in and to raise a family. Continual tax increases can be extremely tough for seniors and people living on a fixed income so it is imperative to think of all residents when making budget decisions.

2. I do not think RTM members should be required to have a government email especially if we have to hire someone and pay them to maintain and monitor the system.

\*Michael G. Heitz 4 Woodland Drive

1. The town issue of most concern to me is assuring that the Town successfully navigates, in a non-partisan manner, the financial challenges posed by the CoVid-19 pandemic.

I define “success” as the fair and equitable balancing of competing demands of the Town as well as the Department of Education in a fashion which all the while acknowledges the hardships (health and safety as well as financial) experienced by many residents.

2. Yes. I have had a government email address for some time; having an address dedicated to Town matters of record helps signify the seriousness which one takes public service and facilitates constituent communication.

\*Rolf C. Obin 9 Archer Lane

1. The Town of Darien (TOD) issue of most concern to me is the COVID-19 pandemic. I feel the pandemic’s affect on commerce, health and welfare, Board of Education and TOD services and personnel has not been fully realized. My duty as a Representative Town Meeting (RTM) member is to stay informed through Board, Commission and Committee meetings, address problems that may arise and support voting action(s) required to assist in our navigation through this health crisis and eventual return to normalcy.

2. I agree RTM members should have an efficient user-friendly government email address.

\*Brian J. Rayhill 6 Pleasant Street

1. As the Chair of District IV for the past 9 years, I have focused on meaningful RTM involvement by our District IV members and accountability to our constituency. Being educated on Town of Darien issues, both

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present and future, is one of the main reasons for my participation in the RTM. Moving forward, I am anxious to see the RTM continue to promote our Senior Programs\Resources and support the upkeep and development of our Town and Board of Education playing fields that service our youth so well.

2. I recommend offering a Town of Darien Email address to RTM members.

\*Jan Raymond 11 Waverly Road

No response

\*Linda S. Terhune 19 Patricia Lane

No response

### **DISTRICT 5**

Poll Location: Town Hall. Vote for any eight.

\*Mark R. Adiletta 69 Holly Lane

No response

\*David F. Bayne 5 Windsor Road

1. I am concerned about the effort to shift power away from the RTM to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance. Last spring's effort to remove the RTM from the annual town budget process was a wakeup call. The business of the RTM is sometimes messy, but it is representative democracy at its best. The effort to sideline the RTM in the budget process shows that the checks and balances provided by the Charter must be guarded or they will be eroded by other bodies willing to take advantage of any vacuum.

2. The RTM should vote on town email addresses.

\*Lindsay Kelly 28 Intervale Road

No response

\*Harry D. Lachlin 54 Edgerton Street

No response

\*Sheila B. Sherwood 266 Hollow Tree Ridge Road

No response

DISTRICT 6

Poll Location: 35 Leroy Avenue Vote for any eight

\*Frank H. Adelman 3 Harriet Lane East

Resource Stewardship and Transparency:

Darien and its citizens have abundant natural, financial, municipal, educational and human resources. These must be carefully conserved, only deploying Town assets and staff – and the time of our many generous volunteers – against truly worthwhile projects that provide longlasting benefit.

But we must also not be afraid to spend our time and money decisively, generously and aggressively when warranted. Example: safely returning students and staff to in-person instruction is a critical priority and we should spend generously to support them. Decisions about major town initiatives must be made with maximum transparency, citizen input and open deliberation.

\*Virginia S. Jijon-Caamano 5 Stony Brook Road

No response

\*Susan R. Lauritzen 59 Hale Lane

1. I have lived in Darien for the past 26 years and have seen enormous growth in town. I've served on the RTM since 2015. I also have an MBA from Yale. A priority is maintaining the superior quality of education, safety in schools, and addressing special education needs. Also important is managing our budget effectively to keep taxes low. Preserving parks and beaches, pedestrian safety, and infrastructure are important to maintain the quality of living we enjoy in Darien.

2. A town issued email address would be helpful for accessibility to constituents and easier communication to address concerns.

\*Richard Poli, 1 Little Brook Road North

No response

\*Robert A. Werner 21 Bailey Avenue

No response

***RTM ATTENDANCE RECORDS***

*The following are the attendance records for the Representative Town Meeting members for the past year. There were seven meetings in the 2019-2020 RTM calendar but some members joined after the year's session began. The attendance record notes both how many meetings were attended as well as how many meetings for which they were eligible. Continuing candidates on this year's ballots are noted by \*.*

**DISTRICT 1**

\*Sarah C. Baldwin 5/6 \*Amy Barsanti 6/6 Luisa Brakman 5/6 Patricia Finn Bumgardner 6/6 \*Curtis Butler 5/6 \*Diane G. Conologue 5/6 Sarah C. Haverstick 1/6 Patrick M. Keane 4/6 Colin J. Kelly 5/6 Derek Lublin 5/6 Karen McNichol 5/6 \*Cassie Ann Mecsery 6/6 Bradley G Pattelli 5/6 Lois J. Schneider 6/6 Jennifer A. Schwartz 6/6 Bert H. von Stuelpnagel 5/6

**DISTRICT 2**

\*Vincent Arguimbau 6/6 \*Elisabeth C. Bacon 2/6 Kara Bohnsack 5/6 \*Michael A. P. Casolo 4/5 William F. Cusack, III 6/6 Marie A. Handler (Mia) 6/6 Susanne R. Handler 6/6 \*James Henry Howe 4/6 Robert K. Lyons 5/6 Monica M. McNally 6/6 Iris B. Mix 5/6 \*Cheryl Russell 5/6 \*Clara C. Sartori 6/6 \*Barbara L. Thorne 4/6 Stacey Tie 5/6 \*Michael C. Wheeler 6/6 \*Penelope Wilson 6/6

**DISTRICT 3**

Adele M. Conniff 6/6 \*Jack H. Davis 6/6 Holly M. Giordano 5/6 \*Eric D. Golus 6/6 Catherine Kazim-Baily 3/6 Elizabeth B. Lane 6/6 \*Petr Marousek 6/6 M. Carolina McGoey 5/6 \*Marcy A. Minnick 5/6 Sue-Ellen H. Mitchell 5/6 Thomas W. Moore 6/6 Seth W. Morton 6/6 \*Edward A. Washecka 4/6 Jennifer Woodbury 4/6 \*Lisa Yarnell 6/6 \*Scott Zimmerman 3/6

**DISTRICT 4**

Martha A. Banks 6/6 Angus James Cameron 6/6 Christine A. Castles 6/6 Joan V. Davis 5/6 \*Werner Domittner 5/5 \*Lucy Fiore 5/5 Joseph H. Hardison, III 2/6 Olive J. Hauser 5/6 \*Michael G. Heitz 6/6 Frank B. Kemp 5/6 Joseph D. Miceli 4/6 Andrew C. Millar 4/6 \*Rolf C. Obin 6/6 \*Brian J. Rayhill 6/6 \*Jan S. Raymond 4/5 Sandra A. Savage 6/6 \*Linda S. Terhune 4/6

**DISTRICT 5**

\*Mark R. Adiletta 6/6 Carolyn Golden Bayne 6/6 \*David F. Bayne 6/6 John V. Boulton 4/6 Terrence J. Duffy, Jr. 6/6 Kenneth A. Fiveson, Jr. 5/6 Janet F. Grogan 6/6 \*Lindsay Kelly 3/6 \*Harry D. McLachlin 5/6 Jennifer M. Moller 5/6 Laura R. Mosher 5/6 Sara D. Parent 6/6 James M. Patrick 6/6 Ann B. Reed 6/6 \*Sheila B. Sherwood 5/6 William Smith, III 5/6 Cecil Wade 6/6

**DISTRICT 6**

\*Frank H. Adelman 6/6 Barry R. Baldwin 4/6 Carlo F. Cantavero 1/6 Amy R. Chickles 5/6 Edgar M. Hawkins, III 4/6 \*Virginia S. Jijon-Caamano 6/6 \*Susan R. Lauritzen 5/6 Elizabeth Lucas 6/6 M. Caroline Luz 6/6 Emily Quinn McDermott 5/6 Peter P. Orphanos 6/ 6 \*Richard Poli 5/6 Shannon Silsby 4/6 William R. Van Loan, Jr . 6/6 Theresa Vogt 6/ 6 \*Robert A. Werner 4/6

**Candidates for Registrars of Voters**

Vote for either one [**they'll both get elected**]. Term: Jan. 6, 2021 to Jan. 4, 2023

**Question: What are the challenges of running an election during a pandemic?**

100 word limit

**SUSAN GRAY (D)**

\*Susan K. Gray, Democratic Party, 57 Brookside Road

So far, the year 2020 has presented us with unprecedented obstacles to administering streamlined elections. The Covid-19 Pandemic has created public welfare issues that led to the implementation of both state-wide absentee ballot and in person voting.

Since March, our office has worked closely with the Governor and Secretary of the State to ensure that our voter registration process is not compromised by Covid-19 related state-wide mandates, and the Darien poll sites are safe environments for our election officials and voting public. Also, without the generous outpouring of public support, our success would not be possible.

**JOHN VISI (R)**

\*John J. Visi, Republican Party, 25 Little Brook Road

In past elections, we have focused on providing a safe and efficient voting experience for all Darien voters. Now, due to the pandemic, we also have to provide a safe working environment for our poll workers.

Without our volunteer poll workers, we would not be able to set up and run a well-organized voting process. We continue to maintain in-person voting for our many Darien voters, provide personnel support for absentee ballot counting, and rely on our volunteers to execute the many functions needed to insure the integrity of elections in Darien.

**Candidates for State Senate**

**DISTRICT 25**

Vote for One: Term: Jan. 6, 2022 to Jan. 4, 2023

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Considering your education, employment experience, political involvement, and personal attributes, what qualifications do you have to be a good State Senator?
2. Do you support or oppose the new police accountability bill that was recently enacted in the July 2020 special session? If elected, how--if at all—would you propose to change state laws surrounding police accountability?
3. Affordable housing is an ongoing concern. What changes, if any, to state laws and/or programs will you support to address this issue? How would this impact the communities you represent?
4. What is your view on statewide laws and mandates, as opposed to local autonomy for Connecticut's municipalities? Is the balance about right, or should there be more statewide consistency, or more local autonomy? Give one or more specific examples that apply to our local area.
5. Do you support or oppose an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut to permit early voting and/or no-excuse absentee voting?
6. If elected, what will be your top priorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including management of the economic fallout?

150 words per question

**BOB DUFF**

State Senate Majority Leader \*[Bob Duff](#), Democratic and Working Families Parties, 50 Toilsome Ave., Norwalk

**1. Qualifications:** My public service career began at age eight. I had written a letter to the mayor of Norwalk concerned about the future of Duffy Field. We still have our Duffy Field, now renamed Veteran's Park. My parents had instilled in me a belief that activism is a civic duty. In college I earned a degree in political science while interning with former senator Chris Dodd. I learned how "the system" works and how to make it work for my future constituents.

My years as a long-term substitute teacher in Norwalk and as a real estate professional taught me the value of listening and understanding people's needs, wants, and don't wants.

As a member of the state legislature since 2001, and currently Senate Majority Leader, I've been very effective at building consensus among my colleagues, regardless of political affiliation or personal ideology, to move Connecticut forward.

**2. Police Accountability:** There are people on both sides of this issue who view police accountability as anti-police. Not so. This is not an us vs. them issue. It's about improving public relations through increased transparency and enhanced professionalism. That is what I support.

Nothing in our recently passed legislation hinders a police officer's ability to control crime or enforce laws, two of the three primary responsibilities of police. And it does aim to enhance that third responsibility, one the public has cried out for – maintaining order, or as we used to say, keeping the peace.

Police work is tough. It's often dangerous. Every officer wants to go home in one piece at the end of their shift. My hope is that this new legislation makes for renewed public trust in and community support for the police, making a police officer's job easier and safer.

**3. Affordable Housing:** The challenge at the state level is crafting policy that's workable in diverse communities, from urban, to suburban, to rural. We've made good progress in affordable housing in recent years. Look at just about any mixed-use development and you'll see provisions for affordable housing.

By far the biggest issue is a community's opposition. That's the current issue at many proposals. We've had legislation in place since 1989 to promote affordable housing. But today we still have too many families, elderly and young people, all with limited incomes, who are locked out of the housing market. If we are ever to achieve economic class and racial integration, we'll need to change people's hearts. And that's something we can't legislate.

**4. Regionalization:** The word "regionalization" has been co-opted – transformed into a divisive political term. It means nothing more than sharing services between communities. The goal is to maximize dollars spent in order to save taxpayers their hard earned money. With 169 municipalities and 162 school districts, we have a lot of duplication in our state. Approaching housing, transportation and other municipal functions with an eye toward maximizing efficiency and saving taxpayer dollars is a goal we should all share.

**5. Early Voting:** I am support all efforts to make the right to vote as convenient and expedient as possible. Amending the state constitution is a lengthy process that requires a good deal of thoughtful consideration. However, Connecticut is behind where many other states are in this area and we should provide easier access so everyone can participate in our democracy.

**6. COVID-19:** Continue leading with science and facts to ensure the health of our people. That we open up responsibly, not repeating the mistakes of many states. We've had one of the lowest rates of infection in the country. At the same time we've opened 95 percent of the state's economy, with an over 85 percent economic recovery rate.

And rather than closing the 2020 fiscal year with a COVID related deficit, we had a small surplus. That money goes into our “rainy day” fund, now at a record high. In fact, it’s more than 15% of our budget, so the extra is adding to our efforts to pay down long term debt.

As a legislator, I know we’ll have to work on helping our small businesses, nonprofits, arts organizations get back on their feet. With our strong fiscal position, we’re better prepared to be a good partner.

**ELLIE KOUSIDIS**

[Ellie Kousidis](#), Republican and Independent Parties, 8 Deerwood Court, Norwalk

**1. Qualifications:** Just as I have always had a student-first approach to education, I will have a citizen’s-first approach to legislation and issues that concern our community.

I am an educator, a mother and a wife of a small business owner. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, as well as two Masters degrees; one in Teaching and the second in Educational Technology. Additionally, I hold three State of CT teaching certifications including, Secondary Social Studies, Library Media Studies, and Technology Education. I am passionate about making sure all children have access to the tools and resources they need to be successful. In 2018, I was the proud recipient of the Stamford Public Education Foundation Excellence in Education Educators Award.

Throughout my years as an educator, I’ve seen what it takes to make positive educational experiences that lead to improved outcomes for students and extra bureaucracy is not the answer.

**2. Police Accountability:** The police accountability bill is a sweeping piece of legislation that will drastically change policing practices in Connecticut and overturn decades of Supreme Court precedent. Connecticut Democrats rushed this bill through the House and the State Senate during a special session with little comment or analysis. Many legislators, police officials, and officers have voiced their concerns about how this bill will severely damage police retention and recruiting. This will make our communities less safe and it is not necessary in Connecticut.

I think we need community solutions for community issues. The one-size fits all approach taken by our current administration creates more problems than it solves.

Connecticut ranks 8th best in the nation on the U.S. News Safest States report. USA Today ranks Connecticut ninth best, noting in particular safety in Connecticut schools. The Norwalk Police Department has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement since 1995.

**3. Affordable Housing:** Connecticut is ranked 48th in the nation for fiscal health. It is no surprise that our community is struggling with affording housing. We are saying goodbye to businesses regularly. Connecticut was once one of the largest manufacturing states. We need to bring these jobs and businesses back to Connecticut. Our answers to affordable housing must include a broad approach to becoming a thriving state

that is conducive to businesses. State control of local zoning is a narrow approach and does not address the true problem. The state should stay focused on creating policies to ensure thriving communities.

**4. Regionalization:** Top on my agenda for state legislations is to promote local control of our communities and schools, and stop forced regionalization. Forced regionalization will add levels of bureaucracy to our schools that is just that — an extra level of bureaucracy. It will not bring better education to our schools and I have seen first hand of how local control benefits our children. Every community has different needs and the more local the solutions, the better outcomes we can expect.

**5. Early Voting:** I believe it is a right and a privilege to vote. We are in unprecedented times but we are a people that can solve problems. We should be able to find the balance between having the safest and most secure election process. And as with so many items, it will take input from the local towns and municipalities.

**6. COVID-19:** We are currently in Stage 2 of reopening in our state. COVID-19 cases have been brought under control, schools are reopening, the move to stage 3 continues to be a long and drawn out process.

We need our legislators back at work participating in these conversations and representing the people they were elected to represent. It is critical that the people have a voice in this process.

We must work together to keep our citizens informed and educated with clear benchmarks. Transparency is key to building trust in our community.

#### **DISTRICT 27**

Vote for One. Term: Jan. 6, 2021 to Jan. 4, 2023

#### **Questions**

1. Considering your education, employment experience, political involvement, and personal attributes, what qualifications do you have to be a good State Senator?
2. Do you support or oppose the new police accountability bill that was recently enacted in the July 2020 special session? If elected, how--if at all—would you propose to change state laws surrounding police accountability?
3. Affordable housing is an ongoing concern. What changes, if any, to state laws and/or programs will you support to address this issue? How would this impact the communities you represent?
4. In what areas would regionalization make sense? What areas should be left to local government? Give one or more specific examples that apply to the communities you represent.
5. Do you support or oppose an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut to permit early

voting and/or no-excuse absentee voting? 6. If elected, what will be your top priorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including management of the economic fallout? 150 words per question.

SEN. CARLO LEONE (D)

State Sen. \*[Carlo Leone](#), Democratic Party, 88 Houston Terrace, Stamford

**1. Qualifications:** An effective legislator is one who listens to all points of view and has a commitment to the community and to public service. My years in public office have allowed me to foster positive relationships with my local and statewide colleagues and the ability to achieve support for passage of legislation important to many.

My experience from having positions in corporate business, the non-profit community, local government, U.S. military service, and a masters degree all contribute to a holistic approach in critical thinking needed to be an effective legislator.

**2. Police Accountability:** I supported the Police accountability bill as it is clear improvements can be made how policing overall needs to progress, as it remains an issue nationally, and across the state in some areas.

I also am in support of changes to the legislation as the language passed needs to be adjusted to insure the intent is clear without risking the lives or livelihoods of police officers that provide a stellar service in protecting our community, as I articulated on the debate floor.

I also support input from local and state officers that will need to provide their comments for the upcoming session in 2021 that will highlight changes necessary to improve the language.

**3. Affordable Housing:** Affordable housing must be provided in order to meet the needs of the community and provide safe housing options for the middle and working class, many who provide the very services each resident expects and deserves. Input from the community and state are key to find meaningful legislation that can accommodate all concerns.

**4. Regionalization:** Regionalization needs to be a cooperative goal and benefit where duplicative expenses can be consolidated without impacting service. Both local and state government must have a role to play in support of each other. Common office expenses that are not a frontline impact to the community are just one example that can be considered.

**5. Early Voting:** I support making it easier for anyone to vote and have their vote counted. Imposing roadblocks and delays only weakens our democracy.

**6. Priorities Re COVID-19:** Public Safety and Health are paramount to the response related to the Covid-19 pandemic. We must implementing proper Covid-19 protocols for the future to insure lessons learned are improved upon.

Driving solutions to restore jobs and economic input are a high priority and any investment should follow these points as guidelines to any investment in furthering legislation.

Transportation infrastructure improvements must be solved as it is the underlying factor to all economic activity. Education funding and support for our children and schools also are the keys to the future, which is why I support any efforts that further the investments needed.

Protection of our seniors and veterans also must have our support for their years of service and sacrifice, and I fight for these efforts as I have in the past and will continue to do so.

**EVA MALDONADO (R) (I)**

[Eva Maldonado](#), Republican and Independent Parties, 58 Cambridge Road, Stamford

**1. Qualifications:** My qualifications for being a good State Senator are based on an array of experiences, such the founder of the Great Stamford Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, I was able to help a number individuals in start-up businesses; in providing educational seminars to enhance their respective businesses and equally important find mentors for help high school students to help pursue the potential career path.

The empowerment that these business owners and students obtained has been an asset to the community not a burden. It is about giving a hand up not hand out.

My involvement has not been political, has always been community based. I do not see our community based on politics but based on the needs of the community. And my biggest attribute is the skill of listening to the needs of the community and looking to solve issues.

**2. Police Accountability:** I oppose the “police accountability bill”! I retired as a Stamford Police Officer after 30 plus years. Throughout my career I have seen many changes and one thing for certain is that policing is not a one hour television show.

To enact a bill of this magnitude it should have had community input from all facets of the municipalities and done during regular session. I mainly oppose this bill because no two municipality in Connecticut are alike. Parts of the bill will hold officers and the town financially liable and be forced to settle even in cases that have no standing.

When elected I will move to repeal the bill. Policing in an ever-changing world must be well trained not regulated by legislation that does not serve the municipality where they serve. The key to a safe and healthy community is the certainty of Policing who Serve and Protect.

**3. Affordable Housing:** I believe that homeownership is an effective way for prosperity but not everyone knows the means of being a homeowner. I am more in favor of programs that will fit within the fabric of the municipality.

The concept of a program of having vacant property developed into small homes for families, veterans and homeless could have lots of merits with a program that will assist the residences in becoming homeowners.

This would do wonders for their health and well-being. HUD has programs that is making this happen throughout the country which should be duplicated for the needs of the local community.

**4. Regionalization:** One area that I believe regionalization make sense is emergencies services. Teams of Medical, Fire and Police services personnel including K9 and with professional mental health worker (with services animals) to respond as a team on critical / emergency needs. There will be a cost sharing within the municipality.

Additionally, I believe in the area of meeting the needs of special education of our students the State Education Department should work with local districts and jointly help establishes regional resources. Often students have to travel long distance for services at a huge cost to the municipality.

**5. Early Voting:** As a proud American Citizen voting is very important to me and voting in person it is special right given to us. I have voted twice absentee because I knew ahead of time that I was going to be out of town. Everyone is different but planning is essential. 365!

**6. Priorities Re COVID-19:** Connecticut has extremely talented citizens who are committed on the well-being of all. However, Public confidence has been the missing link to the handling of Covid-19.

My priority will be in loosening regulations in government spending with a focus on infrastructure. The strength is in local businesses and their self-motivation in succeeding. Use what they currently have as products and services and market it based on lessons learned under Covid and doing it better.

We need clarity and confidence from the local leadership, and nothing should be off the table. I would push to have a community of stakeholders of the state to work on the main concerns with the cities and towns. Help businesses pivot towards serving the need of now. Connecticut can be rebuilt.

## **Candidates for State House of Representatives**

Vote for one in your district. Terms run from Jan. 6,2021 to Jan. 4, 2023

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Considering your education, employment experience, political involvement, and personal attributes, what qualifications do you have to be a good State Senator?

2. Do you support or oppose the new police accountability bill that was recently enacted in the July 2020 special session? If elected, how--if at all—would you propose to change state laws surrounding police accountability?

3. Affordable housing is an ongoing concern. What changes, if any, to state laws and/or programs will you support to address this issue? How would this impact the communities you represent?

4. In what areas would regionalization make sense? What areas should be left to local government? Give one or more specific examples that apply to the communities you represent.

5. Do you support or oppose an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut to permit early voting and/or no-excuse absentee voting? 6. If elected, what will be your top priorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including management of the economic fallout?

150 words per question

### **State Representative District 141**

**TERRIE WOOD (R) — UNOPPOSED**

State Rep. \*[Terrie E. Wood](#), Republican and Independent Parties, 50 St. Nicholas Road, Darien

**1. Qualifications:** I came to public service seeing a need and gathered a group of like-minded women around the issue of environmental awareness by co-founding the Darien Environmental Group, a 501(c)3 organization.

From this experience, I was asked to serve on other community non-profit boards, developing leadership and board governance skills serving as president of several of them.

I learned early on, the power of listening to find solutions and have developed strong and trusting relationships with fellow legislators in Hartford. We don't always agree, though we always respect our differences. I'm known for being a good listener, problem solver and to seek common sense solutions by working together.

I believe in bottom-up government that is transparent / accountable to the people. I believe in the power of the people, their individual voices and will continue to represent constituents with honesty, courage and compassion.

**2. Police Accountability:** The Police Accountability bill was inspired from the public outcry for racial justice sparked by the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

Connecticut has some of the highest recruiting, training and accountability standards in the country. Many provisions of the bill have been in practice in Norwalk and Darien Police Departments for years. I voted against the bill for two reasons. One, it eliminates qualified immunity.

Current federal law already allows bad officers to be held accountable. We also need to protect our good officers. This bill allows good officers to be sued for unmerited / frivolous reasons.

This damages recruitment efforts and will encourage early retirements of good officers, all impacting public safety. Eliminating qualified immunity was a poor decision and needs to be corrected. Second, this bill was rushed through the process without a proper public hearing, input from stakeholders and precious little time for appropriate due diligence.

**3. Affordable Housing:** This question begs a deep dive into our state's economy. Connecticut has an enormous unfunded pension liability, a large bureaucratic state government unfriendly to job creators, and a majority party that continues to prove their allegiance to the state unions with the richest pension/benefits of any state in the country. Because of this, we are neither an affordable nor competitive state.

There are those in our state that believe that affordable housing is a right and an economic driver. This is a philosophy, not economic reality. The bigger question is, should the government be providing affordable housing? Is this a purpose of government or is this better left to the private sector?

I will continue to advocate for common sense policies that encourage families, seniors, students and job creators to come to and stay in Connecticut. Good jobs and a vibrant economy will foster affordable housing.

**4. Regionalization:** The Councils of Government have been a productive roundtable for municipal CEO's to exchange ideas and discuss important regional initiatives. They are a grass roots, bottom up problem solving venue. Regionalization makes sense when done on a voluntary — not forced — basis.

Zoning and schools should remain under local control of individual municipalities. Recent statewide polling in Connecticut widely supports this bottom up rather than top down approach to government. Bottom up, local municipal governance is far more accountable and transparent to the people than a top down government.

**5. Early Voting:** In 2019, I voted to support adding early voting/no-excuse absentee voting to our state Constitution.

**6. Priorities re COVID-19:** My top priorities are to address our dynamic education needs by ensuring state funding confronts the dramatic impact of school shutdowns now and in the future. We need to make sure all children are educated fully and appropriately especially those children in the urban districts.

Children should be in school for not only academic reasons but also social emotional reasons. In addition, we must rebuild our local economy by placing great urgency on recovery for our local merchants, restaurants and small businesses to ensure their viability.

All of this needs to be done with a keen eye on maintaining public health and safety protocols. Lastly, we must bring sustained fiscal prudence to our state by re-evaluating state budget priorities and supporting policies that attract job creators.

**State Representative District 147**

**MATT BLUMENTHAL (D)**

\*Matt Blumenthal Democratic Party 25 Oakdale Road, Stamford

**1. Qualifications:** As a Marine Infantry Officer commanding a rifle platoon, I lived by a central credo: “officers eat last.” That principle—that leadership is a sacred duty—has been constant in my work. During law school, I helped an Afghan interpreter, threatened by the Taliban for his work with our troops, safely reach the U.S. My work helped pass a Connecticut statute that eased the veteran unemployment crisis. As a lawyer, I fight to ensure victims of negligence and misconduct receive justice. My Yale Law School training taught me that details matter: for good or for ill, the law has a tremendous impact on real people’s lives. I’ve taken all these lessons to the General Assembly. There, my attention to detail, teamwork, and uncompromising defense of our values have helped me be a leader on fighting gun violence, strengthening our democracy, bolstering our economy, and many more issues.

**2. Police Accountability:** The vast majority of police officers are excellent public servants doing a difficult and dangerous job. Like any major legislation, this summer’s police accountability bill will require some fixes. But it represents a step toward forging, statewide, the trust between communities and police that is absolutely necessary to effective law enforcement. It increases state funding for police, providing body cameras, enhanced training, and additional mental-health resources. It allows departments to discharge problem officers while providing every officer due process. It bans chokeholds and aligns our use-of-force rules with the national standard. It ensures departments across the state adopt state-of-the-art policies and training — most of them already in effect in Darien and Stamford. It allows victims of brutality to obtain justice while barring personal liability for officers except in the most egregious cases of bad-faith misconduct. Ultimately, it protects good officers, provides better training and resources, and increases transparency and accountability.

**3. Affordable Housing:** There is no doubt we need more affordable housing in this state, and in Fairfield County in particular. Darien has made significant progress on this front, adopting inclusionary zoning regulations in 2009 that resulted in the building of numerous new affordable units. Statewide, a careful balance must be struck between increasing access to affordable housing and maintaining an important element of local control. I have not supported sweeping changes to the current zoning laws. Solving the affordable-housing problem will require careful study. I plan to consult carefully with experts on all sides as I work to increase access to affordable housing in our state.

**4. Regionalization:** Connecticut has 169 towns. There are undoubtedly benefits to local control. But there is also significant waste through duplicative services. Over the past years, Connecticut towns have achieved important savings through shared services. Dispatch and emergency services is one area: there are currently more 911 call centers in Connecticut than in all of Pennsylvania. Fairfield and Westport, along with a number of other towns, have decided to regionalize this function with good results. Bulk purchasing is another: towns can achieve economies of scale through regional purchasing compacts, sharing permitting systems, and working together on transportation projects, trash hauling, and software systems. Education is a different

matter. While there may be savings in consolidating some back-office or administrative functions, residents expect a strong degree of local control over their schools. Connecticut's schools are among the best in the country. I will oppose any measure that would change that.

**5. Early Voting:** I wholeheartedly support amending the Connecticut Constitution to permit early voting and no-excuse absentee voting. In fact, I was a leader in expanding access to absentee voting this year, and strongly supported the resolution for an amendment to allow early voting we passed in 2019. I will continue to fight to ensure voting is safe, easy, and secure for every eligible voter in our state.

**6. Priorities re COVID-19:** Government's most sacred obligation is the safety of the people. Connecticut's careful, science-based policies have made it a model for the nation, keeping our infection rate low and more than 95% of our economy open.

I will continue to push for policies, like mask wearing and social distancing, that are based on the best medical science and public-health expertise — and put the safety of our residents first. I will continue to work to ensure there is adequate PPE and testing for all who require it.

Over the course of the pandemic, I have helped numerous constituents obtain unemployment benefits and other assistance. In addition to assisting individual constituents, I will continue to fight for additional aid to families and small businesses to help them weather the downturn.

DAN MAYMIN (R)

[Dan Maymin](#), Republican Party, 307 Four Brooks Road, Stamford

No response.

## Candidates for U.S. House of Representatives, District 4

Incumbent U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, a Greenwich Democrat, faces challenger Jonathan Riddle, a Stamford Republican, and Brian Merlen of Stamford, an Independent. The league didn't present any answers from Merlen, who may not have submitted them.

Questions:

1. The nature and timing of the next public emergency (such as disease, flood, fire, agricultural disruption etc.) is unknown, but another emergency will occur at some point. What actions should the Federal government take to ensure that the nation is prepared to respond to these unknowns?
2. The federal deficit has grown to nearly the size of the gross domestic product. Is this a problem? If it is, why and what actions do you propose to address the deficit? If it is not a problem, explain why you

do not see it as an issue. 200 words per question.

**JIM HIMES (D)**

\*[Jim Himes](#) Democratic Party, Valley Road, Cos Cob, CT 06820

**1. Public Emergency:** The federal government needs preventive measures, a clear plan and restored respect for science to better prepare for the next public crisis or emergency. Investing in climate resilience, curbing emissions, advancing disease research and preparation and fully funding FEMA are critical paths forward. The federal government should plan and act quickly for and in emergencies, as the Obama administration did with pandemic preparation.

**2. Deficit:** The growth of the federal deficit is a problem and is unsustainable. It represents generations of failure to pay for what we wanted. At some point, there will be a reckoning, and we would be wise to address that sooner rather than later. As someone who supported the Simpson-Bowles budget nearly a decade ago, with just a few dozen of my colleagues, I am doubtful that most elected officials have the courage to level with their constituents on this topic. Instead, they promise all the goodies: tax cuts, a powerful military, improved health care, but disappear when the bills come due.

**JONATHAN RIDDLE (R)**

[Jonathan Riddle](#), Republican Party, High Ridge Road, Stamford

**1. Public Emergency:** When preparing for any emergency, it is the responsibility of a state's Governor to ensure they have adequate resources available to respond to the unknown crisis to come. For instance, during this pandemic, many of the states were ill prepared and blamed the Federal government's response for the shortage of equipment. In actuality, after H1N1, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut amongst other states, failed to replenish the stockpiles of PPE, hence their shortages. The role of Federal Government in any emergency is to be the backstop for the states when their capabilities are severely challenged or surge past their capacity. It is the Governor who needs to properly assess their preparedness and when needed coordinate with the Federal government to request, release, and manage the resources the Federal government can supply. In preparing for this role, the Federal government should use all tools at their disposal to properly maintain equipment, stockpile in excess of what is needed for any emergency, and strategically locate these assets for quick deployment where needed. In addition, when an emergency is unfolding, the Federal government should take proactive steps in anticipating the request for help for any response.

**2. Deficit:** The ballooning federal deficit has long been a problem since the beginning of 2000. Politicians in Washington have forgotten the meaning of a "Balanced Budget" and continue to spend our tax dollars without care. The Federal government is wrought with fraud, overspending, wasteful spending, and an immense amount of red tape attached to any budget bill. It is high time Congress steps up to aggressively combat this runaway train. We need to deeply look at the entire budget and all levels of government to rein in the fraud, loopholes, and wasteful spending. We are not going to fix the budget by simply raising taxes. If

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this were a household and we spent our way into debt, do you look to make more money or do you change your spending habits? The latter of course! While our military spending is imperative to our national security, there is an incredible amount being wasted on projects such as the Littoral Combat Ship. This \$30 billion failure is just one example. We need more accountability, integrity, and a fiduciary responsibility when dealing with our tax dollars. Congress should be a shepherd of our dollars, not the wolf looking to get fed.

**BRIAN MERLEN (I)**

[Brian Merlen](#), Independent Party, Courtland Avenue, Stamford