

Go Greene 2008
333 Munson Street
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October 20, 2008

Ms. Susan Voigt, Chair
New Haven Democratic Town Committee
28 Pelham Lane
New Haven, CT 06511

Dear Ms. Voigt:

I have received your letter and, frankly must admit that I am both shocked and disappointed at your questionable attempt to interfere in the race for the open 94th District legislative seat between your candidate, Mr. Gary Winfield, and myself. As the Ward 21 Co-chair, and an active member of the Democratic Town Committee, I am unclear as to the basis for your authority to request that I resign from my duly elected position as a representative of Ward 21. Other than your letter, I am aware of no DTC actions, complaints, or discussions (formal or informal) stating any opposition to my independent candidacy. As you correctly indicate in your letter, “neither State Party by-laws nor Connecticut General Statutes prohibit ... (my) doing so.” Further, judging from the number of past and present Ward Co-chairs and DTC officers who have already endorsed my candidacy, I suspect that the positions stated in your letter are your personal views, and do not represent any official actions endorsed by the Town Committee. Be that as it may, I am not obligated to respond to your letter, however, out of respect for the process and your position in it, I will try to respond as needed, in the hopes of resolving any personal feelings you may have towards my candidacy.

Let me begin by saying I am honored to be elected three times to my position as Ward 21 Co-chair and to serve for the past 6 years. I am equally honored to have served as Alderman from my Ward for 14 years prior to that time. I view my elections, and re-elections by the people of my Ward, as an affirmation of my personal efforts to provide my constituents with independence of thought and action in addressing their legitimate needs and requests from City Hall. As you know from our past interactions on the DTC, you and I have often disagreed on many substantive issues of municipal government. Most recently, I have called for creation of a Charter Review Commission to explore the idea of reducing the size of the Board of Aldermen to bring about a more efficient and more capable governing body. My role in seeking needed improvements in New Haven government shall remain as it always has been – independent of any political pressure or threats you may seek to impose. I will not repudiate my positions simply because you request it. As elected officials, Ward Co-chairs are accountable to their constituents, not to the Town Committee Chair. I will continue to serve my Ward 21 constituents as their Co-chair until they choose otherwise.

I will only briefly note that in the past, neither you nor any other DTC officer ever once raised any objection or demands for resignation from your long-time friend and associate Joe Lieberman when he challenged the party-nominated candidate on his re-election bid.

Although his actions subsequent to his re-election have proven to be disappointing to many Democratic Party members (myself included), that does not alter the fact that his Independent Democrat candidacy was perfectly legitimate. So, why the outrage and “disappointment” at my Independent Democrat candidacy?

I am also disappointed that, prior to sending your letter, you did not bother to contact me or request clarification or explanation of my reasons for stepping outside the normal Democratic Party’s nominating process. Had you done so, I would have readily advised you of the following rationale.

The 94th District is comprised of more than 11,000 registered voters (including Democrats, Republicans, and unaffiliated voters), all of whom are entitled to cast their votes for an elected representative of their choosing. In the August primary, 687 voters cast their ballot for your candidate Mr. Winfield, and provided him the “victory” your letter references. 687 votes out of a total of 11,000 registered voters! In Ward 1, Winfield won by a grand total of 9 to 1! The math is compelling. Obviously, the DTC which you Chair must shoulder its share of blame for having such a low voter turnout as to call into question the legitimacy of its primary selection process. And I most certainly will not be made the scapegoat of your lackluster performance in failing to obtain a more representative primary voter turnout. But for my candidacy as an Independent Democrat, the results of that unrepresentative primary vote would stand, thereby disenfranchising the thousands of 94th District voters (whether Democrat, Republican, or unaffiliated) who deserve to have their votes cast and counted in this general election. Unlike the opinion expressed in your letter, no one has “waived” any rights to participate fully in the November vote process. There is simply no honor in the gamesmanship you seek to foist upon the voters in declaring your candidate to have any stronger entitlement to that office than myself, or anyone else who validly qualified for the November ballot. Rather than being subjected to your letter’s unfortunate attempt to cast me as a “rogue” member of the DTC, it was my hope that you would, like other officers and members of the Town Committee already have, embrace my efforts to bring legitimacy to an admittedly flawed process.

With all due respect, I will not withdraw my candidacy for the 94th District seat. Instead, I suggest you let the electoral process proceed unimpeded by any further attempts to undermine the will of the 94th District voters. Rather than benefiting from my withdrawal, your candidate will have to face the voters in the general election, as the rules require of all other candidates for public office.

Respectfully,

Willie D. Greene

Cc: Darrell Brooks
Norma Rodriguez-Reyes
Ronald Smith
Gary Holder Winfield