

Why I am Endorsing Jeffrey Kerekes for Mayor

The answer is fairly simple, New Haven deserves better. After 18 years of back room deals that benefit political allies and big out of town developers, New Haven needs and deserves a mayor with fresh ideas and a fresh approach that does not rely on bullying and cronyism. New Haven deserves a mayor whose main focus is on the residents of New Haven, and not big out-of-town developers or highly paid employees who drive out of town every afternoon.

Trust: Eighteen years have made our current mayor cynical and controlling. Dissent is not allowed and fear and greed reigns supreme. Residents have lost faith and trust in their government and as a result have even stopped voting. The latest example is his lying about the departure of the Police Chief, and then hiring a new chief without any input from the Aldermen, elected representatives of the people, or the general public. We must reverse this trend where now less than 29% of the eligible voters participate in a given election.

Education: For 18 years this mayor has ignored educating our youth, and instead focused on building temples and privatizing our schools. Quite recently we have learned that the DeStefano administration has used the Board of Education as its own private lending institution with zero oversight. When entering into multi year leases he has ignored the charter and has circumvented the Board of Alderman for obvious reasons. Clearly, for the vast majority of his tenure John has used the BOE as a patronage system. He has bullied administrators into funding his campaigns and he has given jobs to political supporters to maintain his political machine. The fact that he has found the “education religion” in the last year and a half doesn’t excuse ignoring the educational needs of a generation of our youth.

Taxes and Spending: This cynical process that we use, raising taxes by double digits during even years where there is no local election, and then holding taxes steady during election years is a dishonest process, and are yearly selling assets to close deficits. After 18 years of development deals, one after another, which promised thousands upon thousand of jobs for New Haven residents, we still face one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. What we don't have is a shortage of consultants doing studies and getting rich. We are selling this city to the highest bidders, and the taxpayers are footing the bills. The fact that Mr. Kerekes has promised to take the issue directly to the taxpayers is a breath of transparency fresh air.

City Services: The City taxpayers are currently seen as a cash cow to be milked regularly, yet when they make inquires or complaints about poor services they are ignored, or even worse, treated rudely by the civil servants who salaries they pay. As an example, during the past year and a half, the Mayor’s staff interfered with an aldermanic committee investigation into misdeeds by the City Assessor’s office, going so far as to refusing to convey subpoenas legally issued by that committee. Worse yet the Assessor, the chief tax collecting authority in the city, who routinely tows cars of residents and of out-of-towners who he claims are residents, votes in another town, and has registered his own motor vehicles and pays taxes in another city. All while this Mayor has silently stood by.

Youth Services and Public Safety: While young unemployed people are languishing on street corners and slowly dying in the streets, this mayor’s focus has been somewhere else. The Youth

Commission, which has a mission to identify the challenges and needs of youth, as well as advocating for young people, has died under his watch. Summer youth employment has effectively disappeared. Young people with jobs gain professional experience and hope for the future. Those without jobs lose hope and end up on street corners playing with loaded guns. The tragic death of 13 year old Marquell Banks should give everyone pause. Clearly, John DeStefano has lost his grip on public safety. He is simply fresh out of ideas or worse the safety of our children is not a top priority.

Jeffrey Kerekes represents a fresh voice and a new direction for this city. New Haven is facing a socio-economic crisis. It won't be easy turning this around but one thing is for sure we cannot make the necessary changes with the individual who is foremost responsible for creating the problems.

The fact of the matter is John DeStefano has overstayed his welcome. 18 years is far too long. I encourage the voters of this city to take advantage of this unique opportunity and use the power of the ballot to send DeStefano packing. The reality is – this city simply cannot take another two years of cronyism, mismanagement, clandestine deal making and iron fisted rule. The weight of such things is much too great for this city to bear.

On Tuesday, November 8, 2011 join me in ushering in a new day for the citizens of our city. I encourage you to not only vote but **GET 5** others to vote for Jeffrey Kerekes. Remember you really can't complain if you don't exercise your right to vote.

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