CONECT
Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut
Congregaciones Organizadas para un Nuevo Connecticut

CITIZENS' REPORT ON THE CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR OF CONNECTICUT

2018 CANDIDATES:

Mark Boughton (*Republican*)

Joe Ganim (*Democrat*)

Tim Herbst (*Republican*)

Ned Lamont (*Democrat*)

Steve Obsitnik (*Republican*)

Bob Stefanowski (*Republican*)

David Stemerman (*Republican*)

JULY 2018

ABOUT CONECT

CONECT—*Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut*—is an organization of religious and civic institutions committed to improving our communities. CONECT member institutions are of many faiths, of many racial and ethnical backgrounds, from urban and suburban areas, spanning Connecticut's Fairfield and New Haven counties. Together, we discover, research, analyze, and articulate a powerful moral voice to negotiate with business and government leaders regarding social, economic, and political issues that affect our member congregations and communities.

WHY THIS REPORT

Sources of independent, non-partisan information on candidates for elected office are more and more uncommon. CONECT encourages its members to be engaged and informed voters. We hope this non-partisan report offers our members and the public at large important, additional information on the candidates as they make their decision about who to support in the Primary on Aug 14th and in the General Election on Nov 6th.

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2018 ELECTIONS – WHAT WE'VE DONE TO DATE

CONECT is a non-partisan, non-profit organization. Nevertheless, CONECT believes in grassroots democracy – that we get only as much respect and results from our elected leaders as we are organized to demand from them. So, rather than wait and watch the pivotal 2018 election play out from the sidelines, CONECT leaders decided to engage the candidates for Governor on a non-partisan basis and raise our voices on issues of concern.

House Meetings & Small Candidate Meetings:

First, we held House Meetings (small group discussions) in our congregations to hear the stories, experiences, and concerns that folks wanted to share with candidates for office. Nearly 500 people from our member congregations participated in these House Meetings.

We then organized small meetings with 6 of the 7 candidates for Governor to begin building relationships with them. Members of our Candidate Team (listed below) met with Mark Boughton, David Stemerman, Ned Lamont, Tim Herbst, Joe Ganim, and Bob Stefanowski. Despite repeated efforts, we were not able to meet with Steve Obsitnik. In these small meetings, we asked

each candidate to commit to attend a larger Assembly in late June, which the team described and also shared a memo describing it in writing.

June 26th Primary Candidate Assembly:

On June 26th, 442 CONECT members packed the gym of St. James Catholic School in Stratford for a Candidate Assembly. 4 of the 7 candidates attended – Mr. Stemerman, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Herbst, and Mr. Ganim. Mr. Boughton, initially committed to attend as well, but his campaign staff notified CONECT just 24 hours before the Assembly that he now had an unexplained schedule conflict. Both Mr. Stefanowski and Mr. Obsitnik cited schedule conflicts from the start and did not attend.

At the June 26th Assembly, CONECT leaders shared stories about common areas of concern to our members and asked the candidates to respond briefly with their ideas. Leaders spoke about Gun Violence, Mental Health Care, Immigration, Criminal Justice Reform, and Economic Development. Each candidate was allowed three, 2-minute opportunities to speak in response to these issues.

Video coverage of all 90 minutes of the June 26th Candidate Assembly is available online courtesy of the Connecticut Network (CT-N).

Commitments for Oct 18th General Election Candidate Assembly:

At the end of the June Assembly, a leader from each CONECT member congregation announced their congregation's pledge for turnout to a planned Oct 18th Assembly with the winners of the August 14th Primaries. Collectively, CONECT members pledged to turn out 822 people on Oct 18th.

Each of the four candidates was then asked to stand if they pledged to return to meet again with CONECT on Oct 18th if they win their party's primary. All four – Mr. Stemerman, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Herbst, and Mr. Ganim – stood and pledged to return to meet with CONECT on Oct 18th. Mr. Obsitnik later pledged via email to attend on Oct 18th if he wins the primary. Mr. Boughton's campaign staff refused to commit to anything until after the primary. Mr. Stefanowski's campaign did not respond by the deadline for this report.

SUMMARY OF THE CANDIDATES' ENGAGEMENT WITH & COMMITMENTS TO CONECT

	Met with small team of CONECT leaders?	*Attended June 26th Assembly?*	*Committed to Attend Oct 18th Assembly?*
Mark Boughton (R)	✓	✗	✗
Joe Ganim (D)	✓	✓	✓
Tim Herbst (R)	✓	✓	✓
Ned Lamont (D)	✓	✓	✓
Steve Obsitnik (R)	✗	✗	✓
Bob Stefanowski (R)	✓	✗	✗
David Stemerman (R)	✓	✓	✓

Criminal justice reform was one of the topics discussed during the candidate assembly on June 26th.

The Candidates

The following pages contain information and impressions gleaned from our Candidate Team's smaller meetings with the candidates prior to the June 26th Assembly. To hear the candidates' responses around gun violence, healthcare / mental health care, immigration, criminal justice reform, and jobs / economy, we encourage you to watch CT-N's coverage of the June 26th Assembly online.

MARK BOUGHTON (REPUBLICAN)

Members of CONECT's Candidate Team met with Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton at his campaign office on Mill Plain Road in Danbury on May 29th. Mr. Boughton welcomed the team cordially and a campaign aide joined the meeting within 5 minutes of the start of the conversation. Once the team introduced themselves to Mr. Boughton and explained CONECT to him, he described his background as a high school social studies teacher in Danbury being an important grounding for his career in public service and elective office.

Mr. Boughton described his ability to get elected and repeatedly re-elected in Danbury, a very diverse and Democratic city, as evidence that he can build relationships and establish trust with all kinds of people. He asserted that his ability to get re-elected was due to his effectiveness as a mayor, alluding to the possibility that the majority in Danbury might not be in his party, they came to trust that he would govern effectively for them.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Boughton personally committed to attend CONECT's June 26th Assembly. At 6:00pm on June 25th, however, Boughton Campaign staff informed CONECT that he now had a scheduling conflict. When asked for an explanation of what the conflict was or how it happened at such a late date, they refused to give any explanation or detail. When asked later about committing to attend the Oct 18th Assembly, his staff refused to make any commitments until after the Aug 14th Primary.

JOE GANIM (DEMOCRAT)

Members of CONECT's Candidate Team met with Bridgeport Mayor Ganim at his campaign office on Fairfield Avenue in Bridgeport on June 22nd. Mr. Ganim's campaign staff greeted the CONECT leaders and ushered to a meeting table just before the 4:00pm meeting explaining that Mayor was running late. The campaign staff began asking the team questions during this period. Mr. Ganim arrived at roughly 4:10pm, but then immediately entered another room. Not until after 4:20pm did Mr. Ganim come to the meeting table and begin engaging with the CONECT Team, apologizing that he had a radio interview.

After a round of introductions and introduction of CONECT, Mr. Ganim recalled being at other CONECT assemblies in the past, both when he was running for Mayor in summer 2015 and shortly after he won in early 2016. He complimented the team on those events being well organized and thoughtful. The team described the planned June 26th Assembly briefly at that point, and Mr. Ganim committed to attending.

When Mr. Ganim heard that health and mental health issues would be raised, he confessed to not knowing those issues well and proceeded to ask a series of questions about those issues, taking advantage of the opportunity to educate himself about our past work and thinking on current issues. The meeting wrapped up nearly an hour after Mr. Ganim arrived with his assurance that he would attend.

Despite being clearly told both verbally at this meeting and in two written memos that no campaigning or campaign literature would be allowed at the Assembly or on church grounds at St. James, Mr. Ganim's campaign sent volunteers to hand out materials to the crowd at the parking lot. Even after our Logistics Team reminded these campaigners of the rules and asked them to stop, it later became clear that they only desisted briefly before resuming their campaign activities.

At the end of the June 26th Assembly, Mr. Ganim stood to confirm his commitment to attend CONECT's October 18th Assembly if he wins the Democratic Primary in August.

TIM HERBST (REPUBLICAN)

Members of CONECT's Candidate Team met with Mr. Herbst at Congregation B'nai Israel in Bridgeport on June 22nd. Mr. Herbst arrived on time with one campaign aide in tow. He recalled having come to B'nai Israel numerous times as a teenager to attend the Bar and Bat Mitzvahs celebrations of his classmates.

Mr. Herbst talked about his parents, who were teachers, and his schools having a major influence on him. He especially talked about his Trumbull High School football coach as another important mentor and role model for him.

Mr. Herbst asserted that he would be well suited to addressing Connecticut's persistent economic and budget woes due to his similar experience when we became First Selectman of Trumbull during the heart of the Great Recession in 2009.

Mr. Herbst seemed to appreciate CONECT's interest in building relationships with the candidates before the election and agreed with our description of the mature public relationship we seek – one where we may not always agree or be allies, but where we can air our differences honestly and directly, face-to-face. Mr. Herbst agreed with this approach, saying he doesn't go in for Twitter or

other social media and said "whatever the issue, we'll talk it over this way," and indicated he meant face to face around a table.

NED LAMONT (DEMOCRAT)

Members of CONECT's Candidate Team met with Mr. Lamont at St. James Catholic Church in Stratford on June 4th. Mr. Lamont brought one campaign volunteer with him. This volunteer, Mr. Jay Lewis, shared that he had first met Mr. Lamont during his 2006 run for Senate and had been a friend and loyal supporter since that time.

Mr. Lamont asserted that he had a long track record of public service before and since his 2006 Senate run. He cited his work on the Greenwich Board of Selectmen, other local boards, as a volunteer teacher in a Bridgeport high school. He also described his success as a businessman in building a cable TV company as relevant to his bid for Governor and plans to bring economic vibrancy back to Connecticut's cities.

Toward the end of the meeting, CONECT leaders asked for Mr. Lamont's commitment to attend the June 26th Assembly. Mr. Lamont refused to make that commitment at that time. Mr. Lewis checked his phone and said it was on the campaign calendar, but both said they would let CONECT leaders know sometime soon whether he would confirm his attendance. Roughly one week later, campaign staffers confirmed that he would attend the June 26th Assembly.

At the end of the June 26th Assembly, Mr. Lamont stood to confirm his commitment to attend CONECT's October 18th Assembly if he wins the Democratic Primary in August.

STEVE OBSITNIK (REPUBLICAN)

Despite repeated requests, CONECT's Candidate Team was not able to arrange a time to meet with Mr. Obsitnik. Early on, his campaign staff told CONECT leaders that he was not able to attend the Candidate Assembly on June 26th. Prior to the publication of this report, Mr. Obsitnik personally committed, via email, that if he wins the Aug 14th primary he will attend CONECT's Oct 18th Candidate Assembly.

BOB STEFANOWSKI (REPUBLICAN)

Members of CONECT's Candidate Team met with Mr. Stefanowski at his campaign Office on North Main St. in Branford on June 21st. His wife, Amy, and his campaign manager joined Mr.

Stefanowski in the meeting. The campaign manager seemed intent on keeping Mr. Stefanowski brief in his engagement with CONECT.

After leaders introduced themselves and the organization, Mr. Stefanowski talked about growing up at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church on Dixwell in New Haven and that his father was still a faithful member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Hamden. He said that he often takes his father to Mass there still.

Both Mr. Stefanowski and his wife expressed interest, even admiration, for CONECT's efforts bringing so many diverse people of faith together to work for the community. They conveyed that their faith and values are very important to them.

When the team described the June 26th Assembly, the campaign manager reminded Mr. Stefanowski of a previously arranged "meet and greet" event. Mr. Stefanowski expressed a desire to attend, but would not commit, given the conflicting event. Upon hearing about the issues planned to be addressed at the Assembly, he said that, as a businessman, the economic issues were clear and easy to him, but the social issues, such as immigration, healthcare, and gun violence, are more difficult to navigate and find agreement around.

DAVID STEMERMAN (REPUBLICAN)

Members of CONECT's Candidate Team met with Mr. Stemerman at St. James Catholic Church in Stratford on June 4th. Mr. Stemerman arrived on time with one campaign staffer. After CONECT leaders introduced themselves and the organization, Mr. Stemerman shared a couple of his family stories. First, he talked about his grandparents' immigrant roots and working class background in Newark. And then, he talked about having a family with five young children of his own and how that played a key role in his interest in restoring opportunity and prosperity for the next generation here in Connecticut.

Mr. Stemerman seemed to have clear ideas about what he would attempt to do if elected Governor, including privatizing some government services to seek greater efficiency, investing in improving mass transit to speed train times to New York City and to expand Sikorsky airport in Stratford to handle major airlines, and to lower taxes to encourage business investment. When asked about how all these things could be done at the same time, given the on-going, dire budget deficits at the state level, Mr. Stemerman did not have a clear explanation.

Mr. Stemerman immediately agreed to attend the June 26th Assembly at the end of the meeting, saying he "would be delighted to be there." On June 26th, Mr. Stemerman also stood to indicate his commitment to attend CONECT's Oct 18th Assembly should he win the Aug 14th Primary.

CONECT's Candidate Team

CONECT's Candidate Team, which has engaged with the candidates for Governor, included the following leaders:

- Ms. Charlotte Parniawski, Team Co-Chair, St. James Catholic Church, *Stratford*
- Dr. Ahmed Ebrahim, Team Co-Chair, Bridgeport Islamic Community Center, *Bridgeport*
- Rev. Philippe Andal, pastor, Community Baptist Church, *New Haven*
- Mr. Stuart Garrelick, Congregation Beth El, *Norwalk*
- Mr. Ray Jarvis, Mount Aery Baptist Church, *Bridgeport*
- Mr. Phil Kent, Congregation Mishkan Israel, *Hamden*
- Ms. Therese LeFever, St. James Catholic Church, *Stratford*
- Mr. Manfred Mohring, St. Raphael Catholic Church, *Milford*
- Mr. George Morrsion, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, *New Haven*
- Ms. Jeanine Oburchay, *Friends of CONECT* Action Caucus
- Mr. Jack O'Melia, St. Jerome Catholic Church, *Norwalk*
- Mr. Charlie Pillsbury, Shalom United Church of Christ, *New Haven*
- Ms. Deirdre Simmons, Mount Aery Baptist Church, *Bridgeport*
- Ms. Pearlye Lulu Sams Allen, Mount Aery Baptist Church, *Bridgeport*
- Min. Kathy Williamson, Mount Aery Baptist Church, *Bridgeport*
- Ms. Cindy Zuckerbrod, Temple Israel, *Westport*

Save the Date! Save the Date! Save the Date! Save the Date! Save the Date!

2018 General Election

CANDIDATE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, October 18th
at 7:00pm, sharp

Location TBA

Election & Voting Information

CONNECTICUT 2018 ELECTION DATES

Primary Elections – Tuesday, August 14th

***REMEMBER**: You must be either a registered Democrat to vote in the Democratic Primary or a registered Republican to vote in the Republican Primary on August 14.*

General Election – Tuesday, November 6th

VOTING INFORMATION

What To Do If You Cannot Get to the Polls on Election Day:

According to the CT Secretary of State, if you are not able to vote during a primary or general election, you can vote using an absentee ballot (one you can mail in) if:

1) You are on active service in the U.S. armed forces;
2) You will be away from town during all the hours of voting;
3) You are sick;
4) You have a physical disability;
5) Your religion forbids secular activity on that day; or
6) You are required to perform the duties as a primary, referendum, or election official at a polling place other than your own during all the hours on that day.

***WARNING:** Voting by absentee ballot, if you are not eligible to do so for one of the six reasons listed above, can subject you to civil and criminal penalties.*

How to Get an Absentee Ballot:

Apply online or all the Registrar of Voters in your town or city (see phone numbers below).

Deadline to Apply for an Absentee Ballot:

While there is no specific deadline to apply, it is best to do so at least one month before the election. You will be mailed your ballot 21 days before a primary and 31 days before a general election. Call your Registrar of Voters for more information or apply online for an Emergency Application for Absentee Ballot if you find, *within six days of the election*, that you cannot vote (visit the website above for more details).

Deadline to Return an Absentee Ballot:

Your completed absentee ballot must be *received by the Registrar of Voters where you live* by the day before Election Day if you deliver it in person or, if mailed, it must be received by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

PHONE NUMBERS FOR REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

Bridgeport – 203-576-7281

East Haven – 203-468-3320

Fairfield – 203-256-3115

Hamden – 203-287-7081

Milford – 203-783-3240

New Haven – 203- 946-8035

Norwalk – 203-854-7996

Stratford – 203-385-4048

Trumbull – 203-452-5059

Westport – 203-341-1115

For towns/cities not listed, Google "Registrar of Voters" in your town or city.
Go online to find out if you are registered to vote.

Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport:

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Primary Election:

Tuesday, August 14th

General Election:

Tuesday, November 6th

CONECT Member Institutions

Bethel AME Church, *Bridgeport*
Bridgeport Islamic Community Center, *Bridgeport*
Calvary Baptist Church, *Norwalk*
Community Baptist Church, *New Haven*
Congregation Beth El, *Norwalk*
Congregation B'nai Israel, *Bridgeport*
Congregation Mishkan Israel, *Hamden*
Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, *Bridgeport*
Friends of CONECT Action Caucus
Grace Baptist Church, *Norwalk*
Greenfield Hill Congregational Church, *Fairfield*
Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Foundation Sikh Gurdwara, *Norwalk*
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, *Trumbull*
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater New Haven, *Woodbridge*
Mount Aery Baptist Church, *Bridgeport*
Office of the Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Hartford, *New Haven*
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish, *New Haven*
Shalom United Church of Christ, *New Haven*
St. James Catholic Parish, *Stratford*
St. Jerome Catholic Parish, *Norwalk*
St. John's Episcopal Church, *Bridgeport*
St. Raphael Catholic Parish, *Milford*
Temple Israel, *Westport*
Temple Shalom, *Norwalk*
Unitarian Society of New Haven, *Hamden*

CONECT Strategy Team

Rev. Anthony L. Bennett, *Co-chair*
Mount Aery Baptist Church

Ms. Therese LeFever, *Co-chair*
St. James Catholic Parish

Rev. Philippe Andal, Community Baptist Church

Ms. Karen Baar, Congregation Mishkan Israel

Fr. David Blanchfield, St. Jerome Catholic Parish

Minister Odell Montgomery Cooper,
Mount Aery Baptist Church

Deacon Doreen Cotter, Mount Aery Baptist Church

Mr. Cecilio Cuapio,
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish

Ms. Angela DeMello, St. James Catholic Parish

Mr. Weethne Dorvil, Mount Aery Baptist Church

Dr. Ahmed Ebrahim,
Bridgeport Islamic Community Center

Mr. Eric Fischman, Temple Shalom

Ms. Terry Freeman,
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish

Rabbi Michael Friedman, Temple Israel

Mr. Dan Guller, Temple Shalom

Mr. Phil Kent, Congregation Mishkan Israel

Mr. Daniel Loch, St. Jerome Catholic Parish

Ms. Stefanie Damaris Lopez,
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish

Mr. George Morrison,
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish

Mr. Demetrio Munguia,
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish

Mr. Jack O'Melia, St. Jerome Catholic Parish

Rabbi Evan Schultz, Congregation B'nai Israel

Ms. Cindy Zuckerbrod, Temple Israel