

130 <sup>th</sup> District (Connecticut House Rep.) Candidate Forum		
	Blight	Highlights
<b>Santiago</b> Democrat, Currently in office	If elected it would be very important for me to work on being reassigned to the Appropriations Committee. I will use my lobbying experience to try and convince enough colleagues that investments in affordable housing, brownfield remediation and small business development have helped Bridgeport make strides in eliminating many of our blighted areas. With so much more that needs to be done, this helps my case during caucus meetings when these issues are discussed and many decisions are made. Ensuring Bridgeport gets it's fair share of funding in our State Budget, to continue a process of urban renewal we have under way. This allows us the resources to help to tool the Bridgeport Economic Development and Anti Blight Offices to continue their work lot by lot. There is an list of demolitions and blighted properties which is currently being worked on. If elected, I will work together with the city to ensure properties in the district I have the honor to represent are not neglected.	-Focus on affordable housing, brownfield remediation, and small business development to address blight.
<b>Gonzalez</b> Peace and Progress Party	The more things change, the more they stay the same. I'm not surprised to hear that trash and blight is serious concern. I can tell you a little of how far back this problem goes. Around 1993, Joe Ganim was the mayor of Bridgeport. I remember reading the newspaper about Joe Ganim running a 26 mile marathon in Bridgeport. He had just been elected mayor not long before. I was an unknown citizen who wanted to be a part of a team to do the work needed to turn things around. I decided to do a 24 hour neighborhood clean-up by myself and started near the old entrance to the Port Jefferson Ferry, moving down Railroad Avenue for 24 hours straight. I contacted the Post and the news and made headlines. I challenged Mayor Joe Ganim to step up and take on the blight around the city as if he was running a marathon. I received a call from Mayor Joe Ganim after reading the newspaper article and he accepted my challenge and formed a Committee which later evolved into the Clean and Green Program.  What needs to be done to help improve the South End and West Side, is a sidewalk repair effort. It must be done in-house as opposed to contracting it out. Ex-cons and prisoners from North Avenue should be allowed an opportunity to pay back the community and learn a trade while doing so. Illegal dumping can be dealt with much easier. If the area is blighted, illegal dumpers will come to	-Focus on side-walk repair with a focus on using Bridgeport contractors

	dump.	
<b>Goodman</b> Republican	Blight Bridgeport is a real bad area all over the city, but no one is going after the people for that so what do I do fight the people with a harder fight saying if you can't keep up with your property then you will fined for every day that it is in bad shape but the taxes are killing them so come up with a plan to help the people with keeping up hire city people to cut the lawns or do the clean up since the city doesn't have bulk trash the downtown is a perfect example for blight. Needs good fixing.	-Focus on people responsible for blight and illegal dumping. - People can't keep up properties because taxes are high
	<b>Taxes</b>	
<b>Santiago</b> Democrat, Currently in office	<p>We in Bridgeport are in a pretty difficult situation when it comes to taxes. I think it is important to be able to give perspective on some of the reasons why that is the case to other legislators. I make sure that they are clear of the myth that Bridgeport is Connecticut's largest city, we are far from it. What we are is Connecticut's most populated city, which means our cost to provide essential services such as: sanitation, fire and police is about the highest in the state. Yet we are about half the size of Waterbury, which means the amount of taxable land is very limited. You add the fact that we have many contaminated brownfields which are no longer generating needed tax revenue and although I love our parks, the reality is that you cannot tax parkland. We are talking about hundreds of acres. We have hundreds of millions of dollars removed from the cities grand list due to tax exempt status. Guess who makes up the difference folks, yes we do.</p> <p>What I have worked on and will continue to do so if reelected is work to get as much of the vacant lots, empty buildings and contaminated brownfield, back to productive tax generating use. On November 18th, I am meeting with State Senator Ayala, members of the States Department of Economic and Community Development, Office Of Policy and Management, City of Bridgeport Office Of Economic Development, and the developers of the former Remington Shaver site to discuss how the State can work with all parties to facilitate the revitalization of this part of the</p>	<p>-Get vacant lots, empty buildings, and brownfields back on tax rolls</p> <p>-Seeking to bring retail to lower Main and Broad street.</p> <p>-Use State small business express program and CT step up programs to attract businesses to South End.</p>

	<p>south end. The state has recently awarded \$2,000,000 in brownfield remediation funds so far. We have also been discussing possible opportunities to bring much needed retail in areas by lower Main and Broad Streets. Using the States Small Business Express program which provides loans and grants to business looking to move to, or relocate within CT in tandem with the CT Step Up Program, which helps by paying a percentage of a qualifying small businesses employee's salary for six months. We have incentives in place for private investment to help increase our tax revenue generation. If we are ever going to be able to lower taxes for current taxpayers, we are going to have to get more people to spread the burden. I almost forgot to mention that we have in some way been penalized through (PILOT) Payment in Lieu of Taxes for being regional providers of education and health care services. Last session we looked at possibly having taxes paid directly to the city from Housatonic and the Hospitals and having them be reimbursed by the state, instead of the current system where the city looks to be reimbursed by the state. It did not make it through the entire process last year, because we want to make sure not to affect their ability to provide the critical services. I feel we need to utilize results based accountability during the budget process to make necessary cuts to ineffective programs and services, which can free up money to try and fully fund (PILOT) payments by the state to municipalities.</p>	<p>-Focus on results based accountability to slash ineffective services</p> <p>-Focus on getting reimbursed for PILOT program.</p>
<p><b>Gonzalez</b> Peace and Progress Party</p>	<p>We all pay taxes whether directly or indirectly. I've never owned a home but my rent pays the taxes and is constantly raised as taxes are raised by the City of Bridgeport. I am in the process of buying my first home in Bridgeport despite my concern of future tax increases. If the city doesn't do what it needs to do on side streets like repairing the sidewalks, there will always be two Bridgeport's—the one you see when on the main roads and the one on side streets. I'm putting my money where my mouth is by investing here. Next year is the time for voters to decide which direction to go to perhaps lower or stabilize taxes and demand their fare share of services for their taxes. If taxes go up, rents will go up and this cycle will continue. Think revaluation!</p> <p>The people of the 130<sup>th</sup> district must know that there a choices to be made. The Santiago/Robles Family has been in control of the political process of the district for 30 years. When I won my seat to the City Council, I defeated a woman (Mary L. Bruce) who held her seat for 16 years at point which the district looked like and was a war zone. I changed all that in just six (6) years by standing strong against Joe Ganim in defense of my district. Till this day Joe Ganim is my friend and he respects me for the way I stood strong without bending my principles. I just need VOLUNTEERS for the next two weeks to make real Bridgeport political history and be the first to break down the</p>	<p>-Lower or stabilize taxes</p> <p>-People should have services for the amount of taxes they pay</p> <p>-Everyone pays taxes, homeowners and renters.</p>

	machine of the 130 <sup>th</sup> . This may be my last attempt.	
<b>Goodman</b> Republican	I will tell you that Bridgeport is the highest in the nation. I can tell you I will fight for lower taxes in Bridgeport CT I will fight to lower the car taxes in Bridgeport CT by 25% that isn't a lot but every little bit that a person saves is good. I will also fight to lower the gas taxes that Dems keep raising. Why does the City of Bridgeport get the highest taxes in the nation? "No thanks to the Dems they will keep raising them?" I will also fight to get senior citizen tax break. I will fight for all the right reason.	-Lower car taxes by 25%  -Lower gas taxes  -Provide a senior citizen tax break
	<b>Governance</b>	
<b>Santiago</b> Democrat, Currently in office	I plan to co-sponsor a bill which Representative Jack Hennessey has introduced which will essentially not allow an employee of the City of Bridgeport to serve on the City Council. I will admit that I struggled with this one a bit in the past, because I was once in this situation and if having to choose, I would of have had no choice at the time, but to leave the council, because the City Council is a volunteer position. I felt that the constituents had the option of not voting a person into office if they deemed a conflict of interest.  I am always trying to improve as a representative and I know that the opinion of your constituency takes precedence over your personal opinion. Discussing this issue with members of the electorate in the district I represent, has helped me to realize that this is good legislation, which is why I intend to work on its passage.	-Plans to co-sponsor bill with Rep. Hennessey that does not allow a City of Bridgeport employee to serve on the City Council
<b>Gonzalez</b> Peace and Progress Party	When I served on the Bridgeport City Council (1995-2001) representing the 131 <sup>st</sup> . district, I was offered a job sometime around 1999 and I took it without making any deals in return. I first asked if I had voted for funding of the job. I was offered the position of Graffiti Removal city-wide. The Special Truck to do the job was purchased with Federal Grants and I was to be paid with grant funds. About a year later I was moved to do Security at the Beardsley ZOO. I believe that their thinking was that I would show some appreciation for the job by going along with their program—	-Supports legislation prohibiting city employees from serving on the City Council –

	<p>that never happened. In fact, I escalated my scrutiny of all matters in front of me. Not all city council members who worked for the city did this and it was obvious they were afraid of losing their jobs if they did not play along. They had much better paying positions and other family members had jobs too. As a State Representative, I will support a bill prohibiting city employees from serving on the council with no grandfather clause. I will make the legislation much stronger—I will require that all city council members use their stipends to clearly inform via a yearly mail of any and all family members they have working for the city. If they are prohibited from working for the city while serving on the council, that doesn't stop them from getting jobs for any and all family members.</p> <p>As for NRZ members, it brings me memory of the helicopter scene from the movie Scarface (Tony Montana) by Al Pacino. I will never trust or do business with the South End NRZ as long a Rev. McCluster is involved. I helped him get the funding for the old Park City Hospital building. After he got the greenlight and was awarded funding, I never heard from the guy again. About a year after the approval of his proposed project, I asked OECD what was going on with the project and was told there was a problem with the project and very little detail was provided. I got better detail when I read what was going on in the newspaper. Watch the helicopter scene from Scarface and you'll get an idea of how I really feel about Rev. McCluster. The people in the South End—in the whole city—need to select better leaders and that won't happen if the status quo (Ezequiel Santiago) is kept in power. These are facts, not perceptions.</p>	<p>with no grandfather clause.</p> <p>-Supports legislation in which Council members would report family working for city.</p> <p>-Does not trust the South End NRZ</p>
<p><b>Goodman</b> Republican</p>	<p>Governance? I don't want to do anything until I talk to my district about the Hartford polices that they want I come to my district about the subjects then I will make my decision the voice of the district by that I voted by my district.</p>	<p>-Wants to talk to constituents first about preferred policies.</p>