

Barry Michelson: This is what I stand for

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Barry Michelson

On Sunday, Josh Fedeli, chairman of the Stamford Democratic Party, asked, "Candidate Michelson, where do you stand?" (Aug. 20 letter). The query comes after a string of false allegations and leading questions all directed to incite hate. The people of Stamford deserve leadership in public affairs, not scurrilous letters whose craven yet obvious purpose is to distract readers from the issues central to this mayoral campaign. The current lack of leadership at the top of city government explains the discontent for David Martin throughout our city. It also explains why so many members of Fedeli's and Martin's party support me.

Like David Martin, who is also in his 60s, I witnessed hate and violence during the civil rights era. I saw Al Gore's father, a Democrat, vote against the Civil Rights Act of 1964, I saw how U.S. Sen. Robert Byrd, another Democrat, recruited people and formed a

chapter of the Ku Klux Klan, and more recently, I saw Hillary Clinton say that she considered James Fulbright, a man who opposed Brown v. Board of Education and filibustered the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a mentor and a man she looked up to as a great inspiration. I am a Jewish American. I know the hate these groups subscribe to or fail to condemn. It is astonishing to witness Mr. Fedeli engage the very same smear tactics and campaigns of character assassination that these vile hate groups have perfected.

Where do I stand? I stand with the residents of Stamford. I stand for good schools, safe neighborhoods, fair taxes, improved streets, and equal enforcement of zoning regulations – all quality-of-life issues that impact every neighborhood in our city.

I stand against racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, and all forms of cultural and ethnic prejudice. I stand against white supremacy and other ideologies of hatred. I stand against senseless acts of gun violence and with the victims of Sandy Hook, one of whom was a family friend.

Shame on you, Mr. Fedeli for using the atrocities in Charlottesville, Virginia, to further your own personal political agenda. Shame on you for evoking the devastating dogma of "white power" to cloud a municipal election. And shame on you for exploiting the Sandy Hook massacre to further your own pursuit of political power.

Your smear tactics are nothing more than attempts to divert attention from a mayoral campaign where the incumbent has become wildly unpopular. On the front page of the same issue that carried Mr. Fedeli's letter, the Stamford Advocate reported a 49-percent increase in the city's mill rate over the past five years and printed a host of quotes from Stamford residents whose neighborhoods have been devastated by lack of zoning enforcement. Mr. Fedeli would very much like us to ignore these concerns, as well as my record of addressing them. Fortunately, Stamford citizens are smart enough to know better.

Barry Michelson is the Republican candidate for mayor of Stamford.

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