



### **Democratic Candidate Paradiso's BOE Candidacy Marred with Conflict**

Dear Editor:

The Ridgefield RTC is deeply concerned about the conflict of interest regarding the candidacy of Jonathan Paradiso, a Democrat running for the Ridgefield Board of Education. Our concern is not a reflection on Mr. Paradiso's character or qualifications, it is based on a significant and unresolvable conflict of interest arising from his wife's employment as a teacher within the Ridgefield School District.

Personnel-related matters, which are at the heart of the Board's functions, touch on virtually every decision, including curriculum changes, scheduling, budgeting, superintendent management, strategic programming, and infrastructure improvements. While Mr. Paradiso claims he will "recuse" himself from voting any time there is a conflict of interest, given the multitude and significance of personnel related matters, recusal from voting would be an ineffective and insufficient remedy. Furthermore, it would make him an unproductive board member because he would not be able to actively participate in the decision-making process including, among other things, not being able to vote on the school budget which is 80% teacher salaries and benefits.

Ridgefield's Ethics Code rightly considers not only actual but also the appearance of conflicts to protect against liability exposures. This conflict of interest also poses an enhanced risk of legal challenges as any decision perceived as favoring the spouse of a Board member could be scrutinized for favoritism or bias which may lead to unnecessary litigation, creating a legal vulnerability the town should avoid.

In the best interest of Ridgefield and its schools, we strongly urge Jonathan Paradiso to withdraw from the current BOE race. While he may be a qualified candidate for other boards or committees, the conflicts associated with the BOE are too extensive and unresolvable. Ridgefield deserves a conflict-free Board focused solely on the task of advancing the excellence of our schools.

Sincerely,  
The Ridgefield Republican Town Committee