



**SO-CALLED “UNAFFILIATED” BOARD OF  
EDUCATION CANDIDATE DAWN-MARIE CALLAHAN  
EXPOSED AS DEMOCRAT RUNNING ILLEGAL CAMPAIGN**

A report published on a local Facebook page on October 16, 2023 exposed so-called “unaffiliated” Ridgefield Board of Education candidate Dawn-Marie Callahan – who enjoys the benefits of Democratic campaign staff, Democratic volunteers, overwhelmingly Democratic petition signers, and (according to at least one report) Democratic canvassers urging voters to pull the lever for her – as running an illegal campaign designed to steal one of the three BOE seats reserved by state law for minority party candidates. These tactics employed by the Ridgefield Democrats make a mockery of the rule of law, undermine the integrity of our elections, and have caused revulsion and disgust across the political spectrum. The only decent and honorable step for Callahan to take at this point is to end her illegal candidacy and, if she is so inclined, run at the next election as a member of her true party – the Democratic Party.

Connecticut law (Connecticut General Statutes Secs. 9-167a and 9-204) requires minority political party representation on most town boards, including boards of education. By law, no more than a specified number of members (generally two-thirds of the total) enrolled in the same political party can serve on a particular body. As applied to the Ridgefield BOE, this means that Democratic Party-endorsed candidates cannot hold more than six of the nine seats. This crucial limitation imposed by state law “serves to prevent one voting bloc from gaining total control of an elected body at the expense of minority groups” and is intended “to include minority perspectives and ideas in local decision-making.”

<https://fairvote.org/connecticut-continues-tradition-of-minority-party-representation-in-2017/>

In the 2023 town elections, there are two Democratic Party-endorsed candidates and three Republican Party-endorsed candidates running for the Ridgefield BOE; voters may vote for five candidates in all. Assuming that those candidates all win, the BOE would number six Democrats and three Republicans – with Democratic Party representation at the two-thirds limit imposed by Connecticut law.

However, Ms. Callahan is also running as a so-called “unaffiliated” candidate for BOE. It is widely known and understood around town that Ms. Callahan (1) was a long-time registered Democratic Party member who disenrolled from her party within the past few months to become a so-called “unaffiliated” candidate, while (2) retaining the significant assistance of local Democratic Party operatives and volunteers in her campaign, which assistance continues to this day. This is most vividly illustrated by the many properties around Ridgefield displaying signs for the local Democratic Party candidates – together with Ms. Callahan’s as well.

**Why does Ms. Callahan's candidacy threaten the integrity of our local elections and violate Connecticut law?** Because if successful, her candidacy would result in a 7/2 Democrat/Republican split on the BOE, which violates state law (which allows at most a 6/3 Democrat/Republican split) and the legislative purposes of “prevent[ing] one voting bloc from gaining total control of an elected body at the expense of minority groups” and “includ[ing] minority perspectives and ideas in local decision-making.”

The plain fact is that the Ridgefield Democrats think state law does not apply to them and, believing that a 6-3 advantage on the BOE is insufficiently Democratic-leaning, hatched a stunning plot to nominate one of their own as “unaffiliated” and brazenly steal one of the three seats reserved for those who do not hold Democratic Party views. They thought that they had cleverly found a loophole in state law and that no one would catch on – but they have now been exposed.

The only honorable step for Ms. Callahan to take at this time is to end her illegal candidacy – and if she does not have the decency and moral compass to do so, then Ridgefield voters should refrain from voting for her and for a Democratic Party that is openly and unapologetically attempting to perpetrate a scam on the good voters of our town.

Respectfully,  
Michael Raduazzo  
Chairman  
Ridgefield Republican Town Committee