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Dems ask candidate to leave race

Leaders say William Gifford, UConn student running in state's 8th District, is promoting hateful ideology

By Livi Stanford
HARTFORD COURANT STAFF

Top Democratic leaders are calling for William Gifford, a candidate running for the state's 8th District, to withdraw from the race after he posted to Instagram an interview he conducted with a Christian nationalist they say promotes hateful ideology.

In the interview, Gifford, a junior UConn journalism student, asks Joshua Haymes, a former pastor at Defense Secretary Pete Hegeseth's church, "is it antisemitic to not like someone because they are Jewish and what the Jewish religion says against white Christian men?"

In response, Haymes said: "It is difficult because I don't know what you mean by not like them. For me, I am called to love everyone. Now the Jew, who is in front of me, I love that Jew and I love him enough to say, 'your religion is evil. Your religion leads people to hell.'"

House Speaker Matt Ritter, a Hartford Democrat, said the video was disheartening and he called for Gifford to withdraw his candidacy for the 8th District representing Columbia, Coventry, Lebanon and Tolland.

"When you are running for office, you have an obligation to correct antisemitic and other derogatory comments that come from somebody and at no time is that done," he said. "If you watch that interview, it is chummy. It is cordial and they basically seem to be in alignment and agreement. And I'm still waiting for an apology."

Ritter added, "This is not acceptable in Connecticut, and these are not the type of

people who should be running for office because they're not ready for it.

"They're not ready for the responsibility of representation of all kinds of people," he said.

This is the second nominee the Coventry Republican Town Committee endorsed to fill Rep. Tim Ackert's seat, who withdrew to run for lieutenant governor with former New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart. Michael Carroll, a candidate from Columbia, pulled out of the race in April when he confirmed to CT Post his arrest in 2017 involving spray-painted swastikas.

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TAKE A SEAT



The Bethlehem Lutheran Church has a Welcome Garden in East Hampton and now it also has a bench to provide visitors with a place to enjoy the garden, which was started at the beginning of summer.

Above: Cheryl Kissinger and Pete Gaszek add stones beneath a new bench at Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Welcome Garden.

Left: Sandy and Pete Gaszek work in the garden.

**AARON FLAUM PHOTOS/
HARTFORD COURANT**

Governor candidate promises tax cuts

Lamont scoffs at Republican Ryan Fazio's plan numbers

By Christopher Keating
HARTFORD COURANT

Standing along a commercial strip in middle-class Stratford, Republican gubernatorial candidate Ryan Fazio promised Tuesday to deliver major tax cuts if he is elected in November.

Describing his package as "the largest middle-class tax cut in Connecticut state history," Fazio says the cuts are necessary "to kick-start the economy and return money to hard-working families." But his opponent, Gov. Ned Lamont, has said repeatedly that he has already delivered the largest cut since the state income tax was created in 1991 under then-Gov. Lowell P. Weicker, Jr.

Declaring that the average family would see tax cuts of \$2,500 per year, Fazio said he would slice two percentage points off the lowest state income tax rates. In other words, the 5.5% rate on certain income would be cut to 3.5%, the 4.5% rate would be sliced to 2.5%, and the 2% rate would be reduced to zero. Under the state's progressive income tax system that includes seven different rates, workers currently pay

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Police union presses for independent investigation

Bridgeport chief accused of workplace 'misconduct'

By Justin Muszynski
HARTFORD COURANT

The Bridgeport Police Union is calling for an independent investigation into Chief Roderick Porter and accusations involving allegations of "misconduct" after tensions between the two have been brewing for months.

Union officials on Tuesday called on Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim to launch the investigation amid allegations of a hostile work environment and discrimination. They also want Porter to be placed on administrative leave while the investigation is carried out, noting that the police department's standard calls for any officer under investigation to be out on leave.

Union officials also called for federal authorities to investigate Porter's leadership at the department at a press conference on Tuesday morning.

Ganim's office reportedly told the Connecticut Post that Porter would not be placed on leave as the city awaits the results of an independent investigation conducted by an outside law firm.

Ganim and Porter have not responded to

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Trump: US, Iran officials meet at UN

Tehran told to make deal soon in address to General Assembly

By Aamer Madhani,
Farnoush Amiri and Edith M. Lederer
ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS — President Donald Trump said U.S. and Iranian officials met Tuesday, shortly after threatening in his address to the U.N. General Assembly that he may "annihilate" the Islamic Republic if a deal isn't reached soon to end the nearly seven-month war.

Trump told reporters that his chief envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, met with the Iranian officials on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders, but he offered few details about how the discussions transpired or the substance of the exchange.

"It was a very good meeting," Trump said.

The president later added that the Iranian officials were "not the highest level, but it's something."



President Donald Trump greets President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday at the U.N.
JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP

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