

Courtney, DeLauro, Hayes, Himes endorsed

Democrats in 4 districts tap incumbents for reelection

By Paul Hughes
STAFF WRITER

WATERBURY — Democrats in the 5th Congressional District endorsed an unchallenged U.S. Rep. Jahana Hayes for a fifth time Monday evening at Kennedy High School in Waterbury, where the former National Teacher of the Year had taught before being elected to Congress.

“Accepting this nomination feels like a full-circle moment for me. It’s personal. It’s familiar,” Hayes said in her acceptance speech. “I still get butterflies at this event because I still know what an awesome responsibility it is to be the congresswoman from the 5th Congressional District.”

There was the possibility of a contested convention, but film and televi-

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sion producer Jackson Waite, a first-time candidate who announced his candidacy on April 9, did not press Hayes for the Democratic Party endorsement on Monday. Hayes thanked Waite without naming him and asked for his help in the campaign.

But the endorsement of Hayes did not go completely unchallenged. A lone woman momentarily disrupted the proceedings protesting the con-

duct of the convention and the lack of other nominations. She was escorted out of the convention without incident.

The 274 Democratic delegates for the 5th District convention gathered at Kennedy High School, where Hayes, 53, the 2016 National Teacher of the Year, was a history teacher for 15 years before becoming the first African-American woman elected to Congress from Con-



Paul Hughes/Hearst Connecticut Media
U.S. Rep. Jahana Hayes accepts the Democratic endorsement for the 5th Congressional District for a fifth time Monday at Waterbury’s Kennedy High School, where the former 2016 National Teacher of the Year taught for 15 years before being elected to Congress for the first time in November 2018.

Democrats continues on A4

Region 15 voters approve new schools



Michael Gagne/Hearst Connecticut Media

Gainfield Elementary School in Southbury. On May 6, voters in Southbury and Middlebury approved a \$224 million bond to construct new buildings to replace Gainfield and Pomperaug Elementary School.

Middlebury, Southbury clear way for a \$224M construction bond

By Michael Gagne
STAFF WRITER

Voters in Middlebury and Southbury approved the 2026-27 budget for the Region 15 schools and gave the green light to bonding for new buildings to replace the district’s oldest elementary schools.

The budget for the next fiscal year totals \$95.6 million, a \$4.86 million, or 5.4%, increase over the current \$90.78 million budget, according to the regional school district. The total is the



Pomperaug Elementary School in Southbury.

same figure that the school board adopted earlier this spring.

Voters in the two towns served by the school district approved the spending plan, 2,679 to 1,618, according to unofficial results from the May 6 referendum.

They also approved \$224 million in bond funds for projects to replace the aging Gainfield and Pomperaug elementary school buildings in Southbury, 2,474 to 1,820.

Region 15 continues on A7

Bronin stuns Larson in bid for Congress

By Alex Putterman
STAFF WRITER

EAST HARTFORD — A tense Democratic convention Monday night ended in an upset in Connecticut’s 1st Congressional District: Former Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, not 14-term incumbent U.S. Rep. John Larson, will be the party’s endorsed candidate in a primary later this summer.

“We just saw a political earthquake in this convention,” Bronin said in a brief acceptance speech.

Bronin prevailed narrowly over Larson on the second ballot, 214 votes to 204, after an earlier count showed Larson with a narrow lead. That result sets up an Aug. 11 primary between the two candidates, along with state Rep. Jillian Gilchrest, who received just enough support at the convention to qualify.

A fourth candidate, Hartford Board of Education member

Bronin continues on A4

Connecticut hit with political earthquake



Dan Haar

COMMENTARY

EAST HARTFORD — In the minutes before voting started at the 1st Congressional District’s Democratic convention Monday night, Jenette Lawrence held out

as a rare delegate in a Goodwin University auditorium brimming with signs and shirts for the four candidates.

She was undecided. And the race was too close to call.

Would she cast her vote for U.S. Rep. John B. Larson, seeking his 15th term in Congress, who held the top spot in the state Senate before his 28 years in Washington DC? Or former Hartford mayor Luke Bronin, hardly an upstart as a mid-career politico, who’s trying to force Larson into retirement?

Her choice was between those two, not the longshot candidates state Rep. Jillian Gilchrest, D-West Hartford, or Ruth Fortune, a member of the Hartford Board of Education.

The 55-year-old personal trainer, on the Bloomfield Democratic Town Committee, had heard the pitches. But

Haar continues on A7

Lawsuit alleges bias against Newtown ex-officer

By Richard Chumney
STAFF WRITER

NEWTOWN — A former Newtown police officer is alleging in a discrimination lawsuit that department leadership denied her promotional opportunities and subjected her to heightened scrutiny for being a woman.

Felicia Figol, who spent nearly 21 years on the force before resigning in 2025, also claims in a complaint filed last Wednesday that Chief David Kullgren and other supervisors retaliated against her for reporting a hostile work environment.

“With Kullgren as chief, Plaintiff was subjected to a



H John Voorhees III/Hearst Connecticut Media file photo

The sign for Newtown Police Headquarters. A former Newtown police officer has filed a lawsuit against the chief and the town, claiming she was discriminated against because she is a woman.

pattern of disparate treatment, retaliation, professional marginalization, and denial of opportunities not imposed in the same manner on similarly situated male officers,” Francesco Picone, Figol’s lawyer, wrote.

The lawsuit names the chief and the town as defendants.

In an email, Kullgren said, “is the Town’s practice not to comment on open complaints or pending litigation.”

Newtown First Selectman Bruce Walczak did not immediately return a request for comment Monday.

The lawsuit claims Figol’s work environment “changed significantly” after Kullgren

Newtown continues on A7

