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## Union candidates' landslide win in New Haven aldermanic primary signals call for 'change' (video, vote results)

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NEW HAVEN — The landslide victory of union candidates in Tuesday's primary caught the city by surprise and will dramatically change the dynamic of the Board of Aldermen.

If re-elected for a 10th term, Mayor John DeStefano Jr. will face an opposition board and could have a tougher time getting approval for budgets and ideas such as the Stormwater Authority, which was shot down earlier this year by a less adversarial board. DeStefano faces a challenge from Jeffrey Kerekes, who came in second place in the primary and will appear on the ballot in November as an independent candidate.

But the most noticeable immediate change to the board will be the departure of veteran incumbent aldermen who were pushed out by union-backed challengers in Tuesday's primary, notably aldermanic President Carl Goldfield, D-29, and President Pro-Tempore Charles Blango, D-20. Goldfield has been on the board since 1992, about as long as DeStefano has been mayor. Blango's tenure spans a decade.

"The union is a real machine and there was a tremendous amount of money coordinated into the ward," Goldfield said Wednesday.

In his sixth year as board president, Goldfield said he ran on his 19-year record, but it didn't carry him to victory. **(scroll down to see ward-by-ward results)**

"We are in an anti-incumbent mood and it's easy to make promises, vague promises of change that things are going to be better," he said.

He credited his opponent, Brian Wingate, with running a good campaign and connecting with voters. With Goldfield leaving, the board will have to choose a new leader. The aldermanic president holds a great deal of power in shaping the agenda, appointing committees, and serving as mayor if something happens to the mayor.

Goldfield expressed concern that the new board could create a stalemate in the city if it refuses to work with the mayor's office on important matters. He likened the potential stalemate to the same sort of impasse that President Barack Obama encounters in the Republican-controlled House.

"I think that some really good people lost their seats on the board. I hope this isn't the case, but I suspect this may be one of those situations where you should be careful what you wish for," he said.

For Blango, the loss lifted a huge weight from his shoulders and will enable him to spend more time with his children and his mother, who is in intensive care at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

"Like my mother said, 'the world needs a politician, but kids need their father,'" he said.

Blango said this is the beginning of a new chapter in his life, one in which he will continue to engage in politics to make a difference in his community. One goal is to resurrect the old Q House as a community center.

Additional incumbents knocked out of the race are Stephanie Bauer in Ward 14, Greg Morehead in Ward 22 and Marcus Paca in Ward 24. Aldermen Matt Smith, D-9, and Darnell Goldson, D-30, were defeated in the primary, but will appear on the ballot in November as independent candidates. Goldson vowed to fight to the end; Smith has not decided whether to continue his campaign.

With the departure of old faces comes a wave of new leaders, who earned their seats through intensive door-knocking and big financial backing from the unions. The Unite Here TIP State & Local political action committee pumped \$70,000 to the local races from July 1 to Aug. 30. AFSCME Council 4 PAC gave \$16,400 in the same period.

Union-backed candidates who won 14 seats in 16 battlegrounds celebrated Wednesday and looked to the future.

Brenda Jones Barnes, who won a three-way race in Ward 13, vowed to be a strong advocate for Fair haven Heights. She highlighted neighborhood issues such as construction plans for the Grand Avenue Bridge in her campaign and said people in her ward responded to her focus on real issues.

"I know that we are connected. We are partnered together and we are moving forward," she said.

Wingate, who defeated Goldfield to gain control of the Ward 29 seat, said he was awed to win as an underdog, something that humbles him as he looks forward to public service.

"I just think that people want change right now and it was obvious that they wanted somebody new and fresh in the seat," he said.

For Jessica Holmes, who defeated Smith in the primary after losing to him in last November's special election to replace state Rep. Roland Lemar, D-New Haven, said her goal is to make East Rock a more livable, close-knit community with a voice in city government.

"We really are at a place where we need to raise our expectations," she said.

Holmes hopes to create bridges between the short-term Yale University population and the long-term homeowners. She also talked about revitalizing block watches and talking to residents about concerns over high taxes and rent. Still, she doesn't take for granted her primary win and she is prepared to campaign into November

if Smith plans to run.

Smith said he felt like he got caught up in the sea of anti-incumbency, even though he has only been in office for 10 months.

"There was this overwhelming motion toward change. It was a tsunami," he said.

Democratic Town Committee Chairwoman Susan Voigt said she did not expect Tuesday night's outcome, and she, too, reads it as a desire for change.

"I'm very disappointed in the losses," she said.

Voigt called Goldfield a voice of reason and intellectual integrity on the board and said he will be missed. In general, she said the party should look to the future and embrace people's desire for change.

Morehead, who has served four years in Ward 22, said he was in good spirits after losing the primary to union-backed candidate Jeanette Morrison.

"I'm fine. I feel that there's a weight that has been lifted," he said.

Morehead said people he talked to in the ward didn't know Morrison was backed by the union and felt she focused her campaigning on Yale students.

Morrison, for her part, said she hoped her victory and the wins of other Yale union candidates, would bridge the gap between Yale students and non-Yale residents.

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