

Four file officially for three New Bedford school committee seats

Four people get to skip the New Bedford school committee preliminary election in October and to face off for three school committee seats on November 7th. At least seven candidates were needed to have a preliminary election.

Incumbent Josh Amaral and new faces John Oliveira, Colleen Dawicki and Richard Porter III are looking to fill the three school committee seats. Margaret Amaral turned in enough signatures, but withdrew her name.

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New Bedford Senator Montigny leads legislator pay raises with 79%, \$65,315 hike

Earlier this year, Massachusetts legislators voted to increase their pay and judges pay by \$18 million. It was vetoed by Governor Baker but quickly overturned by the legislators. The pay raise was mostly on party lines – no Republicans supported the pay raise bill and nine House Democrats and three Senate Democrats opposed the measure.

Before the pay raise, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg was

the only state senator of 40 to make more than \$100,000 a year. In 2016, he earned \$102,233 – \$60,033 base pay, \$35,000 leadership pay and \$7,200 for office expenses. He's now earning \$162,548 and now at least 28 of the 40 now make over \$100,000 per year.

Excluding Joseph Boncore who was only in the senate part time last year, the biggest winner pay raise percentage wise was New Bedford Senator Mark Montigny with a whopping 79% increase. Montigny went from a total income of \$82,233 to \$147,548. The biggest increases came from his leadership pay increase (\$15,000 to \$65,000) and office expenses increase (\$7,200 to \$20,000). Even if you eliminate office expenses his pay went from \$75,033 to \$127,548.

The biggest winner salary wise was Senate President Stanley Rosenberg who went from earning \$102,233 to \$162,548 or a 59% pay raise.

The State Senate legislators were the clear winners, but the Massachusetts House also saw sizable pay raises. In 2016, only one of the 160 State representatives, House Speaker Robert DeLeo, made over \$100,000 in total income. Now 30 of the 160 State representatives do.

Combine both the Senate and House, and we've gone from 2 of the 200 Massachusetts legislators, 1%, making over \$100,000 a year in total income to 58 of the 200, or 34% making \$100,000.

Locally, New Bedford Representative Tony Cabral saw his total pay go up by 37% from \$82,232 to \$112,547. That's an annual increase of \$30,315. New Bedford/Acushnet Representative Robert Koczera saw his total pay go from \$62,232 to \$87,747 or 31%. New Bedford/Dartmouth Representative Christopher Markey saw his pay go from \$74,732 to \$97,547 or 31%.

Local legislators voted for the raise and have gone on record to say they deserve the increase.. Some even say that \$62,500 a year isn't enough to live on. That may be true if you live

on Boston, but in **New Bedford the income per capita is \$21,181**, do New Bedford legislators really need five to six time the income of their constituents?

Almost all of the pay increases come in the form of stipends – extra income for filling leadership positions and increases in office expenses. In reality, this is a way to circumvent the Massachusetts constitutional amendment that restricts the base income of legislators to the state’s median household income.

In 1998, **60% of Massachusetts voters that went to the polls** voted to “prohibit state legislators from changing their base pay and instead would adjust that pay according to changes in median household income.” Voters changed the constitution to restrict base pay, but not total compensation. In response, legislators gave themselves significant stipend raises.

What is interesting is all 40 Senators received leadership pay from \$15,000 to \$80,000, up from \$7,500 to \$35,000. Apparently, in the Massachusetts Senate everyone is a leader and this is clearly where most of the new pay is coming from.

Pay data on Massachusetts legislators wasn’t easy to come by, **MassFiscal.org had to do a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain the paycheck records for lawmakers**. So much for transparency in the Massachusetts government.

These raises in legislator income comes after the lawmakers have **denied Massachusetts residents a tax holiday for two years now**. Sadly, our legislators are looking after their savings account, not yours.

You can see all the Massachusetts State Senators pay raises here.

Senate_Pay_Raise_Totals

You can see all the Massachusetts House of Representatives pay raises here.

House_Pay_Raise_Totals

At the time of this writing, Senator Montingy's office hasn't responded to e-mail requests for a quote.

Five candidates run for open Ward 5 New Bedford City Council seat

Five New Bedford residents have committed to running for the Ward 5 New Bedford City Council seat vacated by Kerry Winterson. In February, Winterson cited his wife's health and personal reasons for not seeking re-election.

The five candidates are David Sullivan, Kate Towers, Nelson Macedo, Paul Chasse and Scott Lima.

Ward 5 contains Buttonwood Park and St. Luke's hospital. See map below.

The preliminary election will be held on October 3rd and the top two vote getters move on to the November 7th final election.

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New Bedford Ward 5 Map

Ward-5 New Bedford Map

Two challenge Dana Rebeiro for New Bedford Ward 4 City Council seat

Incumbent New Bedford Ward 4 City Councilor Dana Rebeiro will face two challengers in this year's race. Former Ward 4 councilor Joseph Jo-Jo Fortes and Kenneth Gilbert are challenging Rebeiro who will be seeking her third term in office.

Ward 4 contains much of downtown, the waterfront and the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge area. See map below.

The preliminary election will be held on October 3rd and the top two vote getters move on to the November 7th final election.

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New Bedford Ward 4 Map

Ward-4 new bedford map

OPINION: In Defense of the

First Amendment

In a letter to his army just prior to the end of the Revolutionary War, George Washington stated the importance of any person being able to voice their opinion, especially when the stakes are high. "... if Men are to be precluded from offering their sentiments on a matter...reason is of no use to us—the freedom of speech may be taken away—and, dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the slaughter."

It's not an accident that the freedom of expression was enshrined in the very first amendment to the Constitution. The Founding Fathers were aware of the importance of such a protection, especially after being oppressed by the British, whose sedition laws could land a person in court or prison. For them, this guarantee was foundational. As Ben Franklin phrased it, there can be "no such thing as public liberty, without freedom of speech."

When the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791, America was one of only a few countries to offer such a freedom. For centuries throughout the world, the legality of speech was what the nearest authority happened to think it was. Even today, there are over a dozen nations with various levels of censorship—including places where things like criticizing the government or blasphemy can get you killed.

The simple, unambiguous edict that congress shall make no law "abridging the freedom of speech" is one of the things that has made the U.S. a beacon of liberty and an example of what a just and free society might look like. Today, however, this most basic of human rights is at the epicenter of a political struggle. One extreme is using it as a cloak from under which they can spread disdainful and incendiary messages; the other is taking hammer blows to it in the name of justice. Radical movements—the vile and the virtuous—will come and go, but there must be a concerted effort to understand the First

Amendment, and resolve to defend it.

Freedom of Expression, while a glorious concept, is not absolute. Over the years, the Supreme Court has examined ways in which this *carte blanche* of public language can have ramifications. With a utilitarian spirit, these judges have imposed restrictions; all of which weighed the right to speak versus the rights and safety of others. Among the handful of caveats are “fighting words,” obscenity, threats, defamation, supporting terrorism, and words that could incite violence or endanger the public.

Unfortunately, there is a degree of ambiguity in these decisions (none perhaps more so than Potter Stewart’s obscenity standard—“I know it when I see it”). For example, hate speech—which is protected—seems similar to fighting words or words designed to incite. Recently, with the reemergence of Neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan, there have been protests and gatherings where this nebulous distinction is back under the microscope. Should vast groups be able to congregate and spew racist garbage in public? What if they’re doing it while armed and marching with torches? Or at night near a predominately black Church? We can see how quickly the situation gets murky.

In instances like these, there needs to be a broad range of appropriate speech—which we must allow, and a line over which demonstrators cannot cross. People ought to be able to gather peacefully and say whatever they like. Whether anyone else agrees with or likes what they have to say is immaterial. As Noam Chomsky said, “If we don’t believe in freedom of expression for people we despise, we don’t believe in it at all.”

Words may be protected—even the most hateful ones—but actions, as they say, speak louder. The circumstances in some instances, like Charlottesville, shift the situation onto different terrain. The crucible of a mob with flags, torches,

slogans, weapons, combined with the time and place, make it reasonable to conclude that some speech and assembly are purposeful provocations.

Charlottesville was not about the free exchange of ideas, it was a demonstration—possibly even a warning. This manner of speech should be outlawed—or at the very least confined to private areas.

One point worth noting is that the First Amendment protects civilians from government interference with speech. But when the government shirks their responsibility or otherwise allows what many consider dangerous, some take matters into their own hands. Several activist groups have marshaled considerable crowds to oppose and drive back these dirty relics from the Jim Crow era.

The motivation is understandable: for decades America has been taking steps to exterminate racism, and much like other infestations, when vermin reappear so brazenly on the kitchen floor, it's only natural to want to destroy them before they lay eggs and spread. When these counter-protesters stand against the volatile, racist rantings of an angry mob, it is difficult to see their efforts as anything other than heroic. And it's all too easy to overlook their methods.

The problem, however, is the noble desire to shield people from hatred and to subdue what might be considered evil has repercussions. First, who decides what speech should be prohibited? How do we know exactly what is inappropriate? How much force is allowed when fighting a perceived enemy? There is a disconcerting level of subjectivity in play.

Sure, it's easy enough to denounce Nazis and White Supremacists—especially when they are behaving violently—but mob mentality circumvents reason; crowds respond viscerally, lose control, and ride emotional waves to unseen shores (and the tide of public opinion can turn back the other way at any

moment). In the process of fighting for the marginalized, these groups are slowly tightening the noose around the first amendment. They are, in other words, throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Not every instance of protest has been of the anti-nazi variety. There have been a slew of demonstrations on college campuses which have held events featuring conservative firebrands. Mobs destroyed property at UC Berkeley when Breitbart's Milo Yiannopoulos was slated to speak. Later, the school canceled Ann Coulter because they feared similar outbursts. These were seen as victories on the far left. They managed to silence the views of their enemy—the alt-right.

This type of behavior is egregious and embarrassing and should be repudiated by everyone, especially liberals. It is nothing more than the militant stifling of opposing views.

Peaceful demonstrations and shows of solidarity are one thing, burning down or even threatening to shut down campuses is another. People like Milo, Coulter, Limbaugh, Tomi Lahren, or Sean Hannity do espouse some political beliefs that we may find repugnant, but the answer is not to respond with Molotov cocktails, fists, and bottles of urine. Allow them to speak, let their views stand naked, and reasonable people everywhere will see them for what they are. Defeat them with rational argument. Considering the left generally prides themselves on being the more intellectual side, this should be both easy and enjoyable.

When we stop speech by force we galvanize the other side, allow them to play the victim, validate their message, and appear intellectually weak in the process. When the initial response to any opposition is to sling the most virulent words in the arsenal (bigot! racist!), we generalize, devalue the meaning of those words, find ourselves at a loss when we encounter the real thing, and end the hope of any productive conversation.

If we resort to these tactics we are setting fire to more than campuses or cars, we are setting fire to the only sacred thing in our secular government: the Constitution.

When true evil presents itself, everyone should vehemently oppose it—often by any means necessary. But we can't assume all who aren't in line with our views are evil. Allow people to speak, understand their positions, and then dismantle them. But never restrict peaceful expression by force, for then Freedom of Speech is only available to whomever has the bigger mob.

We are in a war of ideas, and in this war free speech can be perilous, but as Thomas Jefferson once said, "I prefer dangerous freedom to peaceful slavery."

Is it time to take down the Whaleman Statue?

This week **ESPN removed Asian-American announcer Robert Lee** from covering University of Virginia's home opener football game "simply because of the coincidence of his name." Apparently, ESPN thinks he's a statue and needs to be taken down.

The past few weeks Confederate statues have been covered or taken down in the middle of the night by town/city officials, and the ones that aren't taken down are being vandalized. Vandals are even **burning Abe Lincoln Statues in Chicago**.

The oldest known **Christopher Columbus statue was vandalized in Baltimore** and **vandals are even destroying peace statues by**

mistake.

With the urgent need to appease all those offended by history and scared by inanimate objects, is it time to erase New Bedford's whaling past? The popular Whaleman statue in New Bedford represents all the hard working whalers that helped build New Bedford, but doesn't it also represent tens of thousands of whales killed for oil? Why stop with the whaleman statue?

Just to the other side of the the downtown New Bedford library where the whaleman statue stands is a statue dedicated to Lewis Temple, the African-American man who revolutionized the whaling industry with his toggle iron. That would need to come down too.



Take a trip down William Street to the Whaling Museum and a hanging whale skeleton and museum beckons thousands of visitors each year to New Bedford. That would need to come down also.



To be clear, I'm against removing statues of any kind – especially ones dedicated to whaling. To me it will eventually lead to book burning and erasing America's past. Philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it." By today's standards, the whalers would be considered barbarians and murderers, but during their time they were respected and helped build New Bedford and once lit the world with precious whale oil.

There is an argument that Confederates didn't contribute much to America, fought for enslaving millions of Americans and were responsible for a lot of American deaths during the Civil War. This is true, but then what about **the statue of Lenin that stands prominently in Seattle**? Lenin was the father of Communism which is responsible for over 100 million deaths when people like Mao and Stalin used it to liquidate populations. I despise who and what Lenin stands for, but I'm not about to take down his statue or burn books about him.

Don't we learn from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*? Can you show your kids a Confederate statue and explain to them that the good side won? We pour thousands of school age kids into the New Bedford Whaling Museum and teach them about New Bedford's history, while also explaining to them that whaling is no

longer acceptable. We use our past, no matter how terrible, to teach future generations. Let's not remove statues, or burn books. Let's use them as teaching tools so we don't repeat the mistakes of our past.

Three qualify to replace Steven Martins in New Bedford Ward 2 City Council race

Three candidates have turned in enough signatures before the August 15th deadline in the New Bedford's Ward 2 City Council race. Long time **Ward 2 City Councilor Steven Martins is vacating the city council seat to run against Martin "Marty" Treadup for Assessor.**

Carlos Pimentel Felix and Edwin Cartagena have turned in at least 50 qualified signatures and filed officially with the New Bedford elections office. 2015 mayoral candidate Maria Giesta turned in at least 50 qualified signatures, but still needs to file officially before the 29 August deadline.

The preliminary election will be held on October 3rd and the top two vote getters move on to the November 7th final election. If Maria Giesta doesn't file officially, then there won't be a preliminary election with Carlos Pimentel Felix and Edwin Cartagena automatically moving on to the final municipal election on November 7th.

Ward 2 is an important race as it contains much of Acushnet Ave, North Front Street and Ashley BLVD – all considered high crime areas in New Bedford. Ward 2 is also where the Day of Portugal and New Bedford Feast of the Blessed Sacrament is

held.

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New Bedford Ward 2 Map

Ward-2 New Bedford Map

Steve Martins takes on Martin Treadup in competitive New Bedford Assessor's race

In what will likely be the most competitive race in this year's New Bedford elections, Steve Martins is taking on Martin "Marty" Treadup for one of the New Bedford Assessor positions. Steve Martins is vacating his Ward 2 city council seat to run against long time assessor Martin Treadup who is currently the assessor chairperson.

The New Bedford assessor estimates the value of real property within the city and converts the value into an assessment or one component in the computation of real property tax. Property taxes are a hot topic in New Bedford.

The past few assessor races haven't been competitive as the incumbents have run unopposed. Steven Martins and Martin Treadup are popular figures in New Bedford which will make for a competitive race on November 7th. There is no October 3rd preliminary assessor race because there are only two candidates.



Editor note: normally we put a photo of both candidates running for office, but the only public image of Martin Treadup is a tiny one on the **City of New Bedford's website**. It's too small to feature.

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2009 New Bedford election results

Here are the results for the final New Bedford municipal election as of November 4, 2009.

At-Large New Bedford City Council (top 5 elected to office)

David Alves (I): 6,212
Brian K. Gomes (I): 6,843
Deborah Coelho (I): 5,961
Denis Lawrence, Jr.: (I) 5,607
John T. Saunders (I): 5,567
Naomi Carney: 3,755
John H. Moniz: 3,294
Jeffrey Matthews: 2,016
Jose A. Perez: 1,603

Ward 1 New Bedford City Council

Linda Morad (I): 2,230 (ran unopposed)

Ward 2 New Bedford City Council

Steve Martins (I): 1,225 (ran unopposed)

Ward 3 New Bedford City Council

Kathy Dehner (I): 842

George Rogers: 576

Ward 4 New Bedford City Council

Bruce Duarte (I): 972

Dana Rebeiro: 618

Ward 5 New Bedford City Council

Jane Gonsalves (I): 1,511

Elliot C. Matthews: (dropped out of race) 689

Ward 6 New Bedford City Council

Joseph P. Lopes: 1,189

Ian Abreu: 509

New Bedford School Committee (top three elected)

John J. Fletcher (I): 6,268

Lawrence John Finnerty: 5,922

Joaquim 'Jack' Nobrega: (I) 5,088

Joaquim Jack Livramento: 4,806

Ramona C. 'Mona' Silva: 4,114

Assessor

Kimberly M. Saunders: 6,852

Barry G. Trahan: 3,742

Taking Sides: Charlottesville, Protests, and Moral Imbecility

by Craig DeMelo

While receiving his Nobel Prize, the late Elie Wiesel—who

nearly died at the hands of the nazis—famously said, “We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor...”

The incident in Charlottesville and the subsequent fallout have presented what should be the simplest dichotomizing of good and evil, yet our country is again—bafflingly—divided. Unlike other political issues, Charlottesville has an objectively wrong side, and unfortunately a great number of people on the right have happily decided to occupy it.

Let’s recap what happened: a sizable mob of white men and women, many of whom were heavily armed, took to the streets of Charlottesville with Nazi and Confederate flags and torches, shouting racial epithets and supremacist slogans. And, once met by counter-protesters, one of their number drove a car into a crowd, injuring almost twenty and killing a 32-year-old woman.

The blame—all of it—rests squarely on the shoulders of these villainous bigots. When the first response is to point to the counter-protesters, you are “helping the oppressors.” Only in a world of the most rank and obsequious partisanship, could we find people willing to diffuse culpability by making such a staggering false equivalence. But that “whataboutism” is exactly what we witnessed in the ensuing days.

It took President Trump hours to even address the ordeal (for a point of reference, it took him minutes to tweet about Nordstrom’s when they dropped Ivanka’s clothing line). When he finally made a public statement, he refused to mention white supremacists by name and stated that there is hate and violence “on many sides.” After two days of pressure from just about everyone to denounce the actual hateful organizations, Trump begrudgingly did so in a set of prepared remarks. Then, a day later, he extemporaneously doubled down on his original comments, referred to the “alt-left” (as though such a thing exists), and declared in no uncertain terms that both sides are guilty.

That line was taken greedily by his supporters who wasted no time falling on message boards and social media threads denouncing left wing activists as somehow equal to—or worse than—the Klan. This is morally outrageous. Failing to roundly condemn racist groups is tantamount to tacitly endorsing them. Placing counter-protesters in the same category lets the supremacists off the hook and validates their message. The only moral and rational position available is the one that unambiguously admonishes racists, and at the very least distinguishes them as—forgive the cliché—the absolute worst of all evils. Trump and his ilk have failed this simplest of ethical tests.

In an effort to obfuscate the matter, Charlottesville is also being touted as a free speech issue; it's not. There are limitations to the first amendment, two of which are exceptions pertaining to “fighting words” and speech designed to incite (I'm not a constitutional lawyer, but something tells me screaming racial slurs while armed and marching with torches and Nazi flags just might constitute inciting. It certainly isn't a “peaceful demonstration”). If the Richard Spencers and David Dukes of the world want to reserve a hall where some number of white people can congregate to wax aggressive about the perceived shortcomings of everyone with slightly more melanin content, they should be able to do that. I don't believe that they should be disallowed to voice their abhorrent and despicable views. But let's not imagine for a moment that that is what was happening in Charlottesville. They were shouting their hatred (and their insecurities) from the proverbial rooftops and begging for confrontation.

And that's what they got.

The counter-protesters who showed up to oppose these neanderthals comprised members of several different activists groups—the two most notable being Black Lives Matter and the Anti-Fascist movement known as Antifa. These are the groups that are being derided on the right as “just as bad” as the

KKK and Nazis.

When weighing the rightness or wrongness of such a group, we only need to ask a few questions. Then their placement on the spectrum of moral culpability should be transparent.

First, what are the goals of these organizations? Speaking generally, white supremacists, neo-nazis, and the KKK want to achieve or maintain superiority for white Christians; they want to preserve "White Culture" by either the marginalization, segregation, or eradication of non-white people (particularly, but not limited to: Blacks, Jews, Hispanics, Muslims).

What do groups like Antifa and Black Lives Matter want? Antifa is a militant group that opposes racism, sexism, economic inequality, and any form of bigotry. Black Lives Matter is a group that seeks to stop systemic racism and violence against minorities, especially by police officers.

Secondly, what would an ideal world look like for these groups? White Supremacists would love to see a world without minorities, or at the very least an America without them. BLM and Antifa would want a world without racism and any form of discrimination or unjust economic disparity.

How can any sane individual view these groups as similar?

Now, of course this is not to say that BLM and Antifa are without flaws. Antifa's methods are typically destructive and unyielding. BLM has occasionally promoted some questionable protest methods (blocking highways for example). The protests on college campuses are a shameful impingement on actual free speech. And some members affiliated with BLM have chanted repugnant things about police officers. But regardless of how uncompromising or misguided their methods can be at times, the bedrock motivation of these groups is one of racial and economic equality. And the mere fact that people of every race are in these organizations alone places them in a different

moral sphere than white supremacists.

Finally, what is the worst that you get from these left wing groups? Intransigent views, destruction of property, retaliatory violence, anger, hatred directed at perceived injustice, and the inadvertent stifling of free expression. There is little doubt that these groups—often unorganized and lacking effective leadership—have room for improvement. But their hearts, bleeding though they may be, are in the right place.

What is the worst we've gotten from White Supremacists? Murder, genocide, lynching, subjugation, slavery, assault and battery, injustice, inequality, segregation, hatred, discrimination...the list goes on. And all based on the meaningless distinctions of skin color, religion, or ethnicity. Nobody should want to see that ugliness reemerge in the world.

Lastly, what seems to have gone unnoticed by Trump and his minions is that one side of this battle exists solely as a response to everything for which the other stands. If there wasn't systemic racism or racial injustice or other forms of discrimination—the lifeblood of white supremacy—there would be no Antifa. There would be no Black Lives Matter.

There simply is no equivocating here. One group, flawed though they may be, is fighting to end hatred. The other is hatred. One side seeks equality, the other racial supremacy. To call these equal is to achieve a breathtaking level of moral blindness.

Elie Wiesel was right: we must choose sides. If you, or Donald Trump for that matter, can't tell the difference or think they're the same, then you've already planted your flag. And it's on the wrong side.

Have an opinion or essay that you'd like to share? E-mail mike@newbedfordguide.com.