

2009 Voters Guide



The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford

www.lwvgh.org



Scott Slifka	Democrat
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Biographical Information:

A lifelong West Hartford resident and graduate of Hall High School, he has served as Mayor since 2004 and on the Town Council since 2001. An attorney with The Hartford, he received his B.A. and J.D. from George Washington University. Scott and his wife, Noelle, reside on Grennan Road and are proud parents of a 1 year-old daughter, Betsy.

Response to Questions

1. Which West Hartford services can be reduced and still be viable (assume no increase in state aid)?

West Hartford has reduced its workforce by 1/3 since 1991 and we're 7% smaller since I took office. This past budget we cut spending by more than \$600,000 and reduced our capital budget by approximately \$35 million, while maintaining our AAA bond rating and keeping our core services of education and public safety intact. We achieved this, in part, via a combination of hiring and salary freezes and staff reductions. This is not sustainable in the long run absent comprehensive reform at the State level. So, assuming no increases in State aid and/or meaningful property tax reform, the answer is none. West Hartford will continue to endeavor to do more with less and to work creatively with employees and taxpayers to ensure continuity and quality of services.

2. West Hartford and Bloomfield partner to operate the Health Department. What additional regional cooperative efforts could ease our economic situation?

West Hartford has long been a leader in regional/cooperative efforts that reduce costs to our taxpayers. In addition to the Health District, our membership in CRCOG enables us to save money through regional bidding for products and services. Any additional such efforts that reduce costs to our taxpayers without

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sacrificing quality of service or local control should be considered. Public works, employee management and investment functions present specific regional savings opportunities that we're presently pursuing.

3. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities of our changing demographics?

West Hartford is one of the most successful inner-ring suburbs in the country. We have become more diverse - ethnically, racially and economically - while maintaining our excellence in education, our wonderful neighborhoods and growing into a regional entertainment destination. This has provided us with a great marketing opportunity in terms of attracting homeowners and businesses. The great challenge in coming years is affordability - whether we can continue to provide the same level of services that are largely responsible for our success.

4. If elected, what initiative would be your top priority?

Affordability, through property tax reform and mandate relief. The property tax structure places a disproportionate burden on seniors and those with fixed or limited incomes. Furthermore, it limits the Town's ability to administer our own affairs. We must work with the State on the long-term solutions to this dilemma - obtaining our full share of State funding and relief from unfunded mandates. This year I led efforts on behalf of Connecticut mayors to eliminate or suspend mandates - requirements imposed by the State for which it provides no financial assistance. These cost West Hartford alone \$20-30 million annually.

Issues at a Glance Grid Questions

1. Should West Hartford provide more incentives to assist and encourage small businesses? **YES**
2. Would you support reducing activities at senior centers to save money? **NO**
3. Should the town provide additional safe bike lanes? **YES**
4. Would you support an ordinance requiring developers to replant a tree for every tree removed in West Hartford? **YES**
5. Do you support prioritizing energy efficiency upgrades in the capital improvement budget? **YES**