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Teachers, Nurses and Public Employees Back Fanelli and Walker for West Haven

Labor federation announces formal endorsement in city's September Municipal Primary Election for local active and retired educators to serve their community

West Haven — Members of the nearly 30,000-strong AFT Connecticut are supporting fellow union members Chrystal Fanelli and Susan Walker in West Haven's September 10 Democratic Primary Election. The labor federation's executive committee last month voted to add both active and retired educators to its slate of 2019 municipal endorsements. Members of local affiliated unions have since participated community canvassing and phone banking to help "get out the vote" for Fanelli, Walker and other endorsed candidates.

"Working people in West Haven need advocates in city hall and on the school board," said AFT Connecticut President Jan Hochadel. "Susan already has a proven track record of standing up for the community's schools and supporting their educators and support staff. We're confident Chrystal will bring that same commitment to municipal government, too," added Hochadel, who previously taught physics and science in the state's technical high schools.

Candidates for municipal office have since June completed questionnaires addressing a wide range of policy issues important to the members of local unions and their communities. Members of the federation's legislative and political action committee (LPAC) reviewed the responses and are making recommendations for endorsements in the 2019 Primary and General Elections to its executive committee. In addition to Fanelli and Walker, AFT Connecticut's members are also backing current City Clerk Debbie Collins for mayor of West Haven.

"There is no reason why West Haven shouldn't be one of the most sought after communities in Connecticut," said Fanelli (front row, sixth from left in photo above), who is seeking to represent the city's 8th council district. "If elected, I will work tirelessly to help make this happen. I will do my part to ensure a quality education and opportunities for all West Haven's children," added Fanelli, an English teacher and lacrosse coach at the city's high school.

Fanelli has during her 16-year public education career also served as both a class and National Honor Society advisor. She additionally in 2009 co-founded the

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West Haven Youth Lacrosse League and has since co-directed the girls' program. Fanelli's leadership position as an executive council member of the AFT Connecticut-affiliated West Haven Federation of Teachers and School Nurses further involves a variety of civic duties and responsibilities.

"It's vital to have people with firsthand classroom experience at the table making decisions that impact our town's students, educators and support staff," said Walker (front row, fourth from left, above). "That's the perspective I've brought to our board during what has been a difficult economic period for our community's schools. I'd be honored for the opportunity to carry on that work for four more years," added Walker, who in 2011 retired as a local union member.

Walker was in 2015 elected by town voters to a first term on the BOE and currently serves as the board's secretary/treasurer. The role is a natural extension of her four decades educating and supporting the community's students at both West Haven High and Harry M. Bailey Middle Schools.

"We're so proud of Chrystal and Susan for stepping up and demonstrating that 'labor is your neighbor,'" added Hochadel. "We actively encourage union members to get involved in state and local-level politics because it's critical for elected leaders to understand the issues faced by working people. They have gone a step further by running for office themselves," Hochadel said.

AFT Connecticut represents approximately 30,000 hard-working women and men in PreK-12 education, healthcare, public service and higher education from more than 90 local unions throughout the state. Visit www.aftct.org for more information and follow the labor federation on Twitter at [@AFTCT](https://twitter.com/AFTCT) and on Facebook at [AFT Connecticut](https://www.facebook.com/AFTConnecticut).

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Link —

Photos of union members "getting out the vote" for Fanelli and Walker (AFT CT Twitter):

<https://twitter.com/AFTCT/status/1167233022011346944/>