

## STOP THE ATTACK ON RALPH JOHNSON!

June 12, 2020

Last night marked a new low for the Wahler machine, and that is saying something. I had been wondering how long it would take a School Board stacked with folks the Wahler machine supported in the last two elections to embarrass itself by engaging in naked political retribution – now I have my answer. In case you missed it, last night Board President Shelia Hobson started a process to try to remove Ralph Johnson from the Board.

Yes the same Ralph Johnson who has given hundreds upon hundreds of hours of time volunteering in service of our community. The same Ralph Johnson who did such a great job emceeding the Vigil last Thursday at Green Acres. The same Ralph Johnson who was a popular baseball and football coach until Wahler removed him to punish him for running in the 2017 Democratic Primary. The same Ralph Johnson who 3,129 of you voted for in last November's School Board election, and who has served honorably on the Board for six years. The same Ralph Johnson who is running for Council At-Large in this year's Democratic Primary.

This is what it looks like - a political hit job. Wahler's folks are trying to oust Ralph on a trumped-up attendance technicality; Ralph missed two meetings **because he was working as a law enforcement officer during the emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic**. The level of hypocrisy and craven opportunism is astounding. And even though they do not have a defensible case, and will eventually lose in court, they seem determined to press ahead and waste District time and resources. And to waste them at a time when they should be focusing on any number of important and time consuming challenges, like how to deal with potential reductions in State Aid and budget shortfalls, or how to best organize something to honor our graduates, or how to conduct education in the face of an ongoing pandemic.

As a past Board member, I have not commented on the activities of the current Board, trying to give them the benefit of the doubt. I will not be silent on this. What they are trying to do to Ralph is exactly the kind of machine politics of retribution and disenfranchisement that Ralph, Kamuela Tillman, Laura Leibowitz and I have been arguing against during our campaign in this year's Democratic Primary. It is not in the slightest bit surprising that the Wahler machine is engaging in them – we've said for weeks that these sorts of things were coming, and we fully expect more as the campaign continues. But we won't be silenced. Win, lose, or draw we will keep raising our voices. We will keep encouraging others to do the same. In the end, every machine breaks.

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