

Mimi & Bobby Burgess

To: Mayor Harry Rilling City of Norwalk
Subject: City Of Norwalk committment to fund the NEON Inc. Head Start program

Head Start is a federally funded program for the disadvantaged children of the City of Norwalk Conn. operated by NEON Inc. as the Grantee Agency.

From the inception of the Head Start program in the late 1960'S it was the philosophy of NEON Inc. and the Norwalk Board of Education that the Norwalk Board of Education should have a pivotal role in the early childhood education of our under- served population served by Head Start.

Therefore the NEON Inc. executed a Delegate Agency Contract with the Norwalk Board authorizing them to take full responsibility of Head Start program operation under the guidance of NEON Inc.

In the late 1980's Mayor Frank Esposito requested that NEON Inc. take back the Head Start program operation from the Norwalk Board of Education for the following reasons:

1: All of the Head Start employees were part of the Board of Education Union ,thus causing the City of Norwalk many extra funds due to the salary difference because NEON Inc. employee salary was much lower and the fact that NEON Inc. employees were a non- union shop at that time.

NEON Inc. and the Board of Education refused Mayor F. Esposito request. Therefore the following year Mayor Frank Esposito made the same request that NEON Inc. resume the operation of the federally funded Head Start Program, and if the Norwalk Board of Education and NEON Inc. refused to implement this change in the operation that his administration will cut the board of education operation budget by \$500,000.00. But, at the same time , Mayor Frank Esposito offered an incentive that the City of Norwalk will always fund a cash contribution to NEON Inc. to pay the City's fair share to maintain the quality of services and the number of children presently being served by the Norwalk Board of Education.

The Mayor assigned Jack Miller, the City Finance Director and myself to work out the details and the funding required for the implantation of the change- over.

Mayor Frank Esposito and the City of Norwalk agreed upon the Funding and granted NEON Inc.

A 3% funding increase every year during his tenure as mayor. When Alex Knopp became the Mayor, NEON Inc. never received any funding increase and was always flat funded Under Mayor Knopp during my tenure as Executive Director of NEON., Inc.

When I retired in 2003 ,NEON's funding. from the City of Norwalk was:

NEON Inc. Head Start funding was approximately \$996,000.00

NEON Inc . Central Administration and The Delegate Agencies funding was Approximately \$ 396,000.00

NEON Inc. and Delegate Agencies ,Community Centers, funding was Approximately \$441,000.00

Being involved in Norwalk politics Since 1968 it is hard for me to believe that what a Republican Administration has funded to assist the disadvantaged population of our community, (Black Brown and Poor White Citizens) The Democratic Administration Is taking away. This should be a wake- up call to all of us .

That there is not a level playing field for all of Norwalk's citizens.

Submitted by

Robert Burgess , Chairman: District B Democratic Committee