

For State Representative – 19th district

Derek Slap (Democratic, Working Families)

Why are you running for this office?

I want all our children to be able to attend excellent public schools, find jobs in Connecticut after graduation, afford to raise a family and eventually retire here.

Connecticut faces challenges but it also has tremendous potential. We have the tools needed to build a robust economy that works for everyone. Now more than ever we need folks in state government who know how to get things done and who really believe in Connecticut's future. My father was a minister, my mother a nurse. They taught me the value of giving back to the community. I've spent 20 years working in journalism and public service. I'm currently a manager at the UConn Foundation, where our top priority is increasing scholarships so students can attend our great flagship university.

I've never run for office before but I'm grateful so many people are already supporting me - teachers, environmentalists, and business leaders.

What are your top three legislative priorities?

First, we must retain and grow high-quality jobs. We do this by capitalizing on Connecticut's strengths. Overhaul our transportation infrastructure – including high speed rail - to connect our educated workforce with opportunities within Connecticut and with the nearby economic engines of Boston and New York. Invest in higher education so students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow and can find them here. Reduce red tape wherever possible so entrepreneurialism can thrive.

Second, we must protect our public schools. Empowering our teachers and supporting our students is critical for not only the economy, but for our quality of life. We also need fairer funding for our local schools and universal pre-k to close the achievement gap.

Third, Connecticut needs a balanced, affordable and sustainable budget that doesn't drive up property taxes or shred the social safety net. A more efficient government and a vibrant economy will get us there.

Do you believe there are barriers to voting in CT and if so, what would you do to eliminate them?

We must continue to eliminate barriers to voting so more people have a voice.

Anyone who wants to vote by absentee ballot – for any reason – should be permitted to. We could also implement early voting, as many states already do, and consider voting by mail. For too long the specter of voter fraud is used by some politicians as a scare tactic to pass laws that make it more difficult to vote.

Candidates themselves also play a role. Over the past three months I've met with thousands of families in every neighborhood in the district. I've had great conversations about what's at stake, how we can work together and find common-sense solutions to our challenges. I really listened to people's concerns and refused to pander. I believe folks are much more likely to vote when candidates run this type of positive and engaging campaign – and then follow through once elected.

Chris Barnes (Republican)

No response received.