

My name is Vincent Benvenuto, I have been employed by the City of Hartford for eight years. I am currently a sergeant with the Hartford Police and a union representative. I have been a law enforcement officer for almost 30 years. I am against Bill 464.

In 1994, I was employed for 7 years as a Police Officer by the City of New York. The city had a population of 8 million people with another 3 to 5 million people passing through it daily. The city at this time had over 2000 homicides a year, was facing massive budget deficits, and the New York Stock Exchange was moving to New Jersey. The situation was dire. A newly elected mayor made it his job to change all of the doom and gloom. His name was Rudolph Guliani. He came to New York, and made use of every resource at his disposal. First, he organized the police, put new policies and new units into place, and brought safety back to the city. With that safety came massive investment from private business as well as tourism. His policies to this day are why the city still has surpluses instead of deficits.

Compare this to our newly sworn mayor. Instead of realizing the massive potential that Hartford possesses, he turns to SUBTERFUGE to back door the city charter at the expense of the legislature. One month after taking office, he refuses to show revenue streams, refuses to meet with unions, refuses to honestly interpret city finances, in short, REFUSES TO DO THE HARD WORK he was elected to do. He is the mayor of a city with a population of 125,000 people with an approximate number of 500,000 people coming into Hartford daily, contained in 18 square miles. This is nothing in comparison with the daunting task Mayor Guliani faced entering office in 1994. At no time did the Mayor try to change the New York State Civil Service Law and push off the hard work to save the city. The work of the NYC Mayor and the unions started in 1994 continues to pay off 20 years later.

Mayor Bronin's actions would lead any reasonable person to believe that he is incompetent, inept, or both. His "quick fix" solution would not even amount to a temporary band aid. The unintended consequences to the city would be catastrophic. The city of Hartford, the State of Connecticut, as well as the rest of the country is watching what we do right now. I implore the legislature (with the support of the working men and women, the Hartford Unions, as well as the rest of the state) to please not only DISMISS this legislation, but tell Mayor Bronin to get back to work. Mayor Bronin must come up with a real plan that does not make retirees homeless and eliminates employees' rights. I assure the legislature that the Hartford unions will work diligently to make Hartford work. Insuring Hartford's future is insuring our own future, and the future of others. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sgt. Vincent Benvenuto