

CONNECT

Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut
Congregaciones Organizadas para un Nuevo Connecticut

Grassroots Organizing for Justice 2017-2018 Highlights

CONNECT leaders and teams have been hard at work on local, regional and national issues. CONNECT continues to develop leaders and to build its power along the way. Here are some highlights of CONNECT's work from July 2017 through June 2018.



442 LEADERS PACK JUNE CANDIDATE ASSEMBLY

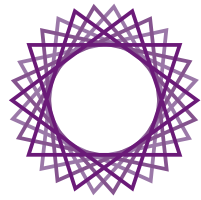
CONNECT leaders came out in droves on June 26th to a Candidate Assembly. During the Assembly 4 Gubernatorial Candidates – Mayor Joe Ganim (D), Tim Herbst (R), Ned Lamont (D), and David Stemerma (R) – listened to stories and concerns from a mix of CONNECT leaders on gun violence, mental healthcare, immigration, criminal justice reform, and jobs / the economy and then offered their ideas and responses. All four candidates pledged to return to another Assembly on the evening of Oct 18th if they win the August primary. CONNECT members pledged to deliver 822 people to attend the Oct 18th Candidate Assembly. *Save the date!*

ANTI-BIAS TRAINING FOR 900+ TEACHERS IN NORWALK

After hearing numerous stories of hate speech and bias-based bullying against youth of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds in local schools, Norwalk leaders began organizing to stop this disturbing trend. After meeting with youth, families, teachers, administrators and others, they focused on the need to support and equip teachers and administrators with the training to intervene effectively.

In early November, at a local Assembly of 188 people at St. Jerome Catholic Church, the Mayor and Assistant Superintendent of School pledged to work with CONNECT to conduct in-service trainings for all 900+ teachers and administrators in Norwalk. CONNECT organized a successful pilot training in February and district-wide sessions are now set for August and November.





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POLICE BODY CAMERAS WON IN BRIDGEPORT

Building on CONECT's successful efforts to press for diverse hiring of new officers and de-escalation and anti-bias training for both new recruits and veteran officers, CONECT pressed Bridgeport Chief A.J. Perez to implement Body Cameras for all patrol officers in the Department beginning in the summer of 2017. After numerous meetings and discussions, CONECT pressed for a clear and public commitment from Chief Perez to move forward at our Nov 30th Assembly. In front of 200+ CONECT leaders gathered at the Bridgeport Islamic Community Center, Perez pledged to begin a 90-day pilot program with 30 officers and then to outfit the entire patrol division with body cameras at the end of this pilot program.



STURM RUGER SHAREHOLDER RESOLUTION PASSED WITH SUPPORT FROM CONECT, METRO IAF & DO NOT STAND IDLY BY

CONECT leaders have continued to play an important role in national Do Not Stand Idly By campaign, which seeks to persuade gun manufacturers to take action to prevent gun theft and illegal sales and to innovate to create safe / smart gun technology. In May, five Metro IAF leaders attended the annual shareholders meeting of Sturm, Ruger, Inc., held in Prescott, AZ. Sturm Ruger is one of the nation's largest gun manufacturers and is headquartered in Fairfield, CT. These five leaders built on the work of three CONECT leaders who attended the 2017 shareholders meeting.

Working with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, CONECT & Metro IAF leaders urged the passage of a shareholder resolution, requiring the company to report to its shareholders on its efforts to create safer products and to track the use of their products in gun violence. In an unprecedented win, the resolution passed with 70% shares voted in favor!

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

CONECT has welcomed 7 diverse members in 2017-18: *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* in Trumbull; *the Unitarian Society of New Haven* in Hamden; *Congregation Beth El*, a conservative synagogue in Norwalk; *Greenfield Hill Congregational Church* in Fairfield; *Calvary Baptist Church* in Norwalk; *Grace Baptist Church* in Norwalk; and the new *Friends of CONECT Action Caucus*.

Collectively, these new member institutions have **pledged \$16,000 in dues** in 2018 and have dozens of new leaders engaging in Core Teams, Issue Teams and more.