

SAVE \$100,000 ON DAY ONE. MAYOR CANDIDATE TO SLASH HIS COMPENSATION.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mayoral candidate Jeffrey Kerekes will slash his own compensation by more than 50% if elected as New Haven's next chief executive. In addition to a flat \$75,000 in salary, Kerekes would decline the city's generous health and pension plan.

"If people are to believe again that City Hall can make tough decisions about finances and priorities, they should not settle for symbolism, silence and defensiveness from the current office holder," charged Kerekes. The mayor took small decreases in compensation only after he got double digit increases.

Mayor DeStefano has steadily escalated his salary and benefits including a projected pension of more than \$100,000 per year for the rest of his life across the last 18 years as mayor and about 30 years in office. The mayor's current salary is \$127,000 per year plus an estimated premium of 40% for pension and health for a combined taxpayer cost of \$175,000. Kerekes says that's living proof the mayor is out of touch with his own budget and his ability to pay for it with existing tax receipts.

"We are in dire financial times," says Kerekes. "Well intentioned half measures are good, but not good enough." The city is bleeding from years of overspending and accumulated debt and pension obligations that have been ignored. With the state deciding this week how much aid to take away from New Haven in light of the unions' concession rejection.

Kerekes wants to transform how the city does business. It starts with bringing our employees home so that they contribute to the vitality and safety of our streets and neighborhoods. It now moves to the mayor's position and that office's administrative budget. Kerekes promises more transforming ideas for how the city can effectively govern in a more streamlined way in the days and weeks ahead as well as several bold property tax measures.

"Most people in New Haven do not make \$75,000 and their average tax bill is more than \$6500 on pretty modest homes," said Kerekes. Is it too much to ask for the top leader to actually lead and serve? "He should not be the first in line to be taken care of by taxpayers with an excessive compensation package." We have to set spending priorities says Kerekes if we are to take care of our core responsibilities like education and public safety.

Our kids are not being educated and there are murders in the streets almost every other week. Our finances are a mess. All of it is tragic and we deserve a mayor less consumed with his own compensation, attaining higher office or being feted in Amsterdam. He should be focused on solving our mounting problems, says Kerekes. "I intend to be that kind of mayor," he said.

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