

*Matt Plain
8 Gladridge Drive
East Greenwich, Rhode Island 02818
mplain@bglaw.com
(401) 595-5818 (c)*

RE: **Party Affiliation Change**

Dear East Greenwich residents:

In the last couple of years, I have observed that unyielding partisan politics and incendiary rhetoric, coming from both ends of the political spectrum, have plagued our community. Though I am at a loss for finding an overnight cure-all for this trend, I am confident that this engaged and thoughtful community, working together, can reverse course. Initially, it is imperative that we all recognize that we share common goals, like the maintaining of a safe, thriving community with great schools capable of providing a high-quality education to our students. I know that, from time to time, I have lost sight of the notion that, despite a difference of opinions on the right path for pursuing these goals, two people can nevertheless desire the same outcomes. Though I wholeheartedly seek to improve, I come to each interaction with my own life experiences that influence my thinking, rendering improvement in this regard an ongoing challenge.

A step I can make towards effectuating meaningful, personal improvement is to separate myself from a political party identity. Party identifications alone seem to have catalyzed considerable division among our citizenry at a time when unification is of paramount importance. To this end, I recently changed my party affiliation from "Republican" to "unaffiliated." I leave the local party with a heavy heart. I have been the beneficiary of an enormous amount of support from folks within that group over the past few years. Along the way, I have learned a great deal, and even gained a couple of mentors. For that, I am eternally grateful. However, in my opinion, the burdens associated with the political party system substantially outweigh the benefits it may bring to local government, at least currently and in our town. Hostility and vitriol, caused at least in part by assumptions made about party affiliations, infiltrate discussions about the governance of our town and schools. Our residents, and most certainly our children, deserve better.

I do not purport to be of any influence on others with this action, I merely seek to ensure that my own interactions in and around government trend constructively, or not, based on the substance and manner of the same, and not on perceptions that seem to carry the current day. That said, I have difficulty rationalizing the need for party affiliation in our local government, and have heard similar sentiments expressed, so perhaps others may determine that they might benefit in following a similar path.

In any event, I can assure you that my approach to governing our schools will not change. Delivering high-quality public school education is among our government's most important functions. I am honored to participate in this effort, and grateful to all of you for the opportunity. Should you have any questions or comments, please reach out to me.

Very truly yours,

Matt Plain