

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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Leadership that Listens calls on “Kids First” candidates to disavow endorsement from extremist ‘New Jersey Project’

Today, Leadership that Listens Hoboken Board of Education candidates called on the “Kids First” candidates, Pavel Sokolov, Donna Magen and Cindy Wiegand to immediately disavow their endorsement from the “New Jersey Project”. The group has documented and is well-known for extreme viewpoints that include opposing diversity and inclusion measures, favors banning books from classrooms, opposes teaching sex-education in school, opposed common-sense COVID-19 precautions during the height of the pandemic, and lists their endorsement for Pavel, Donna and Cindy [on their website](#).

Leslie Norwood, Antonio Graña, and Alex De La Torre are running for Board of Education in Hoboken under the [Leadership that Listens](#) name, on the November 8th ballot positions 2I-3I-4I.

As parents of children attending Hoboken schools, Leadership that Listens is dismayed and shocked that the New Jersey Project, an extremist group, endorses the “Kids First” slate of Pavel Sokolov, Donna Magen and Cindy Wiegand. It’s troubling that any candidate attempting to serve our children on the Hoboken Board of Education would engage with a group like this and offer their slate in response to a call for like-minded candidates. Furthermore, the NJ Project actively besmirches New Jersey teachers and their association, referring to them as clowns and accusing them of indoctrinating students. At a time where extremists are attempting to infiltrate school boards across the country, we call on Pavel, Donna and Cindy to disavow this group and all of NJP’s extremist viewpoints.

Pavel Sokolov, leading the “Kids First” slate, is the current Chairman of the Hudson County Young Republicans and Secretary of the Hoboken Republican Party. Sokolov [campaigned for and supported Donald Trump’s re-election campaign](#).

Donna Magen, also running under “Kids First”, has been a contributor to [NJ Fresh Faced Schools](#), a Facebook group run by the [NJ Project](#) and supported by [Chaos & Control Substack](#), since July 2021. It was there that she identified “Kids First” as running under a “child first” initiative.

As evidence of their extreme views, in a recent Facebook post, The New Jersey Project referred to President Joe Biden as “Pedo-Hitler.” This group is also openly hostile towards teachers’ unions, including the New Jersey Education Association. In her [blog](#), the leader of this group stated: “Let me be clear: Democrats wear masks because their Masters told them to. It’s not about science.”

Cindy Wiegand and her husband petitioned their children's Hoboken-based school to abandon any and all pandemic protocols in July 2022, prior to the 2022-2023 school regulations being released. This petition wasn't well-supported within their school community, with only sixteen signatures.

Leadership That Listens states, "We have nearly come through a global pandemic, but we are not out of the woods yet. Misinformation and disinformation have serious consequences. Now let's extrapolate that to education administration. If you refuse to believe peer-reviewed research, what other data will you set aside when making decisions for our community's children?"