

# The Bogotian

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No. 1

## Democrats Raise Municipal Taxes By 10% Jackson & Lyons Support Big Increase

Bogota property owners who received their 2008 estimated tax bills in July were handed a huge tax increase -- for the second year in a row -- by the Democrat-controlled Borough Mayor and Council that passed the Borough's 2008 final budget at the July 17, 2008 meeting.

A Bogota resident with a home assessed at \$230,000 will pay property taxes of \$9,269 for 2008, an increase of \$690, or 8.04% more than 2007. This follows a \$759 or 9.7% increase in 2007 on the 2006 property taxes of \$7,820 for a \$230,000 home.

The portion of your property tax bill that pays for the Borough's municipal government went up 10%, the school portion

went up 7%, and the county portion went up 9.4%, for a total increase of 8.04%.

Don't be fooled by the Democrat double-talk; in both 2007 and 2008 the Democrats had control of the Council. The Democrats gained control of the Bogota Council in June of 2006. In the first two full years of Democrat control, our property taxes have gone up 18.5%, while the consumer price index in this region went up only 3.8% in 2006 and 2.8% in 2007. Council candidate Rick Gil de Leon said, "We Republicans are opposed to these property increases at more than the rate of inflation because they hurt senior citizens and others on fixed incomes the most."

### Fede & Gil de Leon Propose Campaign Finance Reform

The Bogota Republican candidates for Borough Council, Andrew T. Fede and Richard Gil de Leon, are proposing that the Bogota Mayor and Council adopt two anti-pay-to-play ordinances drafted by Mr. Fede, who was Bogota's attorney for 12 years. "If we are elected to the Council, I will immediately move for the adoption of these ordinances to bring campaign finance reform to Bogota," Fede said.

One ordinance is based on a model circulated by Citizen's Campaign, a non-partisan reform group, as well as the latest state regulations adopted under the state's pay-to-play law. Many New Jersey towns, including the Township of Teaneck, have adopted similar ordinances since January 2006, when a state law authorizing these ordinances went into effect.

The ordinance will set limits on contributions from no-bid contractors to Bogota candidates and political party committees, and to Bergen County political parties and political party committees. "These provisions are necessary to prevent the 'wheeling' of contributions from the County parties and others into Bogota from donors who cannot be traced," Fede said.

The ordinance also will require no-bid contractors to disclose political contributions

made to Bogota candidates and to other political party organizations in this state. Fede stated "this disclosure provision is broader than the one adopted in most towns."

The other ordinance will require all those filing applications with the Bogota Planning/Zoning Board to disclose contributions made to Bogota and Bergen County candidates and political party committees. "The disclosures required by these ordinances will be on file in Borough Hall for anyone in town to see," Fede explained.

"Two recent developments have made it clear that now is the time for Bogota to join with the other towns that have adopted campaign finance reform ordinances," Fede stated.

First, the 2007 campaign fund of the Bogota Democrat candidates for mayor and council received \$5,000 contributions each from the attorney and the engineering firm to which the Mayor and Council awarded no bid contracts in January 2007 and January 2008. The ordinance states that these contributions are in an amount that is far in excess of contributions that previous campaigns of both parties reported in Bogota.

Second, on June 30, 2008, in In Re Appeal of Earle Asphalt

*Continued on Page 4 "Reform"*

The 2008 municipal budget that the Mayor and Council initially approved called for a \$1,226,591 tax increase, 26% more than in 2007. In a press release given out at the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Mayor claims that the final budget reduced a still-massive \$557,691 increase by "approximately \$670,000." In fact, \$643,900 of this "reduction" is made up of state aid that was not included in the original budget, with only \$25,000 in spending cuts. Among these cuts, however, is an \$8,000 reduction in the amount of the increase in the Borough's legal budget, which in the final budget will go up \$12,000 instead of the originally-approved \$20,000 increase over the 2007 budget for this spending.

The Borough thus temporarily avoided an even greater tax increase by the partial restoration of regular state aid (still \$234,589 less than last year), and an increase in extraordinary aid of \$400,000 over last year's \$100,000. "Without that extraordinary aid bailout, our taxes would have gone up even more, but the problem with extraordinary aid is that we cannot count on it from year to year, it is only a temporary fix," said Council candidate Andrew Fede.

One of the biggest budget increases is for police salaries. The Mayor and Council awarded a new contract to our police that raises base salaries each year by 4.04% in 2007 and 2008 and

*Continued on Page 3 "10% Increase"*

### Democrat Tax Increases in 2007 and 2008 Repeat Budget Busting of Prior Democratic Admin.

The tax and spend approach of the Bogota Democrats comes as no surprise to those who remember the years 1988 to 1995, the last time Democrats controlled the borough's government. The Democrats increased municipal spending from \$4,154,710 in 1989 to \$6,043,000 in 1995, causing our property taxes to skyrocket, while they also increased our Borough's debt. The Democrat mayor during those years was hired this year as the Borough's Chief Financial Officer. The Mayor and Council did agree to not collect their salaries for a part of this year, but this creates only a small savings. It also is not a new idea; the Republicans did this in 1996, over the "no" vote of a Democrat who then was on the Council.

In 1996, the Republicans came in and cut the budget four years in a row, to \$5,722,890 in 1999, while maintaining our services. This excellent fiscal record continued right through 2006; Bogota's local property taxes were among the most stable in the County until these increases.

Between 2000 and 2006, under the prior Republican

administration, Bogota had the fourth best property tax record out of all Bergen County municipalities, according to *The Star Ledger*. "If the Bogota United team is elected in November, we pledge to return to the principles embodied in the Taxpayer Protection Ordinance, which was a Bogota Republican innovation adopted in 2002; we will keep Borough spending in line with the rate of inflation, and we will ask the Borough's voters to approve any borrowing that will increase our Borough's current debt levels," Fede and Gil de Leon said.

Visit the  
**Bogota United**  
Website to Meet  
**Our Candidates**  
**BogotaUnited.com**

## Editorial

### Democrats and Tax Increases: Perfect Together

#### The Official Voice of the Bogota Republican Organization

**Fact one**, beginning in June 2006, and continuing in 2007 and 2008, the Democrats held control of Bogota's municipal government, our board of education, and the county and state government.

**Fact two**, in 2007 our property taxes went up by 9.7%, in 2008 our property taxes went up 8.04%, and we also have been paying a 16.67% sales tax increase that the State Democrats passed in July 2006.

**Fact three**, the County Democrat freeholders wanted you to vote "yes" in November 2007 on a ballot question that would have doubled the county's open space tax, which is part of our local property tax bill, thus further increasing our 2008 property taxes. We asked you to vote "no" on this proposal in 2007, and the question was defeated, otherwise your taxes would have gone up even more in 2008.

**Fact four**, between 2000 and 2006, while Bogota's Republicans controlled our municipal government, we had the fourth lowest level of property tax increases among the 70 Bergen County towns.

**Fact five**, the Bogota Republicans passed the Taxpayer Protection Ordinance to control Borough spending and debt.

**Conclusion**, if you want these higher taxes to continue each year in the future, just vote for continued Democrat control on all levels of our government. If you want fiscal responsibility and some checks and balances on this one-party control, vote for the Bogota United Republicans for Bogota's mayor and council.

The New Jersey Democrats have long advocated a tax and spend philosophy of government; Governor Brendan Byrne gave us our first income tax and

Governors James Florio and James McGreevey each raised it. When this did not raise enough revenue, the McGreevey administration advanced a tax, borrow, and spend philosophy, which was cut back by the New Jersey Supreme Court in the case of Lance v. McGreevey. The court held that the state could not "balance" its budget with borrowed money. Council candidate Andrew Fede was one of the lawyers who argued that case before the New Jersey Supreme Court on the winning side.

This year, Governor Corzine proposed a tax, borrow, sell, and spend approach; he wants to sell to private investors the estimated future income from our toll roads, a scheme he called asset monetization. This is just another scam on the taxpayers of today and tomorrow. It would cause tax increases thinly disguised as higher tolls, would increase borrowing authorized by the State, and would reduce revenue far into the future, because the tolls of the future will be sold for cash today at a discount rate.

No wonder New Jersey is ranked among the top states in taxation and among the bottom in business-friendly atmosphere. This poisonous combination explains why residents and businesses are moving out of our state, and, even worse, why polls show that almost half of New Jersey's residents plan to leave our state in the future. This exodus of people and productivity means fewer jobs, less tax revenue for government on all levels, and higher taxes for those of us who want to or have to stay here in New Jersey.

It is time for the rest of us to start voting with our heads and not our feet. Vote for the Bogota United Republican Team in 2008. Vote "no" to higher taxes and vote "yes" for fiscal responsibility.

## Why Vote Republican in 2008?

**FACT:** Democrats Take Control of Borough Council in June 2006

**FACT:** In 2007 Your Property Taxes Went Up 9.7%

**FACT:** In 2008 Your Property Taxes Went Up 8.04%

**FACT:** Taxes on a \$230,000 home went from \$7,820 in 2006 to \$9,269 in 2008

## Had Enough Yet?

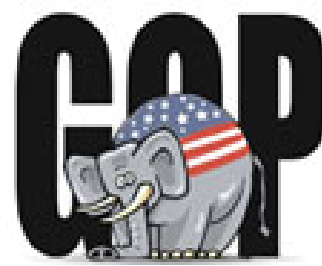
**Vote for Balance, Experience, Integrity**

November 4, 2008

Vote Republican

Vote for

Fede & Gil de Leon



## Republican Candidates Launch Website: BogotaUnited.com

The Bogota 2008 Republican candidates for Borough Council, Andrew T. Fede and Richard Gil de Leon, have launched their website, BogotaUnited.com. "This website is an example of the open and honest approach to government that we will bring back to Borough Hall," Fede said.

The website contains the candidates' biographies. Between now and November, it will contain campaign news and updates. It also has an e-mail feature so that voters communicate their views to the candidates and the candidates can communicate with the public.

"We believe that local government's strength lies in its ability to encourage a give and

take in the community," said Gil de Leon. "This website proves that we want to begin that process in our campaign, and we will continue it next year," he added.

"The Bogota Republican team calls itself 'Bogota United' because we want to represent what is best for all Bogotians, without regard to party affiliation, which has dominated the thinking of the Democrat party in this borough and our county. If we are elected I can assure you that the Democrat bosses in this county and state will have no say in who we hire, fire, or what we do here in Bogota," pledged Fede.

Andy is a 49-year Bogota resident, and a Bixby School and Bogota High School graduate. For more than 25 years he has been a private practice lawyer. He was Bogota's borough attorney for 12 years, and has worked as the borough attorney, planning board attorney, zoning board attorney, and special counsel for five other municipalities. For six years he was a member of our Board of Health, and for the last two years was the Board's president. He is a part-time adjunct professor in the Department of Political Science and Law at Montclair State University. Andy's wife Daniele was a member of the

Bogota Environmental Commission for 12 years.

Rick is a businessman who has lived in Bogota for more than 30 years. He is a member of V.F.W. Post 5561, American Legion Post 117, and Bogota's Senior Citizen Club. For eight years he served in the U.S. Navy Air Force, including time on the U.S.S. Coral Sea aircraft carrier. He also served as radioman for the first successful ICBM launch at the Air Force Missile Test Center. He is a parishioner at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, where he is an active member of the Holy Name Society. Rick's wife Rona was a Bogota Councilperson.

## Democrats Do an About-face on DPW Merger Agreement: Tell Press One Story and Public Another

By: Andrew T. Fede

The Bogota Democrat Mayor and Democrat Councilmembers did an about face when they were questioned at their July 3, 2008 meeting about a story in *The Record* on that date, which reported that "Bergen County and Bogota have agreed to share their public works departments."

Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney and Bogota Mayor Patrick McHale held a press conference at our DPW garage on July 2, 2008. *The Record* reported that, "Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney and Bogota Mayor Patrick McHale said they agreed to create a joint Commission of Public Works that would unite the staffs and equipment of the county's and borough's public works departments." The article states the agreement creates a "joint venture," or a "new entity" with a "board of commissioners and its own budget and dedicated staff." Both McNerney and McHale are quoted describing the agreement's terms, and its alleged benefits. The article states: "The agreement, which McNerney hopes to have in place by the end of the summer, could last as long as 40 years, he said." It also states that "[t]he County and Bogota have applied for a \$20,000 to \$30,000 grant from the Department of Community Affairs" for the cost of a study on how to implement the agreement.

NY 1 television news also covered this press conference. They reported that "Bogota is joining forces with Bergen County to create a more efficient [DPW]."

At their July 3, 2008 meeting, however, in response to questions from the public, the mayor and borough attorney stated that there was no agreement or even a draft agreement with the County. The members of the council agreed. They admitted that the Bogota Mayor and Council has not adopted a resolution authorizing an agreement with the County, and claimed that they had adopted a resolution authorizing a "SAGE" grant to fund a feasibility study for the merger.

(Councilwoman Anne Marie Mitchell, the lone Republican, was absent from the meeting because of illness).

After the meeting, a review of all of the 2008 resolutions confirmed that the Bogota Mayor and Council had not even adopted a resolution authorizing the grant application for the feasibility study for this DPW merger agreement. Instead, Department of Transportation SAGE grants were authorized for road repairs.

And at the July 17, 2008 meeting, it was revealed that even though the application had already been prepared and filed, it was not until that meeting that the Mayor and Council passed a resolution authorizing the Borough Administrator to file the application. The Borough Administrator admitted, after being questioned by members of the public, that the grant application that he already filed was not for \$20,000 to \$30,000 as reported in the press, but it was for \$120,000.

"I am not sure when the truth was being told, when the press was told there was an agreement, or when the Bogota public was told there is no agreement," said Andrew Fede, one of the 2008 Bogota Republican council candidates, who attended the July 3, 2008 meeting. Republican Council candidate Richard Gil de Leon added: "I am very concerned about the proposal to merge our DPW with the County because the proposal would create a new level of government, which would tell our elected officials who to hire and how much money we must spend for this new joint Bogota/County DPW."

"Cooperation with other towns on DPW and other services is not new in Bogota," Fede explained. "We have since 1996 had an agreement with Ridgefield Park. We share a salt silo and fueling pumps, at a cost savings to the taxpayers in both municipalities. This is the type of sharing we should continue pursue," Fede said. He also stated, "the \$120,000 feasibility study better show significant savings before we follow through with this 40-year agreement."

## Mayor Says He Will Resign, Then Doesn't: This is Leadership?

By: Andrew T. Fede

President Harry S. Truman said: "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen." Apparently, the June heat got to be too much for Bogota Democrat Mayor Patrick McHale, who sent an e-mail to the members of the Borough Council and the borough administrator on the morning of June 3, 2008 stating: "I will be resigning effective today at 3 PM."

According to *The Record* of June 5, 2008, McHale did not do what he said he would do. McHale claimed that he sent the e-mail "out of frustration with some other members of the council, controlled by Democrats with whom McHale has recently clashed on financial policy."

At the Mayor and Council meeting of June 5, 2008, I asked Mayor McHale if he would describe

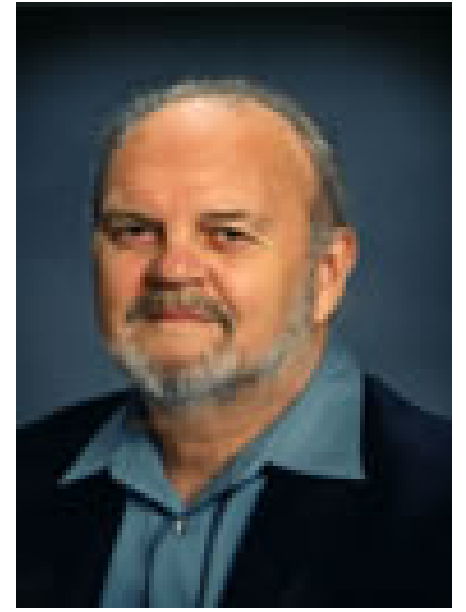
further for the public in Bogota why he stated his intention to resign, but he refused.

We are left to wonder why the Mayor saw fit to promise his resignation, and then breach that promise. Was it a fit of temper or anger? If so, we are all in trouble because the mayor is the person who must keep his head clear when decisions need to be made in times of natural or other disasters. If the mayor was trying to make some important point of public policy with the council and the administrator, then a threat to resign in a few hours leaving a void in the borough's government shows a lack of leadership skills, judgment, and maturity. Harry Truman also said: "A leader has to lead, otherwise he has no business in politics."

## VOTE FEDE & GIL DE LEON FOR LOWER TAXES & BETTER SERVICES



Andy Fede



Rick Gil de Leon

*10% Increase  
Continued from page 1*

4.30% in 2009 and 2010. The highest paid patrol officer's base salary level in 2008 will rise to \$101,764, excluding overtime and other benefits. This year we also are paying \$35,000 for the 2007 retroactive increases plus about \$150,000 for the 2008 raises. The total cost may be understated, however, because the budget calls for \$65,000 less than the amount the Borough actually paid for police overtime expenses in 2007. But the Mayor and Council are not adding any new officers in 2008; in fact two are retiring.

The new contract also gives away a provision that the Republicans negotiated to create an incentive for our junior officers to continue their employment with the Borough. The junior officers were to receive regular increases as they moved up the scale until they reached the top pay grade. The annual percentage increases on top of these step increases were to be banked and paid later as an employee retention program. As a result, in 2008 the four least senior officers will receive massive salary increases of between \$13,200 to \$25,400 each, which, under the Republican-negotiated contract, they would have received in later years only if they remained employed by the Borough.

The Mayor and Council also claim that our Borough debt service increased by \$160,000 in 2008, but the actual 2008 payment is \$400 less than the 2006 figure. The increase will pay for the debt costs necessary for the two new fire trucks that Bogota's voters approved in 2006. The Borough employee health insurance costs increased by \$150,000. The Mayor and Council had the opportunity to shop in the market for better rates, but did not get a better deal. The State-mandated pension contribution increased by \$106,000, another tax that the Trenton Democrats passed along to us as a State tax increase that is hidden as a property tax increase.

The Borough's legal budget also was increased from \$65,000 to \$77,000.

Angry residents attending the July 17 Mayor and Council meeting demanded to know what the Mayor and Council was doing to contain costs and raise revenue, and why the Democrats did not keep their promise to stabilize taxes. The Mayor and Council Democrats had no answers, and again and again try to pass the buck and blame the prior Republican administration for these increases. The Democrats even have tried to blame the Republicans for about \$50,000 in bills included in this year's budget that they state were not paid in 2006, even though the Democrats had control of the Council at the end 2006 when they say those bills were not paid.

These property tax hikes come instead of the 20% property tax cut promised in 2006 by Democrat Governor Corzine and the Democrat-controlled New Jersey State legislature, and they are in addition to the 16.67% increase in the state's sales tax that we all have been paying since July 2006. Instead of property tax reform, the state legislature and governor's office slashed regular municipal aid to Bogota in 2008 by \$234,589, a 21% reduction, when our neighbors saw their aid reduced much less: Hackensack 8.6%, Teaneck 9.1%, Ridgefield Park 10.11%, and Little Ferry 10.94%.

This year's taxes pay for the budgets of the all-Democrat Bergen County Board of Freeholders, Bogota's Democrat-controlled local school board, and Bogota's Democrat-controlled Borough Mayor and Council. "We cannot afford to let the Democrats continue to have control of our state, county, school board, and municipal governments, we need some balance and the return of the two-party system," said Fede. "Our local Democrats need to stop making excuses and remember the words of Harry Truman, who said: 'The buck stops here,'" Fede said.

