

If you're reading this letter, I assume you care.

I do not want your money, and I am not going to pester you.

THIS IS NOT A POLITICAL LETTER TO GET YOU TO VOTE FOR ME.

THIS LETTER IS TO MOVE US INTO A MORE INFORMED, MORE INTERESTED DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC.

FEEL FREE TO SKIP AROUND TO YOUR SECTIONS, but I hope we can be on the same page about it all.

My name is Robert Worthington, and I am running again to be your City Council representative. Four years ago, I promised that if I didn't win in 2015, I would run again. Here I am, fulfilling that promise.

I'm not writing to ask that you vote for me. If you feel there is a better candidate, vote for them. All that I ask is that you care, and care enough to look into the candidates and issues before you vote. If you already do this, you're doing great. I hope you can help others do the same. The time it takes to read this letter could determine the course of the next FOUR YEARS.

Our neighbors say that they see very little good or much of anything coming out of politics, or our government. I agree. If you agree, you will probably want to read what I have to say.

I agree with you. What we are seeing coming from our government and politics, in our country, our state, and our city, is not good for us, or good enough. YOU DESERVE MORE. YOU DESERVE BETTER.

Our current councilman, Peter Ujvagi, has stated that "a Councilmember's job is to represent the City to the people." I completely disagree. Perhaps this is the reason he didn't do much to help our struggling District. I believe that a Councilmember's duty is to fight for the district, and to provide the best representation and service they are able. I thank Mr. Ujvagi for his service, but hope he does not return.

A Councilmember's job, as they are elected to do, is to FIGHT for those they represent. To FIGHT to make our district as well off as it can be. To FIGHT against corruption and to FIGHT against an absurd unbalance of power across Toledo that we can all so obviously see.

Right now, 4 of the 6 At-Large Councilmembers are from District 2. When there was a vacancy in 2017, I answered the call to serve as a District 3 resident, but our Councilmember, Peter Ujvagi, who was supposed to be fighting for District 3, didn't lift a finger about anything, and immediately backed the candidate supported by the Lucas County Democratic Party, Kurt Young of District 4, who is now the Chairman of the Lucas County Democratic Party.

MY FELLOW DEMOCRATS: The Democratic Party, the DNC, the Ohio Democratic Party, and the Lucas County Democratic Party (LCDP), are not here to help us. They are here to help themselves, win elections, raise money, make money, and stay in power. The "Party of the People," yet they haven't been helping the People at all. Their spinelessness and corruption in Congress has led to the decline of the middle class; the loss of jobs; inaction on climate change; a sham of a national healthcare system; massive student debt; massive poverty; and now the rise of Donald Trump, who is more ignorant, and more dangerous, than many of our fellow Americans seem to be grasping. The national and state Party has stuck to talking points of division that have led our rural and red neighbors be turned off to the idea of the Party, instead of

focusing on how we could actually improve all of our lives, which, if explained would surely pull workers back from the lies of Donald Trump. Our local Party, the Lucas County Democratic Party, has spent decades packing our politics into Democratic supermajorities, yet for some reason they were not able to enact meaningful change. They will say it is because we are limited by State Law, and by the budget. I say they are limited by a lack of effort, political courage, and dedication to their office.

If you're relying on the Democratic Party to tell you who to vote for, by way of telling you who the "endorsed Democrat" is, I ask, why? I screened for the Lucas County Democrat Party endorsement, and will never be doing so again. During the first round in February, the full committee was there, they asked basic questions, and then spent about half the interview being offended by what I said about Detroit in 2015. (They claimed I was disrespecting Detroit. In reality, I was stating the fact that they were in bad shape at the time, and I stated that if we didn't fix things, we would end up like them, and live up to our nickname, "Little Detroit"). I thought they were there to interview me on what we could do to help Toledo. My mistake, apparently. They endorsed Peter Ujvagi, a former elected official and Democratic Party Chairman, which everyone saw coming a mile away. This is important to note because per their by-laws, if there is more than one "qualified candidate," they should not recommend endorsement. Then, Peter Ujvagi dropped out of the race, citing health reasons, and maybe that's true, or maybe it's because every time he walked into a room he talked nonstop about whatever he could to avoid addressing the actual issue at hand, or because he seemed to get more disdain than praise. What a qualified candidate. So the LCDP held another round of screening. Both Theresa Gadus and I showed up to screen. This time the committee was smaller, and I could feel the cockiness, and special interests at work from certain individuals. I repeated my pitch that the Democratic Party was letting people down and I was there to help set a better example. They again chose not to endorse me, but this time endorsed Theresa Gadus, who, after a few months of little change, is now a "qualified candidate" for them.

Theresa Gadus, 39, of East Toledo, is a very nice person. She has a good heart, good intentions, wants to get good things done, and says she won't be controlled by the Democratic Party. I'm not convinced. She is positive, but I hear repeated talking points. She speaks well enough, but I am not seeing the passion and force that I expect my representative to show, especially when we need a loud representative to get our District some care and attention. When Peter Ujvagi mispronounced her name in front of a room full of Garfield Neighborhood constituents, she did not correct him. (At least he said her name; he apparently didn't know mine). She is the President of the Stonewall Democrats, a chapter of the LCDP, which makes me believe she's playing by their rules. I have no ill will for her, but because of the importance of our District needing the best representative we have to offer right now, I will relay the message as I see it, unless and until it changes: Democratic Party line, talking points, lack of concrete plans to solve issues and provide better city services, and lack of political punch. I am also disappointed that she did not attend the Community Solidarity Response Network Forum to which we were all invited to over a month in advance. This last bit about the Democratic Party will just be a side note, as no one should give much attention to the topic: "Johnny Hildo." From what I have gathered, "Johnny Hildo" is a person or group of people within the Lucas County Democratic Party who acts as a fly on the wall and is somehow allowed to present their gossip as "news" in The City Paper (the only reason I bring this up). Of course, their op-ed can't be considered real news. They wrote an article about me and a couple other young candidates, and despite all my information, basically everything about myself and my plans, being available for all to see on my website, they obviously didn't do any research on me, before they tried using my age as a measure of who I am and what I've accomplished. They did a cute little graphic, and had my name under two different faces. All they showed me was how truly inept they are, that they're cowards unwilling to attach their name(s) to their words, and that maybe they're right where they belong at the LCDP.

NOTE that *not every* Democrat or Lucas County Democratic Party *member* is terrible, or terrible all the time, and there's plenty of time for us all to step it up and change ourselves and the Party for the better.

MY REPUBLICAN FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS: I certainly hope you didn't see "Democrat" and run for the hills. I am an "independent Democrat." I'm not here to stick to Party talking points or to make sure the Democratic Party fills every seat. I'm here to make decisions in the best interest of the people and of the public. Sometimes we will disagree, but I assure you that we probably agree on much more. I want our taxes to be efficient, I want to help small businesses, I want our neighborhoods to look nice, and I want people to be kind and compassionate. The Democratic and Republican Parties at the national level pick the most divisive issues to divide us up. If you have a question about where I stand on an issue, it might be on my website, but I am letting you know that you can just simply ask me. We might disagree, we might agree in part. But I promise you the label "Democrat" is not a label that sticks so cleanly to me. Now, you do have a Republican candidate in this race: Glen Cook, 77, of East Toledo. He has a bit of class, he's been around forever, and he's done some good things. He has plenty of advertising. The problem is that he has no plan for us. He says he wants to get the churches more involved, and while I agree with the sentiment of people being more moralistic, I don't see how judging people and forcing religion on them is going to help. He brings up the shooting he witnessed, and claims the tragedy as his own, yet he offers no solutions. He says that's what made him sure he wanted to run, what, just because he saw it happen? Gun shots ring out all over East and South Toledo, why don't those matter? He hasn't called for gun control, and maybe you don't want gun control, or maybe you know that the gun situation in America is completely out of hand, and we can make some changes in gun laws that make sense, and have bi-partisan support. He dangles the fact that his wife is Mexican to ignorantly claim that he "knows the struggle" of Mexicans, then disrespects immigrants to get in a talking point about the 'millions of babies that have been murdered' through abortion. He says he "damn near won last time" when he ran in 2015, as if that means anything. He lost. He got 29% of the vote in the Primary in 2015, and couldn't beat Ujvagi in the General. He got 47% of the vote in the General, and this, coupled with his actions, hinted to many, many people, myself included, that he was going to run again anyway. Might be important to mention, at the time he was an "independent," but now, when it's convenient to help him run, he's all about the Republican Party. From what I have seen, paying attention for years, he's a plain politician. I'd say I'm sad that he didn't make it to the CSRN Forum, either, but it was predictable that he would not show up.

GREENS AND LIBERTARIANS: You've chosen to be a part of political parties that are not major parties in our political system, and I respect that. I would also like your parties to have ballot access. This is supposed to be a democracy, and all voices are supposed to matter. The Democratic and Republican Parties have such a hold on everything, that it is hindering our democracy. I look forward to working with your parties going forward, and with you, as individuals, who have also seen the overly-political ways of the two major parties in this country.

INDEPENDENTS: I choose to remain a "Democrat" because I appreciate the ability to vote for my preferred candidate in primary elections. I do align with Democratic ideals, and in a place like Lucas County, we sometimes have to decide between "who is the *best* Democrat" to vote for, because our options are so limited. You are very wise to stay away from Party politics. Nothing good can come of it. It leads to division, gridlock, and "unity" under false pretenses. I hope one day we can move our democracy into a truly non-partisan system, so that we might get things done for the good of the public, instead of just focusing what is good for one party or another. Remember, no matter how much you see or hear about the Republican or Democratic Parties, it is Independents who make up the majority of voters.

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS: It is easy to jump to the conclusion that I am against you, but I am not. My family has had no less than seven small businesses, three types of which are still in operation – car washes, a law practice, and construction businesses – and I’ve done work with all of them. I am not here to put anybody out of business. On the contrary, I’d like to help our local businesses. I would like to create an interactive map, inform the public, and even do a series of local business visits to present a virtual tour and experience to local residents who may wish to patronize your business. I absolutely do believe all employees deserve a living wage, and that no person should be working 40 hours a week to go home and not be able to feed their children. That is a sentiment rooted in an economy which has been molded by greed for far too long. But it can change. Large corporations who make millions in profits from ripping off workers should bear the brunt of the change, not small businesses. In the end, I also am certain that with a raise in wages, disposable income will be put into our local economy, if we work together and make sure it happens that way. We’re all in this together.

TO MY ARLINGTON NEIGHBORS: What an amazing journey it’s been for me, an Arlington Bengal and Arlington Brave, running for City Council for the second time at the age of 24. I lived the first half of my life in the Arlington neighborhood, gained friends, survived hard times, and loved every minute of playing outside in the neighborhood. Those were simpler times. I got to grow up hearing about things getting worse, and as an adult I see the problems in full bloom. You are not defined by these problems, and you are not left behind. There are still neighbors active in your community who take care of their properties and put in the extra effort to work on taking care of the neighborhood as a whole. I often come in contact with these neighbors, help out when I’m invited, help pick up Highland Park. My fiancée and I were invited to do a mural on the concrete slab on the library side of the park down by the footbridge. It lasted a while, but was unfortunately tagged by graffiti. The important part is that we continue to work, even if we face setbacks, because as long as we continue, no effort will be in vain. Glen Cook and Theresa Gadus say they want to help both South and East Toledo. I hope for our sake that they are telling the truth, and that they actually follow through if elected. I am convinced that with continued effort, more attention and care, such as with the hands-on care I intend to bring to the District, and improved communication and coordination, we can really start setting our neighborhoods back on the right track. The Arlington Neighborhood will always be where I’m from, and I will always care enough to help the neighborhood remain a place you can call home.

TO MY BURROUGHS NEIGHBORS: If you haven’t heard, the Burroughs Neighborhood Organization is here to help, and the BNO has been doing so for over a decade now. I joined in 2015, and my fiancée, Sarah, and my mom, Rosa, have joined in as well. You are very welcome to join us as you please. Currently, I serve as President, and am working with the Land Bank to ensure that The Triangle at South and Airport sees its full potential realized with a memorial to the neighborhood, a memorial to military service members, and landscaping beautification. This year, we won a grant of \$13,000 from the City of Toledo’s District Improvement Program for this work, which the Lucas County Land Bank has offered to project manage, in addition to adding an additional \$10,000 of their own money to make sure this gets done the right way. A couple years ago, we won a \$1,000 sustainability grant to add flowers to the Airport Highway Corridor, and we also did a neighborhood-wide property survey which we used to show the Land Bank that we are a neighborhood in which it is worth it to invest. They chose our neighborhood because of the hard work and dedication of the BNO, and they came in and demolished, restored, and sold properties right here in the Burroughs Neighborhood to raise our property value – they were able to sell homes for well over \$60,000 each to dedicated new owners. The BNO is not a traditional block watch, but is a group of committed neighbors and volunteers who do not spend time nit-picking every little thing wrong, but

instead take inventory of how our neighborhood can improve and work towards that improvement in a more positive and cooperative manner, with our neighbors, our allies, organizations, and the City and County.

I was asked if I would still be President of the BNO if elected to Council, and I said I do not think that would be appropriate, since I want to work with and help all organizations within the District, including the South East Toledo Neighborhood Alliance which I would like to create to bring us all together with our Councilmember at the same time at least monthly, but I would continue to work with the BNO as a member. We are considered a “tipping point” neighborhood, meaning we could go uphill or downhill, and we, in the BNO, and I, personally, will continue in efforts to push us in the right direction, whether I am elected or not. This is where I live with my family. This is my home. I intend to keep it that way.

TO MY EAST TOLEDO NEIGHBORS: I live in South Toledo, but I sure cross the High Level Bridge to get to your East Toledo a lot. I have frequent trips to Oregon, Northwood, and frequently directly to East Toledo, where I attend several One Voice for East Toledo meetings, Metroparks meetings, meetings held for District 3, which are mostly held on your side of the river, and other events and meetings aimed at spotlighting and re-introducing East Toledo to the rest of the city. I’m not interested in staying in one place, sitting in an office. I want to be available, active in all my communities, and mobile, so I can *know* the District I hope to represent. I want to hear what people have to say. I want to see, hear, and feel what’s going on. I want to have concerns so I can intelligently and effectively make decisions that represent the best option for my neighbors. I’m not afraid to say that I will represent East Toledo. I will represent East Toledo. I want to work so hard that everyone else understands as my fiancée and I do that East Toledo is better than the reputation it seems to get, and that East Toledo is still a part of Toledo as a whole, while maintaining its own uniqueness and diversity. I have listened to residents who don’t just want downtown to spill into East Toledo, but who truly want an East Toledo revitalization. I believe I can help in this goal. I do not appreciate how Councilmember Ujvagi seems to cut off residents who attempt to demand more. He tried to silence me because I’m “in a gray area” as a candidate, but I’m not going to let my voice be silenced. I am a resident of District 3, and I speak to help my neighbors, not for political gain. So, against his “demands,” I spoke anyway. That’s what you can expect from me – someone who listens, and someone who will not be silenced when it comes to fighting for District 3.

TO MY HISTORIC OLDE SOUTH END NEIGHBORS: I hope you know that not all is being done to help you improve your Historic District. I hope you know that glass sitting on a sidewalk for years on end is not okay. I hope you know that destroyed house-fronts and storefronts sitting in rubble are not okay. I hope you know that high weeds, debris, and boards all over windows along the tourist route, along Western, South Avenue, and Broadway, are not okay. That’s the condition your *Historic* district is left in by your City officials under current “leadership.” I would love to show you a better quality of leadership, with maintained effort to help you keep your historic district as nice as you know it could be, and I would love to work with you, the residents, to make it happen in a way that represents your own vision.

TO ALL LIFE-LONG DISTRICT 3 RESIDENTS: I know you’ve seen things go downhill. I’m only 24 and I’ve seen things go downhill. I grew up in the Arlington Neighborhood, then bordering in the Walbridge Neighborhood, and have now lived the second half of my life in the Burroughs Neighborhood. My grandma lived across the AWTrail on Colburn, and she let us stay there for months when we lost our home. I’ve had family and friends in East Toledo my whole life. I’ve been here watching this happen, too, and I’m angry. This is my home. Why won’t anybody care? Why won’t anybody give us the representation, care, and fight that we deserve? We have it tough, but we remain, strong, and not ready to give up on our communities.

I haven't given up, and I'm here offering to be that someone who fights for us in the political and governmental arenas. It's about time we have a fighter in office to truly fight for us.

TO THE YOUNG CITIZENS AND STUDENTS: Don't think I forgot about you. Don't think anybody has forgotten about you. We are here for you, to work with you, to welcome you in *your* city, and to provide plenty of opportunities for you, right here in Toledo. I will work with you, directly. I will provide opportunities for learning, learning to work, learning to lead, and learning to work together. I will provide opportunities to make sure we all make it as far as we can, as a reference, with letters of recommendation, with scholarship opportunities, and hopefully with whatever you need to keep going forward. I'm young. People say I'm too young. I say they're wrong. I prove them wrong. You can prove everyone wrong, and show them that you are young and maybe you are going through a tough time now, but you are worth something to this world, and you will make a difference. It is you who will save this planet, end racism, win the fight for equality, and make your own dreams come true in the process. You *can*.

TO THE VOTERS: I hope you made it this far. I hope you care. I don't ask that you agree with me, or even believe me, but I hope I was able to present a perspective that might help you in this primary election, if not in all coming elections. This wasn't to sway your vote towards one candidate, even to me. This is way too important to be a political message. This was my attempt to show you that not everyone who runs for office is just another politician, and that you don't have to be a politician to run for office. This is personal. It's a personal letter, about problems that are weighing so heavily on me. I can barely sleep at night. I have so much anger, all the time, about the injustice, the lies, and the inaction. I don't care who you vote for. I just hope it all matters. I hope it all works out for the best. I hope we can make informed decisions, and not rely on the lies that come at us from every single angle out there. I hope you get the chance to keep learning, and keep informing yourself, about every issue, and every candidate running to represent you. Keep your elected officials honest, and hold them accountable. If I'm elected, you can expect that I'll be real with you, and provide the best representation and public service I can. If I'm not elected, I'll still be real with you, and still provide the best representation and public service I can, in whatever form that happens to be. It doesn't end here. This year, this race, is not the end. I will continue to fight in my way, doing my part, and I hope you do the same. We're all in this together, and not one of us has any right to claim some special privilege or power over another. I'm trying my best to keep money out of politics, so this may be the only hard-copy communication between us, and if you couldn't tell by the length of this letter, I aimed to make it count. If you'd like to talk with me further, email is best – RobertJamesWorthington@aol.com. I'm finishing my final semester in grad school, so I'm working on a million things, but I'll reply. If you care, I have four years of plans and positions on my website, as well as election information and resources for all Toledo voters, at RobertWorthingtonToledo.com.

(Signed:

Thank you,

Robert J. Worthington)

Robert James Worthington