



## INTERVIEW WITH JASS STEWART

Conducted at Jass Stewart's Home in Brockton

A  
MOVEMENT  
FOR  
CHANGE  
IN  
BROCKTON

**Q. Why are you running for mayor of Brockton in 2007?**

**A.** There are three major reasons why I'm running for mayor of Brockton again. First, in 2005, I committed to building on the movement for a more inclusive, transparent, and accountable Brockton government that our campaign created. Part of this work included founding the New Leadership Fund, which endorsed and, more importantly, became deeply involved in helping to mount the unprecedented grassroots campaign that led to Deval Patrick's decisive victory in the Massachusetts governor's race. NLF is committed to identify and training active citizens and transforming them into new political leaders in Brockton. I think it's important for this transformation to happen at all levels of government. And an important starting point is the Mayor's office. Second, leadership continues to be Brockton's most pressing issue. We have been stuck in neutral since the last election. Unemployment, violent crimes, bankruptcies, and frankly, cynicism about the future are on a dramatic increase. From all over Brockton, I've heard what you've heard. We have had enough of leadership on the quick, of leadership through friendship and last name, of leadership that says: I'm running because I've been told it's my turn. Brockton is crying out for leadership with candor and charisma, leadership with vision and purpose, leadership with integrity and accountability. I am committed to bringing fresh and respectful leadership to our city that says, "yes we can." And third, like many people in the city, everything that I have is in Brockton. My business is in Brockton. My family is in Brockton. My son is in Brockton public schools. As far as I can see, my life is dependent on Brockton doing well. I'd like to have a hand in that. The current administration is focused on meeting the needs of a very few special interest groups, while most communities in Brockton are left demanding safer neighborhoods, quality education, and a safety net when things get tough. The system is broken. We have to fix it. There is simply too much at stake for us to leave things the way they are.

**Q. You've mentioned creating a City Hall that's "responsive to the needs of all the people of Brockton." What will this look like?**

**A.** My 5-Point Plan is based on listening to the people of Brockton. The campaign has presented options and solutions to address a variety of concerns by being smart enough to realize, in the first place, that we don't have all the answers to every problem. We talked to thousands of people during and since the last

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campaign, took note of their concerns, hopes, and aspirations for Brockton and have noted the most pressing issues. We've worked diligently to formulate strategies to address these problems, of which, five of them come to the surface – accountability, jobs, education, safety, and ownership. In our plan, we've articulated starting points on how to make our government more accountable to the people so trust in the system can be regained; how to build jobs in the city through a thorough review of our economic stance, the feasibility of an expanded economy, and how to build a workforce that will attract jobs to the city; how to build an educational structure for the community that prides itself on high-quality education for all; how to fight crime before it starts through effective intervention programs, and how to prepare those ex-offenders who return to Brockton to contribute to the city; and how to increase homeownership and help existing homeowners hold on to their homes – a significant factor in boosting a city's economy and uplifting our community's morale and reputation. Success will require partnerships with other towns and coalitions with people who have addressed similar issues in other places. My vision of City Hall and the future administration of the city is essentially a critical, open approach to civic policy and the concerns of the community at large.

**Q. Your 5-Point Plan is ambitious. Will new taxes be needed to accomplish your goals?**

**A.** Higher taxes are not the answer. Building our economy by attracting growth industries and high-paying jobs is the long-term solution. A short-term solution, however, is to spend our taxes more wisely. There are things we can do to, almost immediately, pump millions of dollars into our economy. For example, in Brockton, we have a school department that has a budget for contractual work that's approximately \$24 million dollars a year. Every year, the school department awards about \$20 million in bids to contractors located outside of Brockton. This is money that the school system could be putting back into Brockton's economy. We have to be smart about reinvesting in Brockton so that we are spreading the wealth that can be created with our own tax money. And the \$20 million figure is only the school department. You can't even get the numbers from City Hall about the total amount of tax dollars going outside of Brockton. We can begin a new era of growth, not by raising taxes, but by spending more of our money within the City of Brockton.

**Q. Your ideas are exciting. But why not run for city councilor to get your feet wet, rather than mayor of Brockton?**

**A.** Our city is in desperate need of long-term, strategic thinking to make our government more accountable to the citizens it serves, to create jobs and build Brockton's economy, to improve our educational system, and to win the fight against crime on our streets. The mayor of Brockton is charged with crafting and implementing a vision that prepares Brockton for positive growth many years down the road. Leadership with a long-term vision is the biggest void, politically, in the city right now. With my passion to see Brockton thrive and my clear vision for the city, I know it's a void I can fill best.