



BHC-MSS 0153  
Guide to the Papers of Senator Ed Gomes  
By Meg Rinn

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Gomes, Edwin

**Title:** Papers of Senator Ed Gomes

**Dates:** 1970-2018

**Quantity:** 6 manuscript boxes, 2 record cartons, 2 oversize boxes

**Abstract:** Ed Gomes was an active part of Bridgeport life starting in his role as union representative for the United Steelworkers of America. He would go on to serve on the Bridgeport City Council from 1983-1989 and then again from 1999-2005, followed by representing District 23 in the Connecticut State Senate from 2005-2013 and from 2015-2019. This collection's contents primarily contain material that was kept by Senator Gomes, but not specifically generated by him. As such, there are very few manuscript documents featuring his handwriting. However, the material collected demonstrates not only the arc of his career as a politician and public servant, but also his interests and concerns in those roles and as a private individual.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Bridgeport History Center

**Biographical History:**

Ed (Edwin) Gomes was born on February 25, 1936 and was one of 18 children. His family moved to Bridgeport in 1944, where he attended public school. As a young adult he was a part of the United States Army and following an honorable discharge, became an employee at Carpenter Steel. A unionized workplace, Gomes went on to become a union representative and was actively involved in the United Steelworkers of America until his retirement in 1998.

According to his obituary, Senator Gomes' time in the Army shaped his world view and his drive for social justice. He was stationed in Virginia for a portion of his service, where he was exposed to segregation and racism. Gomes was later stationed in Silver Spring, Maryland, which allowed him to participate in the March on Washington in August 1963. Likewise, his obituary notes that Ed Gomes credited his time in the Army with teaching him negotiation skills, which would become valuable in the United Steelworkers of America union and in local and state politics.

Ed Gomes' first political office in the city of Bridgeport was as a member of the City Council, beginning in 1983 and continuing until 1989. The 1980s were an especially rough time in Bridgeport, and so fighting for jobs and strong neighborhoods were key parts of his work at the time. Between 1990 and 1999, he remained committed and engaged with Bridgeport and was involved in the debate over the city's redistricting and the fight of the Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Nation for federal recognition. He served on the city council again from 1999 to 2005.

Gomes made the jump to state politics in 2005, when he was elected state Senator for the 23rd

district and again in 2015 until 2019. He had a number of assignments during that time. The include appropriation committees for general law, housing, the judiciary, labor and public employees, and veterans' affairs. He was vice chair for aging, labor and public employees, and veteran's affairs. He was also co-chair for public safety and security.

The assignments represent a keen interest in looking out for working class people, veterans, and ensuring greater safety for the State of Connecticut. This is likewise reflected in the additional causes Gomes supported during his time in the senate, including abolition of the death penalty, educational reform, and assistance for those with criminal records to find gainful employment and reduce repeat incarceration.

Gomes was seriously injured in a car crash on December 13, 2020. He passed on December 22, 2020 due to those injuries.

His obituary notes that he was a proud member of the Ashanti Men's Organization and a lifetime member of the NAACP, with an extremely large surviving family.

### **Bibliography**

<https://justfacts.votesmart.org/candidate/biography/30548/edwin-gomes>

<https://www.bakerfuneralservices.com/obituary/edwin-gomes>

<https://www.wiltonbulletin.com/news/article/Former-state-Sen-Edwin-Gomes-dies-nine-days-15821417.php>

### **Scope and Content note:**

This collection's contents primarily contain material that was kept by Senator Gomes, but not specifically generated by him. As such, there are very few manuscript documents featuring his handwriting, save for occasional meeting notes and handwritten speeches in the early material in series I. However, the material collected demonstrates not only the arc of his career as a politician and public servant, but also his interests and concerns in those roles and as a private individual.

This is particularly apparent in series I, the United Steelworkers of America which has the most handwritten content, and Series IV which shows his areas of legislative interest during his time in the state senate.

The extensive number of awards, plaques, certificates, and citations likewise underscore his interests and the respect gained from the communities he worked for in his career.

### **Arrangement Note:**

When the material arrived, there was no specific order to files or groupings. Folder titles have been retained whenever possible. The collection is arranged into six series, placed in rough chronological order to document Senator Gomes's career from union work for the United Steel Workers of America to senator in the Connecticut senate.

Series I, the United Steelworkers of America, focuses on his time as a union representative while working at Carpenter Steel in Bridgeport. There is some crossover in this material between his time as a union rep and as a part of the Bridgeport City Council.

Series II represents Gomes's time on the Bridgeport City Council itself. He served in two nonconsecutive time periods, from 1983-1989 and from 1999 to 2005. The bulk of the City Council material comes from this second period, although of note is the 1983 report regarding the City of Bridgeport police behavior.

The third series represents other Bridgeport political activities, specifically the downtime between Gomes's service on the City Council. It includes information regarding the redistricting of Bridgeport in the mid-1990s and the work of the Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Nation for federal recognition in the same time period.

Series IV, the Connecticut State Senate, represents the bulk of the material. It has been broken down into ten subseries owing to the material's complexity. The first subseries contains campaign material, and the second contains general legislative activity including copies of bills that Gomes wished to co-sponsor.

Subseries 3 and 5-9 represent committees that Ed Gomes served on during his time in the Connecticut State Senate: aging, housing, the judiciary, labor and public employees, public safety and security, and veterans affairs. These materials primarily contain copies of bills, testimonials, and meeting agendas, along with occasional press releases. Subseries 4, education, represents a topical interest, although Gomes never served on the education committee. Subseries 10, subject files, represent other activities within the state senate, mostly meeting with community organizations and keeping information on file from various groups. Also included are employee applications and reviews, which are restricted access.

Series V, other material, contains undated or otherwise miscellaneous material that fit none of the other groupings in the collection. Series VI contains awards, plaques, and other honors given to Gomes over the year.

**Administrative information:**

**Provenance:** 2021.26, Gift of Sen. Moore.

**Preferred Citation:**

Papers of Senator Ed Gomes (BHC-MSS 0153), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

**Separated material**

*The Bridgeport Light* all of vol 1 (Oct 1988-1989), half of vol 2, (Oct 1989-April 1990 no. 25)

**Names and Subject Tracings**

*Personal names*

Gomes, Edwin

*Corporate names*

City of Bridgeport

Connecticut. General Assembly. Senate

United Steelworkers of America

*Subject tracings*

African Americans--Politics and government

Apportionment (Election law)  
Concealed carry of firearms--Law and legislation  
Discrimination in housing  
Educational equalization  
Housing  
Housing policy  
Labor laws and legislation  
Labor unions  
Political campaigns  
Wearable video devices

#### Series I – United Steel Workers of American

##### Box 1

1. United Steel Workers of America Notes, memos, and speeches, 1979-1983
2. How to organize and implement a successful nonpartisan voter participation campaign, 1980
3. United Steel Workers of America manual for voting, 1991
4. United Steel Workers of America, 1992
5. United Steel Workers of America manuals, 1995

#### Series II – Bridgeport City Council

6. Management review of the Bridgeport Police Department, 1983
7. City council correspondence, 1987-2002
8. Campaign literature, 2002
9. Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, information, meeting agendas, 2003-2004

##### Box 2

1. State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights Opportunities Rosario v. Bridgeport, 2003
2. Eliminating the achievement gap, 2005
3. Connecticut coalition for Justice in Education Funding, 2005
4. Strategies for investment in housing and neighborhood revitalization, 2005
5. City of Bridgeport disparity study executive summary, 2005

#### Series III – Other Bridgeport political activities

6. Connecticut Voter's Handbook, 1990
7. North End Political Action Committee, 1990
8. Golden Hill Paugussett Tribe, 1993
9. Redistricting in Bridgeport, 1993-1994
10. Redistricting in Bridgeport, 1993-1994
11. 100 Black Men of America, 1994-1996

##### Box 3

1. Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, 1999

#### Series IV

##### Subseries 1 – Campaigns

2. Campaign literature, 2005
3. Campaign expenses, 2005-2006
4. Campaign literature, 2012
5. Campaign literature, 2016

##### Subseries 2 – General legislative activity

6. List of bills to co-sponsor, 2010
7. Midterm budget adjustment, 2013
8. General assembly bills, 2017

##### Subseries 3 – Aging

9. Aging [vice chair], 2018

##### Subseries 4 - Education

10. Teacher certification program implementation, 2008
11. Building a Bridge: a resource manual for high school students, 2009
12. S.B. 400, No representation without population act, 2010
13. SB 1096, An act concerning charter schools, 2015
14. State education resource center, 2015
15. Proposed S.B. 7270: an act concerning the education cost-sharing grant formula for FY 2018-19, 2017

#### Box 4

##### Subseries 5 - Housing

1. Mixing populations in state elderly/disabled housing projects, 2004
2. OLR research reports and affordable housing land use appeals procedure, 2004-2005
3. P.T. Barnum resident association, 2009
4. Housing Committee agendas, meeting notes, correspondence, 2009-2012
5. Housing committee 2010 session, JF/JFS reports, 2010
6. HB 6051 – AAC, an urban homesteading pilot program, 2011
7. Housing committee, 2012 legislative session
8. S.B. 94, 2012
9. H.B.s 94, 190, 5224, 5225, drafts and comments, 2012
10. Housing committee screening meeting, 2012
11. Heroes village, 2012
12. IOREBTA disbursements, 2012
13. Housing remarks and press releases, 2012
14. Marina Village demolition waiver, c. 2018

##### Subseries 6 – Judiciary committee

15. Judiciary committee agendas, correspondence, 2010-20212

16. Judiciary committee public hearings and testimonials, 2017

Subseries 7 – Labor and Public Employees

17. Labor relates bills, 2012
18. Labor and Public Employees committee agendas, 2012
19. Labor committee public hearings, 2012

Box 5

1. Ban the box/fair chance hiring, 2015
2. Second injury fund advisory board, 2015-2017
3. Working drafts – 1864, pay equity and fairness, 2018

Subseries 8 - Public safety and security

4. SB 770 file no. 436, an act creating a pilot program for police body cameras, 2015
5. Summary profile, police officer standard and training council, 2015
6. HB 5408, AAC the presentation of a concealed carry permit, 2016
7. Public safety and security testimonials, 2017
8. Public safety and security, undated

Subseries 9 – Veterans affairs

9. Veterans affairs, 2010
10. Acts affecting veterans and the military, 2015

Subseries 10 – Subject files

11. Center for Family Justice info packet, 2015
12. Child First Inc., 2015
13. Citizens Election Program, 2009
14. Congratulatory letters, 2005-2006
15. Connecticut Hospital Association, 2015
16. Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty, 2007
17. Correspondence, meetings, and other materials, 2009-2012
18. Employment applications and reviews – RESTRICTED ACCESS, 2010
19. John Esteves pardon team, 2015
20. Housatonic Community College president Brodie, 2018
21. Nameplates, undated

Box 6

1. Other activities, 2009-2018
2. Other senate material, 1988, 1997
3. Ralphola Taylor Community Center, 2008-2009
4. Sterling House Community Center, 2008
5. Upper Reservoir Avenue Corridor revitalization initiative bonds, 2006

Series V – Other material

6. American with Disabilities Act questions and answers, undated

7. Information regarding lotteries, undated
8. M.O.V.E. Yacht Club,, 1970-1989
9. Recommendations for establishing local and statewide Latino voting rights committees, 1990s

Series VI – Programs, awards, citations, and events

10. Programs, awards, and events, 1999-2009
11. Programs, awards, and events, 2010-2011
12. Programs, awards, and events, 2012-2017

Box 7

1. Awards and certificates, 1982-2018
2. Board of Alderman certificates, City of Bridgeport citations, 1984-2018
3. State of Connecticut citations, 1986-2009
4. Harbor Steel photograph, undated

Box 8

1. Greater Bridgeport Black Democratic Club award of appreciation, 1986
2. Men's Conference of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, 2010
3. Merille Milstein Award for Organizing and Activism, 2012
4. Keep the Promise Coalition legislative leadership award, 2012
5. Common Cause in Connecticut Voting Hero, 2013
6. We Care Community Center Inc., 2017

Box 9

1. Cape Verdean Social Club president, 1971
2. Cape Verdean Women's Social Club Inc. of Bridgeport, 1989
3. American Legion Post 140 Master of Ceremonies, 1989
4. Groove Phi groove S.F.I., 1992
5. Benny Thornton Civil Rights Achievement Award, 2000
6. Coalition of Black Trade Unions Connecticut Chapter, 2002
7. Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation, 2003
8. Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, Raphola Taylor Community Center, 2006
9. Cape Verdean Women's Social Club, 2006
10. Connecticut ACORN grassroots legislator of the year, 2007
11. Gala Cape Verdean American Reunion, 2008
12. Calvary Seventh Day Adventist Church appreciation award, 2008
13. Kitchen of Hope Feeding Ministry Award, 2008
14. NECC Public Service Award, 2013
15. August Lewis Troup Preservation Award, Greater New Haven Labor History Association 2013
16. NAACP Margaret Morton Government Award, 2016
17. NAACP 100 Most Influential Blacks in Connecticut, 2018
18. Bridgeport Young Adult Police Commissioners Black History Celebration Lifetime Achievement Award, 2018

Box 10

AARP retirement savings champion, 2016  
AAH Ebenezer D. Bassett award, 2013  
Save our Babies, 2004  
Family Reentry Elizabeth Bush Award, 2017  
New England Healthcare Employee Union 1199 Warrior award, 2018  
Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, 2016  
Unidentified glass vase, please note, highly fragile, undated

Box 11

Steel Warrior medal presented by Connecticut AFL-CIO convention, 2018

**Accrual, March 2024**

Certificate, State of Connecticut General Assembly, In Memorium. Acknowledgement of Gomes' death and expression of sympathy. Introduced by the Connecticut Legislative Black and Puerto Rican Caucus, 10/23/2021

Program: Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame, Class of 2022 Induction Ceremony, January 19, 2023

Certificate: Special Recognition in the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame from Congressman Jim Himes' office

Plaque: The Office of the Governor of Connecticut, recognition for induction into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame, January 19, 2023

Certificate: Connecticut State conference of NAACP Branches, Fallen Leaders Recognition, honoring the memory of Edwin A. Gomes, October 23, 2021