

President's Message: Pro Public Education.... A Yes Vote for Patrick and a No Vote on Question 3

(A good portion of this article is taken directly from a power point presentation put together by the MYA Communications Dept.)

November 2, 2010 is a very important date. The results of this election will make a big difference for public school teachers and students in Massachusetts. Get out to vote and tell ten of your friends who care about the public schools to do the same. We must defeat question 3 and re-elect Deval Patrick. That's the bottom line. Read on for the full story:

QUESTION 3. If QUESTION 3 passes our state sales taxes would be cut to 3%.

The story of Question 3 begins with Carla Howell, co-founder of the Center for Small Government. She is no friend of public education. When she ran for governor on the Libertarian Party ticket in 2002, she said that one great way to shrink the size of the state budget would be to cut per pupil spending by 43%. That was as outrageous an idea then and as it is today.

Mrs. Howell's target is state government and her strategy is to shrink state revenue. No less than our jobs, our salaries, our benefits, and our classrooms are at stake.

In 2002 and again in 2008, Carla and company placed a referendum on the ballot that would have eliminated the personal income tax. Howell's organization focused their campaign on saving family's money without ever even allowing that the elimination of income tax would have resulted in a major cut in government services. Her campaign was that this would save the average family \$3,700. She never did bother to explain what services she was willing to cut if the ballot question had passed.

Taxes provide services. Had Carla been successful, state revenue would have been cut by \$12 billion. In 2002, 45% voted in favor of Carla's referendum. This encouraged her to try again in 2008. In 2008, the same referendum lost by a 70% to 30% margin.

The MTA and other groups ran an aggressive and successful campaign against Howell and the referenda. Her new referendum, Question 3, is designed to cut the sales tax from 6.25% to 3%. Even Charlie Baker, the Republican candidate for governor (we'll discuss him soon) is against this Draconian tax cutting measure.

If successful, Question 3 will shrink state revenues by \$2.5 billion. Carla will have succeeded in "shrinking government." Where will the \$2.5 billion in cuts be made?

A huge amount, 42%, goes to health care. This is up 6% in the past 3 years and no one seems to have an answer to this growing problem. The legislature might feel pressured to take away our bargaining rights over health care in this scenario. In fact, Charlie Baker is already on record as being in favor of stripping municipal union's ability to bargain over health insurance.

Twenty percent of state revenue, or \$6 Billion, goes to Public K-12 and higher education. All other government services- police, fire, human services, bridges and highways- pale by comparison. So where will the cuts be made? In effect Carla Howell is putting public education on the chopping block. Question 3 must be defeated!!!!!!!

The Governor's Race ~ Patrick vs. Baker

Where does Deval Patrick stand on issues that educators care about? Despite a difficult economy, Patrick has helped maintain education funding. Yes, the MTA is lobbying for MORE money for education during these difficult times but level funding is far more than the cuts other services had to endure. Patrick has been a key figure in Washington with his lobbying effort on behalf of education and education jobs.

Deval Patrick was in favor of Federal Stimulus Funds that saved 8,500 educator jobs and the Education Jobs Fund that brought in \$204 million. Deval Patrick was a strong supporter of closing corporate loopholes to raise revenues.

- Patrick supports educators. He believes our health insurance and pensions should be protected.
- Charlie Baker believes superintendents should have greater power. He believes in merit pay and more charter schools. He believes health insurance should be removed from collective bargaining.

- Charlie Baker is in favor of cutting public employee pensions. Baker wants our pensions to be based on the average salary that a teacher has made over his/her career, as opposed to the rules that we've all been working under for OUR ENTIRE CAREERS, the average of our highest three years. I started teaching in Braintree in 1976 at \$8,200 a year and I'm now at approximately \$80,000. It's taken me 35 years to get to this figure. You do the math. Charlie Baker's plan is simply wrong.
- Charlie Baker and Tim Cahill both said they would have voted against the Educator Jobs Bill that was approved by Congress in early August. This bill brought and continues to bring \$200 million to the state to save educators' jobs.
- Deval Patrick supports educators. He meets with the MTA and teachers. His appointments to the Board of Education, the Division of Labor Relations, the Judiciary, and the State Department of Labor are good and friendly to WORKERS.
- Patrick praises teachers for Massachusetts ranking first in the country. He often says that poverty, not teachers, is the problem in many communities.
- Patrick has not jumped on the bandwagon to make big cuts in our benefits.

We finally have access to the governor after 16 years of being closed out, most recently by Mitt Romney and former Board of Education Chair, Jim Peyser. Jim Peyser was one of the principals of the Pioneer Institute - the conservative think tank co-founded by Charlie Baker.

Charlie Baker, Jim Peyser, and the Pioneer Institute have continually painted public employee unions as the problem, not the solution. Their big focus is privatizing public education and creating more charter schools. The clear choice for the continued success of public education, for teachers, students, parents and the MTA is Deval Patrick for governor.

The fight in politics is constant and can be tiring and tiresome. We see today that the Carla Howells of the world are energized and angry. We need reasonable solutions, not fear. We need reasonable people to organize, rally together, and go to the polls and vote.

The fear mongering side is energized. To keep them at bay we have to talk to our friends, our neighbors and family members to do the same and encourage each other to vote.

Advocate for yourself. Advocate for your students. Advocate for your jobs and your working conditions. If you take the approximately 650 BEA members and add them to the rest of the MTA family we are now approximately 100,000 strong. Imagine the difference we, the MTA, the largest union in the state working together, can make in this election.

Politics isn't a bad thing. It's about fighting for what you believe in. Please get involved and make a difference.

Larry S Kramer

Many of you have asked about the BEA survivor plan. This is a voluntary program that costs \$5 to join. You do not have to pay \$5 every year. In the event a BEA member dies (not a retired former member) their designated beneficiary will receive \$1,000. Please send a check made out to the BEA or cash to Lisa Pacino at Hollis, with a quick note identifying yourself, if you are not a member of the survivor plan and you wish to join.

WORK ORDERS:

If you have a concern about your physical workspace, please fill out a work order as soon as possible. This is done by emailing your concern to the head custodian of your building. Remember to "cc" it to me, the principal of your building and Peter Kress. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions/concerns about this process.

Larry Kramer

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