

In the Arena

I am excited and energized with the prospect of serving you and our towns and communities as state representative. I pledge to bring the same commitment, dedication, and hard work to my new role as I did during the campaign. Just as I made myself accessible to you at your doorsteps, so too do I want to be available in the district and the State House, to continue to listen to your ideas, concerns, and perspectives. You, the people of Lincoln, Sudbury, and Wayland expect and deserve that, and I'll be a better state representative for it.

This is an exciting time in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Our state government is shifting from celebration to implementation of its bold new health care initiative, which has received nationwide attention and acclaim. Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Salvatore DiMasi, who championed the May 2006 law, will lead the way in ensuring that the experiment is funded properly and that the inevitable kinks get worked out appropriately. Given the experience I have in helping companies in Massachusetts design and finance health care plans for their employees, I hope to offer thoughts and guidance to this important implementation phase.

It's also an exciting time, full of opportunity, because we have an engaged and dynamic new governor in Deval Patrick. Like many others around the state, I am hopeful that the inspirational speeches we heard from candidate Patrick can lead to positive change in the Commonwealth through Governor Patrick. He will need our help, and I plan to do my part. I hope that all of us give him a chance to succeed, and offer our own ideas, energies, and intellect to his priorities. He worked hard during the campaign, and he deserves to witness the better angels of our nature as he forges ahead.

Throughout the year, I look forward to hearing directly from many of you about your perspectives on the direction of the state. Undoubtedly, given the Governor's emphasis on change, we will see and hear new ideas, new initiatives, and new experiments in our state government. I encourage you to contact me along the way; your feedback and viewpoints are most welcome, and I look forward to being your voice in the legislature and into the Governor's office.

I am available to meet with interested constituents monthly during scheduled office hours, or by appointment. Last month, I was thrilled to get several visitors during office hours, and this month I hope to see many others. I'll be available as follows:

Lincoln Tuesday January 16 at 4:00 - 5:00 in the Lincoln Library

Sudbury Tuesday January 16 at 5:30 - 6:30 in the Goodnow Library

Wayland Tuesday January 16 at 7:00 - 8:00 in the Wayland Library

I would also like to engage the citizens of our towns in civic discussions, perhaps every other month, in forums to discuss issues of interest to you and that are in the news. For example, "Creating Energy Efficient Cities and Towns"

could be one such forum, in which distinguished guests from government, academia, or the private sector and a local Conservation Committee member make presentations. Other topics could include state aid, education, the environment, and creating new jobs in Massachusetts. Please let me know if you have an interest in these topics and if so, whether you have ideas on "distinguished guests."

I have hired an assistant, Jenny Nathans, who will be responsible for researching bills, helping me file legislation, and receiving incoming constituent inquiries. Jenny has a background in political science, social work, and psychology. I hope you find her as delightful to work with as I do. Until we have a more permanent office in the State House, Jenny and I can be reached at 617-722-2425 and Rep.Thomasconroy@hou.state.ma.us.

I'll also be maintaining my website from the campaign, www.tomconroy.org, and posting occasional updates, such as office hours, on that site.

I'm interested in getting help from all of your expertise in the district. Many of you have extensive knowledge and experience in a broad range of public policy fields. I want to tap into that expertise, not only because it can help me be a better advocate for you, but also to provide tangible opportunities for citizens to shape public policy. The more you are engaged and invested, the better chance we have in developing the right laws for the Commonwealth.

I would like help from high school and college aged constituents who are interested in public policy and political science. I'll be able to have summer interns helping out in the office on a variety of tasks. More details to follow. Please send me an email if you are interested.

I would like to continue to utilize the print press to reach out to you and receive your feedback. The Lincoln Journal, The Sudbury Town Crier, and The Wayland Town Crier have all kindly indicated a willingness to publish a periodic column from me. I'm grateful to them, and would like your input on a draft format as follows:

1. Description of a major issue being considered on Beacon Hill
2. What I've done in and around the issue
3. What each of you can do to have a voice in shaping public policy on the issue
4. Next steps in the legislative process

Finally, I would like to share a passage from a US Presidential speech from nearly 100 years ago, which seems particularly relevant as we look forward in 2007:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no

effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt

Tom Conroy is the newly elected state representative for Lincoln, Sudbury, and Wayland.