

Wayland Town Crier

Conroy: A better future for our towns

By Tom Conroy/ Guest Columnist

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My supporters say that I am the best choice to be the state representative from Lincoln, Sudbury and Wayland because I offer the best hope for a better future, and can effectively address the significant challenges we are facing as towns. These challenges include insufficient state aid, rising property taxes, and a contentious atmosphere that is tearing at the core of our communities. My experience, skills and ideas indicate that I am the best choice for a better future for our towns.

I know how to increase state revenues without raising taxes. I worked closely with several state agencies in Massachusetts, helping generate over \$500 million in non-tax revenues for the commonwealth by rigorously using information technology and bringing best practices to state agencies. I want to apply these skills, techniques and practices to our state government again, to ensure that we're maximizing our non-tax revenues.

I can work effectively with local officials, the legislative leadership on Beacon Hill, and the next governor to get positive results for our towns. I have listened to the voters at their doors while "running" for office and have met with selectmen, School Committee members and other community leaders. Previously I worked with senior officials of the Massachusetts state government; I know how it works, and I'm aware of its strengths and its weaknesses. I have also served in the federal government, written legislation, and understand how states rely on federal funding to meet local priorities and goals.

As a Democrat, I'll be able to work as part of the majority, most likely with a Democratic governor. These experiences will help me advocate effectively on your behalf, to ensure that state programs reflect our local priorities, and that our towns get more state aid.

I have practical ideas for improving our state's economy, creating new jobs and expanding our statewide commercial tax base through growth. The ideas stem from my training in economics and business administration, my management consulting experience, and my work in a Fortune 500 company. They include providing seed capital, strategic advice and cross-training to experts in key industries in Massachusetts, such as retail, high technology, health care and financial services. This will keep our best and brightest in state, to enhance the competitive advantages we already enjoy in core industries, and to spawn new business peripheral to the core, such as back-office financial transaction processing.

We can also use public/private partnerships to minimize risks and foster growth in emerging industries in our state, such as biotechnology and renewable energy development and distribution. Moreover, my education and experience afford the residents of Lincoln, Sudbury and Wayland an opportunity to add real balance to the state Legislature. We need more legislators who have practical, real world business experience, and are not merely career politicians.

Beyond these practical matters of effectiveness, many supporters see my candidacy as the best choice for safety, protecting the fundamental rights of our citizens, and integrity. I believe in safety restrictions on guns and increased oversight of the licensing and sale of firearms. We need to stop the flow of illegal firearms into our state. Too many children in this country are killed by unsafe and unregistered guns. Let's do all we can to prevent a tragedy with guns from occurring in our schools.

I believe that marriage equality is protected by the constitution of the commonwealth, and that we shouldn't amend our constitution to discriminate against minorities. In the past two years, we have not witnessed the erosion of the traditions of marriage here in Massachusetts, as some feared. In fact, we have allowed more people to express marital commitments and uphold the values of marriage than ever before.

I have not sought the endorsement of any special interest group, nor have I accepted any special interest money. Instead, by running door-to-door to over 4,000 homes during this election, I have been able to retain my independent, objective and honest perspective in service to you, the residents of Lincoln, Sudbury and Wayland.

Finally, many supporters sense that I can be a positive voice for a better future for our towns because I'm so invested as a parent, volunteer and leader in the future of our communities.

As a resident of Wayland who lives directly across the street from Wayland High School, I am reminded daily of the need to restore the school to its original, award-winning stature at the lowest possible cost.

I have four daughters - 10-year-old triplets and a kindergartner, all of whom attend Happy Hollow Elementary school. Like many of you, I want them to get a great education in our public schools, but know that our schools are at risk because of a paucity of state funding.

My mother-in-law lives just down the road from us, so I see firsthand how seniors on fixed incomes are finding it difficult to make ends meet because of rising property taxes. She's been a great help to the family while my spouse Sarah and I have been working full-time at our jobs, and we don't want her to leave town because of the high cost of living.

I've also been volunteering outside of work to enhance the sense of community and comity in our towns. As a soccer coach, I delight, like many of you, in seeing passels of kids run and play and make friends while enjoying friendly competition.

At the church I attend in Lincoln, I help provide grounding in morals and ethics for children. I also serve on the governing body of the church, with an eye toward growing its very supportive, welcoming and service-oriented community.

This election is not about the past, it's about the future. We have an opportunity to elect a candidate with a strong background, broad vision and a long-term commitment to the future of our towns.

Millions of Americans across the country will be voting next Tuesday, and most of them want change, and new leadership. A vote for me represents a vote for change and a better future for our communities. As your state representative, I will be your advocate and your champion in the Legislature.

I have been honored to be your candidate. I would love to be your state representative. Please cast your vote for me on Nov. 7.

Tom Conroy is running as a Democrat for state representative in the 13th Middlesex District, which includes Lincoln, Sudbury and Wayland.