



Q&A with state rep candidates Geoff Diehl and Allen McCarthy

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The candidates for state representative in the 7th Plymouth District, Republican Geoff Diehl of Whitman and Democrat Allen McCarthy of East Bridgewater, answer our questions about the issues in the campaign. The district comprises Abington, East Bridgewater and Whitman.

<p>Name: Geoff Diehl Age: 41 Address: 10 Village Way, Whitman Education: Lehigh University double-major: B.A. government, B.A. urban studies Experience: Account executive, Poyant Signs; co-owner, Boss Academy of Performing Arts; member, Whitman Finance Committee; member, South Shore & Metro South chambers of commerce; Eagle Scout; restored Whitman's Historic Toll House Sign, 2007 Family: Wife, KathyJo; daughters Kaylee, 9, Emily, 4</p>	<p>Allen J. McCarthy Age: 40 Address: 10 Rolling Hills Drive, East Bridgewater Education: East Bridgewater High School; Boston College, B.A.; Boston College Law School, J.D. Experience: Former assistant district attorney in Middlesex County; former litigation attorney in Boston; former counsel to the School Transportation Association of Massachusetts; maintains current law practice; first elected to House in 2006 Family: Wife, Diane; children, Abigail, 9, Stephanie, 7, Coleman, 2</p>
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How are you going to help East Bridgewater follow through with plans for a new high school?

DIEHL: I intend to meet with the executive director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority and the East Bridgewater School Building Committee regularly to facilitate communication, plus remain engaged beyond the new construction to insure that the complex reimbursement process to the town meets with no obstacles. Additionally, I will work with leaders in the House and Senate to ensure that (any needed) legislation (on land transfer or zoning issues) be passed quickly to avoid any unnecessary delays.

MCCARTHY: Ultimately, the decision will be up to the citizens of East Bridgewater. As I have done in the past, I will continue to advocate for East Bridgewater at the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to ensure that the town is in the best possible position with that agency and I will work to maintain open and productive lines of communication between town officials and the MSBA.

How have you helped constituents?

MCCARTHY: Clearly, these have been very difficult times for many people and one of my main responsibilities as a state representative is to assist those in need. I have assisted deal with constituents on two levels: helping them individually deal with state agencies for unemployment benefits, and on a broader level, fighting for initiatives to create more jobs in the district.

DIEHL: Throughout the years that I have worked in the sign industry, I've met hundreds of business owners, and one of my goals is to help connect people from my district, who have certain skills or interests, with companies that may be looking to hire. I (also) (will) fight to reduce the state sales tax in order to create a better business climate so that companies can grow and provide our state with much-needed jobs.

What has been your most valued accomplishment as a business owner?

DIEHL: Opening a small business, a performing arts studio which my wife runs, has been a great shared achievement for our family because we have had only positive growth over the nine years since we started it and we've meet so many great kids and parents.

What has been your most valued accomplishment as a state representative?

MCCARTHY: It is difficult to pinpoint one specific accomplishment as I am very proud of the work I do on behalf of the district. However, one of the most important accomplishments has been reforming how things are done in state government by passing significant reforms in the areas of transportation, ethics, and pensions.

What's the first issue you're going to tackle if elected?

MCCARTHY: Creating jobs has to be first and foremost among many important issues. We need to promote economic growth by protecting tax credits for businesses, helping small businesses with out-of-control health care costs, and increasing our efforts to invite and keep businesses here in Massachusetts.

DIEHL: The first bill that I will file once in office is to make local aid a fully-funded mandate which the state must address first in the budget process, and not last. My experience on the Whitman Finance Committee gives me a direct view of how our towns are impacted when they can't get final budget figures until the very last minute of each fiscal year.

What's your plan for public safety officials? There have been cuts and wage freezes in both Abington and Whitman – will you make an effort to restore their aid or to replace positions that have been eliminated?

DIEHL: Through my plan to make local aid a fully-funded mandate, the first-responders of all our towns, plus teachers and town employees, will not have to agonize over whether there will need to be cuts to staff or hours in each department. (That) will lead to more productive town meetings and allow our town officials to plan more effectively for the future.

MCCARTHY: Local aid has always been, and will continue to be, a priority for me. During this year's budget debate, I voted in favor of an unsuccessful amendment to fully fund local aid and I will continue to make every effort to provide the funding that our towns need for public safety, education and core municipal services.