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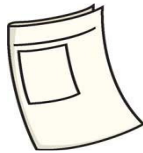
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WHCA hosts state rep. TV debate

Written by Meaghan Glassett

Wednesday, 13 October 2010 14:34

Tensions are growing as incumbent Democrat Allen McCarthy and Republican Geoff Diehl vie for the office of state representative of the 7th Plymouth District.

McCarthy and Diehl participated in a debate hosted by the Whitman-Hanson Cable Access station with Kevin Tocci as moderator and panelists Express General Manager Justin Graeber and Suburban Editor of The Enterprise newspaper John Zaremba.

McCarthy has served as the state representative for Abington, Whitman and East Bridgewater for four years. Prior to becoming the state representative he was an assistant district attorney and has prosecuted cases in superior court.

“I am proud of my record fighting for the district and my constituents,” McCarthy said.

McCarthy and his family are residents of East Bridgewater.

Diehl and his family are residents are Whitman. He and his wife own a small business in Hanson known as Boss Academy of Performing Arts. Diehl works for a sign company and is a member of the Whitman Finance Committee.

Diehl believes lowering taxes will create a better business environment and get people back to work.

McCarthy said creating jobs in the Commonwealth will create jobs within the district. He is a supporter of the film tax credit and also the bio industry. He said he believes the film tax credit will create more jobs.

McCarthy said he would like to encourage small businesses and maintain them. To do so he said the cost of health care, which has been challenging for employers, needs to be looked at. He suggested a buying pool.

Diehl said he is not a proponent of helping one industry. He said he hopes the film tax credit will bring jobs to the area and he hopes it is done right.

“I don’t think the government should be in the industry of picking who should be winners or losers,” Diehl said.

McCarthy said that the state is not about cherry picking industries.

If elected to office, the candidates were asked what three initiatives they would undertake.

Diehl, who supports Question 3 to reduce the state sales tax to three percent, said the first piece of legislation he would introduce would be to make local aid funded first in the budget so the town and the firefighters, police and teachers don’t have to agonize over it every year. He said he would also work toward lowering the sales tax. His third initiative would be to ensure that there is more transparency up on Beacon Hill.

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McCarthy said the state can't base the budget on expected revenues.

"[You can] try to do your best and balance your budget on the numbers you have and you fight as hard as you can for your towns," he said.

Diehl said he would like to see local aid fully funded before the state focuses on any of its "pet projects."

McCarthy said three out of the four years he has served as state representative, there was a local aid resolution and the fourth year there was a joint local aid statement.

McCarthy said the first initiative he took in office was making sure the towns were fully reimbursed for the costs of special elections. He also filed an amendment that would not allow towns to raise additional taxes above Proposition 2 1/2. Another amendment McCarthy filed was to have sexually dangerous persons go before a jury, in some cases after they served a complete sentence.

McCarthy said that local aid is number one on his list of initiatives, followed by job creation.

The candidates both stated that they felt immigration was an issue that has to be solved at the federal level.

McCarthy said, at the state level, the legislature has taken a look at six outside sections of the budget and indicated that agencies in Massachusetts had to verify legal residency before receiving benefits.

Diehl said that there may be initiatives with the programs in place, but asked where then is the success.

McCarthy said the law came into effect in July.

Both McCarthy and Diehl believe the position of state representative is a full-time job.

McCarthy said being a state representative isn't just the hours they log when in session. He said that when he's not in session he is studying 6,000 to 8,000 bills and out in the community talking to his constituents.

"I pride myself in the work I do," he said.

Diehl said one of his goals if elected is to make his campaign headquarters his district office where he would be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday- Friday unless in session.

The candidates also participated in a debate hosted by WXBR AM 1460 and Whitman-Hanson Cable Access on Tuesday morning. Moderating the debate was Bill Carpenter. Panelists for the debate were WXBR news director Kevin Tocci, Enterprise Suburban Editor John Zarema and Whitman Express Editor Meaghan Glassett.

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