Election 2008

VOTERS' GUIDE

This public service effort by the League of Women Voters of Arlington is designed to provide voters with information to help them make informed decisions about the candidates in this primary election for the 23rd Middlesex District State Representative Seat, to replace Jim Marzilli. The district is precincts 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18 and 19 in Arlington and West Medford precinct 2 of ward 3, and precincts 1 and 2 of ward 6.

In compiling the information for this Voters Guide, the League sent a questionnaire to all candidates whose names will appear on Primary Ballots for the February 5, 2008 vote. This date is also the Presidential Primary in MA. The candidates' names were provided by The Secretary of State's office. By law, candidates' names are listed in alphabetical order on the primary ballot. We also included one candidate whose name will not be on the primary ballot because he does not belong to a political party.

The League of Women Voters of Arlington formulated the wording of all questions asked. If replies exceeded the word limits, answers were edited by the League to fit the required limit. To be included, the answers to all questions had to begin with either a YES or NO. All candidates were informed of this process in the mailing. Replies are also formatted to fit within the space constraints of this document. The candidate responses were not edited for grammar or spelling.

CANDIDATES NIGHT
Thursday, January 24, 2008
Town Hall, Arlington
doors open at 7:30p.m.,
debate starts promptly at 8 p.m.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has officially recognized four political parties Democratic, Green-Rainbow Party, Republican and Working Families. These parties will have official ballots for the Primary Election on Tuesday, February 5, 2008. If you are enrolled in a political party, you will receive the ballot for your party. If you did not designate a political party (un-enrolled) when you registered to vote, you may request a primary ballot for any of the official parties. For the purpose of voting, you will belong to that party and return to your un-enrolled status after voting. Choosing a party ballot does not affect your "un-enrolled" status.

There are 3 candidates for the Democratic ballot; no candidate for the Green-Rainbow Party, though voters may write one in; one candidate for the Republican ballot; and no candidate for the Working Families ballot, though voters may write one in. There is one un-enrolled (meaning the entrant does not belong to any political party) candidate, Robert Valeri , 7 Wheaton Road, Arlington, MA 02476 whose name will appear on the Special Election ballot on Tuesday, March 4, 2008 along with the candidates who won the nomination in their political parties.

DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY BALLOT

- Sean Garballey, 45 Maynard St., Arlington, MA
- Andrew E O'Brien, 109 Hillside Ave., Arlington, MA
- Jeffrey D Thielman, 37 Coolidge Road, Arlington, MA

REPUBLICAN PRIMARY BALLOT

- John L Worden III , 27 Jason St., Arlington, MA

GREEN-RAINBOW PARTY PRIMARY BALLOT

no candidate

WORKING FAMILIES PRIMARY BALLOT

no candidate

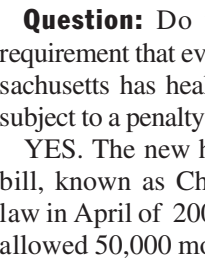
DEMOCRATIC STATE REPRESENTATIVE PRIMARY BALLOT

(Candidates are limited to 100 words for their answer to each question.)

Vote for NOT MORE THAN ONE

Sean Garballey

45 Maynard Street
Arlington, MA



Occupation: Student

Qualifications: I have served on the Arlington School Committee for three years. I have been a Town Meeting member for five years, and helped create the Mystic Shores Team, a group of citizens who work on flooding issues impacting the quality of life for West Medford and Arlington residents.

Question: Do you support raising new state revenues? (100 words)

YES. An important task facing the next State Representative is developing new ways to raise revenue. The state needs to develop a better relationship with cities and towns and work to generate revenue for critical services that impact the quality of life for citizens. I support the Municipal Partnership Act as a way to raise revenue. I support the efforts that would allow municipalities to increase the meals tax and would allow municipalities to adopt a hotel tax. I support ending the telecommunications property tax exemption. These initiatives could generate over $120 million in new revenue.

Question: Do you support the requirement that every person in Massachusetts has health insurance or is subject to a penalty? (100 words)

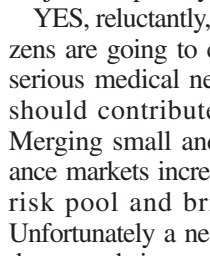
YES. The new health care reform bill, known as Chapter 58, became law in April of 2006. Chapter 58 has allowed 50,000 more people to enter into Medicaid and created a free health insurance called Commonwealth Care for the poorest residents of the Commonwealth. The major concern I have is with the second phase of health insurance reform. What will happen if people who require health care stop paying? I believe that the fee's and penalties should be available to people based on a sliding scale system that is based on that persons income.

Question: Do you support casino gambling? (100 words)

NO. I do not support bringing casino gambling to the Commonwealth. The present economic conditions in our state have caused the debate over whether or not to approve casino gambling in Massachusetts. I am against this proposal because I believe that casino gambling will cause tremendous social and economic problems for our state. I believe that there are additional ways to raise necessary revenue. I will support and champion the implementation of the Municipal Partnership Act.

Andrew E. O'Brien

109 Hillside Ave
Arlington, MA



Occupation: Citizen

Qualifications: I'm a regular citizen who is running simply because I think I can make a difference for the betterment of our district and our state. As a part-time substitute schoolteacher, part-time moving company rigger and piano mover, part time stay-at-home dad I can relate to the struggles of ordinary citizens.

Question: Do you support raising new state revenues? (100 words)

YES, in some towns a single fireman responds to a fire or in many towns school buildings are left to fall into complete disrepair. These are just a couple of examples of the financial stress cities and towns are under. Many of our citizens are elderly and live on fixed incomes, raising their property taxes is neither just nor equitable. Casino licenses and taxes are counterproductive and not reliable. I support raising the income tax back to its pre-1999 level of 5.95 %. I also support eliminating corporate tax loopholes.

Question: Do you support the requirement that every person in Massachusetts has health insurance or is subject to a penalty? (100 words)

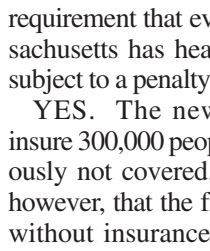
YES, reluctantly, I believe if the citizens are going to care for everyone's serious medical needs then everyone should contribute their fair share. Merging small and individual insurance markets increases the size of the risk pool and brings down costs. Unfortunately a near universal system does not bring costs down enough. Paying 15,000 to 16,000 dollars a year is overly burdensome financially for many. Despite increasing the role of the insured, the commonwealth connector remains too expensive and many will opt to pay the penalty. I believe only a single payer system will bring down costs and provide quality care.

Question: Do you support casino gambling? (100 words)

NO, gambling is a vice that hurts families and communities. I am against expanding gambling in Massachusetts. Native American tribes may still be able to set up casinos with the assistance of the federal government even if the state votes down Governor Patrick's casino bill. I believe when people are provided accurate information about gambling, fewer people will gamble. As your state representative, I will propose legislation that will require the lottery and casinos to post an information label indicating the average negative return on each game played. Similar labels will also be mandatory for all media gambling advertisements.

Jeffrey D. Thielman

37 Coolidge Road



Occupation: Vice President, Cristo Rey Network

Qualifications: My legal training, five years of service on the Arlington School Committee, three years volunteering in Peru, work creating schools for low-income young people in the U.S., and leading the effort to secure funds to rebuild Spy Pond Park have prepared me to represent the 23rd Middlesex District.

Question: Do you support raising new state revenues? (100 words)

YES. Just as I have on the School Committee, I will look carefully at state budgets and work to make government more efficient. The state faces an estimated $1 billion shortfall, and we cannot fix bridges and roads and fund schools without additional revenue. Cities and towns should be allowed to vote on a 1 or 2 percent tax on meals and hotels, the exemption telecommunications companies enjoy from paying taxes on poles should be eliminated, some corporate tax loopholes need closing, and corporations must file combined tax returns for all subsidiaries, which would generate $460 million in additional revenue.

Question: Do you support the requirement that every person in Massachusetts has health insurance or is subject to a penalty? (100 words)

YES. The new law has helped insure 300,000 people who were previously not covered. I am concerned, however, that the fines for individuals without insurance – up to $912 per individual and $1,824 per family each year – are too high. Mass Health insures people with incomes less than 300% of the poverty level. I've met many families in our community with incomes just above this threshold (e.g., a family of three living on $48,500 per year) who do not have health insurance. Mass Health must be extended to help these families.

Question: Do you support casino gambling? (100 words)

NO. We cannot gamble our way out of our revenue problems. People with the fewest resources spend the most at casinos, and casinos lead to increased gambling addiction, spousal abuse, and other social problems. Projected revenue from casinos is dubious because their creation will likely cause a reduction in lottery earnings, a source of income for municipalities and state programs. The state can create high paying jobs that sustain economic development by investing in the life sciences, clean energy, financial services, tourism, health care and other growth industries. Targeted investment in infrastructure improvements will also create good jobs.

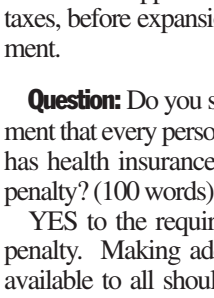
REPUBLICAN STATE REPRESENTATIVE PRIMARY BALLOT

(Candidates are limited to 100 words for their answer to each question.)

Vote for NOT MORE THAN ONE

John L. Worden III

27 Jason St



Occupation: Attorney

Qualifications: Moderator of Arlington 1989-2007, Town Meeting Member 1970- , Historic District Commissions, ByLaw Recodification Study Committee, Zoning ByLaw Review Committee, Sanborn Foundation (director), Farmer Trust (trustee), Animal Rescue League of Boston (director), REBA Affordable Housing Committee and many others; practicing attorney in trusts & estates, Simonds, Winslow, Willis & Abbott.

Question: Do you support raising new state revenues? (100 words)

NO, while taxes are necessary for those functions which the individual cannot perform (roads, schools, etc.), they become an enormous burden on those with fixed income such as the elderly and for young families struggling to educate their children. What is needed is a local aid "foundation budget" that would be a first call on state revenues. Most vital services – police, fire, education, libraries, elderly services, snow & trash removal, water/sewer, etc. – are provided by municipalities out of local tax revenues. State aid should be distributed to supplement local real estate taxes, before expansion of state government.

Question: Do you support the requirement that every person in Massachusetts has health insurance or is subject to a penalty? (100 words)

YES to the requirement, NO to the penalty. Making adequate health care available to all should be a priority for Massachusetts, but we can't do that if we drive primary care doctors out of our state. The present plan is a step in the right direction but is flawed. I believe that health care can be more affordable and more fairly priced, especially for individuals and employees of small businesses, by reducing the large percentage of health care costs that go to insurance companies. Format limit of 100 words requires a visit to my website, www.Worden2008.com, for details.

Question: Do you support casino gambling? (100 words)

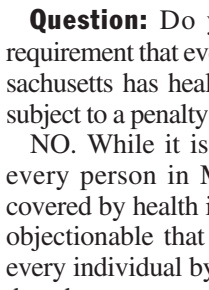
NO. Casino gambling is, in effect, a tax on those who can least afford it. The experience of casinos in Connecticut illustrates the social costs of gambling, including addiction, damaging impacts on local businesses, traffic impacts on both the host community and adjacent communities, as well as funneling most of the money to out-of-state gambling interests. Years ago, the sales tax was touted as the state's revenue solution, then the lottery was going be the answer – the fact is that the state's appetite for money will absorb every source and still want more, without providing measurable service improvements.

INDEPENDENT STATE REPRESENTATIVE CANDIDATE

NOT ON PRIMARY BALLOT

Robert V. Valeri

7 Wheaton Road



Occupation: Owner/Operator of a Commercial Printing and Business Forms Distributorship

Qualifications: The fiscal crisis in Massachusetts requires legislators to have expertise in budgeting and financial management. My degree is a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Concentration in Economics. I have managed two successful businesses – one being my own. These skills and personal dedication will serve the district well.

Question: Do you support raising new state revenues? (100 words)

YES. The state budget is severely lacking revenue – probably over 1 billion dollars. A long term solution will be required to preserve the integrity of State Government for our children and grandchildren. In discussions with local residents, there appears to be neither the will nor the desire to raise state income or property taxes. Since these are the constituents I would represent, and I firmly believe in TRUE representation, I would be bound to vote on matters according to their wishes. Together, we will need to find creative short term revenue-raising solutions to keep the budget in balance.

Question: Do you support the requirement that every person in Massachusetts has health insurance or is subject to a penalty? (100 words)

NO. While it is a great idea that every person in Massachusetts be covered by health insurance, I find it objectionable that it is forced upon every individual by law. I am certain that there are many folks, not covered by employer health plans, who have made personal decisions to go without insurance. It is quite possible that their income levels do not support this expense. If I were faced with a choice of paying for rent, food, clothing, or health insurance, I would opt for the first three. An added penalty by the government seems to make no sense.

Question: Do you support casino gambling? (100 words)

NO. I am personally opposed to gambling. There is some sentiment that it would be a boon to state revenues. In studies I have read regarding other states with casino gambling, the affect on revenues always falls far short of promises and projections. These studies also show that the standard of living in casino towns declines for a multitude of reasons. Since I want to truly represent my district, if the majority is in favor of casinos, I would support a bill which included a provision that a portion of casino profit be earmarked for gambling addiction rehabilitation programs.