



Building a 21st Century Workforce

A Forum on Jobs and Opportunity with the Candidates for Governor

Thursday June 29, 2006 • 6:00 - 8:00 pm
Roxbury Community College's Media Arts Center

Featuring:

						
Candidates: Chris Gabrieli	Kerry Healey	Christy Mihos	Deval Patrick	Tom Reilly	Grace Ross	Moderator: Janet Wu

Sponsored By: **SkillWorks** PARTNERS FOR A PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE In partnership with Workforce Solutions Group and Jobs for the Future

EVENT TRANSCRIPT

JANET WU: Good evening, and welcome to *Building a 21st Century Workforce*. Tonight's forum will talk about jobs and opportunities, and we'll have the opportunity to hear from six of the candidates for governor. We thank you for being here. We know that there are many different ways you could be spending this wonderful summer night, and we appreciate your presence and your support for this issue.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge all the local and state officials who are here tonight and thank them for service, and I would also like to acknowledge the directors of training programs, the heads of state agencies and local workforce boards, business leaders, educators, philanthropists, and community residents, all of you who are here tonight. The range of folks here in this audience just shows that this is a very critical issue for the Commonwealth over the next four to six years.

Now, I would like to introduce our host this evening, Dr. Brenda Mercomes, who is vice president of academic affairs here at Roxbury Community College. Dr. Mercomes.
[APPLAUSE]

BRENDA Mercomes: Good evening, and welcome to Roxbury Community College (RCC). Our president, Dr. Terry Gomes, is unable to be here this evening. He had an engagement as the keynote speaker at an event for scholarship students, and he sends his regrets.

RCC is, as you know, a comprehensive, city-centered, open access community college. We provide secondary higher education opportunities in the liberal arts and sciences and occupational programs. However, we are especially proud of the role we play in the area of workforce development—as the gateway to the dream, if you will, for working adults to achieve greater personal self-esteem and economic self-sufficiency. Further, because of our ability to reach working adults, we can provide affordable, flexible training for area businesses. We are very happy to host tonight's forum, and if I may be allowed a personal note for a political junkie, this is a dream come true.

We look forward to hearing tonight from the person who will be our next governor, on how he or she will help working people access the opportunities that come with greater education and training. Thank you for being with us tonight. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Dr. Mercomes. Now, before we hear from the candidates tonight, we're going to try to give just a little bit of background on how important workforce training is to our state's economy and to our residents. Loh-Sze Leung is the director of SkillWorks, which is the sponsor of our event tonight. [APPLAUSE]

LOH-SZE LEUNG: Thank you, Janet. Welcome and thank you for coming this evening to Building a 21st Century Workforce. This gubernatorial forum on jobs and opportunity is being sponsored by SkillWorks: Partners for a Productive Workforce. SkillWorks is a model of how the public and private sectors can work together to accomplish a common set of goals. The initiative is led by the Boston Foundation and funded by the City of Boston, the State of Massachusetts, and eleven other local and national foundations, all of which are listed in your program.

SkillWorks' dual goals are to help workers gain skills that move them toward economic self-sufficiency and to help businesses find and retain skilled workers. To do this, SkillWorks funds six workforce partnerships that address the needs of the workers and the businesses that hire them. In addition, SkillWorks funds the Workforce Solutions Group to promote public policies that help low- and moderate-income individuals gain the skills that they need to advance and that build the skilled workforce that meets the needs of the businesses in the state of Massachusetts.

Two weeks ago the legislature, as part of its Economic Stimulus Bill, passed the Workforce Solutions Act, which secures \$24.5 million in new state funding for workforce development and \$20 million in additional federal funding. Unfortunately, Governor Romney vetoed \$14 million of this funding, but there is a good chance that his vetoes will be overridden.

Together with the Workforce Solutions Group and Jobs for the Future, SkillWorks has organized this event in order to focus the attention of our next governor, who will speak tonight on this issue which is vitally important to all of us: jobs and opportunity for the citizens of Massachusetts.

SkillWorks and its partners and funders hope that you will take this opportunity to listen to the candidates and testimonials and take their knowledge and opinions to the polls in November.

Thank you to the candidates and speakers for taking the time to be here. Thank you to the planning committee for all of your hard work, and thanks again to all of you for coming here tonight. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Our next speaker is Paul Grogan, the president and CEO of the Boston Foundation, which founded SkillWorks, which is of course our sponsor tonight. [APPLAUSE]

PAUL GROGAN: Thank you very much. I want to thank Roxbury Community College for hosting this evening, thank all of you for being here, and thank especially the candidates for governor who are going to share their thoughts with us this evening. And I believe that this is the first event of this still young campaign that has attracted the participation of every single declared candidate. I think that says something. [APPLAUSE] I think that says that this is an issue on the rise. You know, it's not unusual in Massachusetts politics to have candidates for major office talk about jobs, and it's not unusual in United States politics either, but it is far less common to hear candidates talk about workforce. I hope I'm not insulting anyone here tonight when I say that workforce has generally been a policy backwater in the United States. There are some historical reasons for that, which we don't have time to go into this evening. But it simply must come out of that backwater and take center stage, and we hope it does here tonight.

We've been reading about some of the trends that are underway, troubling trends in Massachusetts and New England, of an aging population, the loss of talented young people, a low birth rate, sluggish job growth, and all the rest. It's very worrisome in terms of the future of the economy of this commonwealth, particularly when you realize that we have made the conversion to a knowledge economy that is talent-driven; talent is really all we have. But there are far too many talented people leaving, and there are far too many people here that lack the skills to participate and join the mainstream of American life. The great upside of this set of conditions is, if we get this right, if we get workforce right, there will be tremendous opportunities for people to move up to high-quality jobs, and that's why the Boston Foundation is proud to be a convener and supporter of SkillWorks and believe this forum on jobs and opportunity is an important event at a propitious time for our state. So thank you for being here, and we look forward to hearing what the candidates have to say. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Paul. And, finally, Ada Riggins, who is a member of the Brockton Interfaith Community, representing the Workforce Solutions Group, which is one of the groups that is funded by SkillWorks.

ADA RIGGINS: I'm Ada Riggins. I stand before you to represent the Workforce Solutions Group, a coalition led by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Massachusetts Workforce Board

Association, the Women's Union, and MCAN, the Massachusetts Communities Action Network. I'm a leader in the Brockton Interfaith Community, which is also affiliated with MCAN. The recently passed Economic Stimulus Bill has more than \$23.5 million in new funding for workforce development.

The workforce solutions group worked very hard to get this passed, along with other organizations, like MCAE, MWA, MACGC, and key legislators. However, Governor Romney was very wrong to have vetoed the job training and school-to-career passed in this bill. We must all work to get the legislature to override his shortsighted vetoes. A governor committed to workforce training and education could make this just the first step toward lifting skills of families and success of businesses. An old African proverb states, if you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to walk far, walk together.

We are looking for a governor who will truly work with us. A governor who believes in investing in families, to lift skills and create more and better paying jobs.

As a teacher, I see why job training is important. I saw a single parent mother go from being extremely involved in her child's education to stopping communicating with me and not going to school events.

What changed? She lost her job, and she could not find another one, and this often made her unhappy and angry.

So what's the lesson here? Jobs at decent wages and the training to get them brings stability to families. It affects being able to support their children in all ways.

Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you very much. Before we meet the candidates, I'm going to quickly run through the format and the flow of the forum. Now, this is not a debate, this is a forum, and the organizers have written three questions that all the candidates have had the opportunity to review. These questions are printed on the back of your handout.

Each candidate will make a one-minute opening statement. Then I will ask each candidate these three questions, which have been given to them ahead of time. The candidates will have two minutes to answer each question, during which time I reserve the right to interrupt if I feel the candidate is not answering that question. Each candidate will have two minutes to make a closing statement before leaving the stage.

Each candidate has also received a list of questions that people submitted along with their online registrations, so they are aware of your concerns here tonight, and they've been encouraged to incorporate those concerns into their responses, but they may not.

The speaking order of the candidates was determined by random draw. They have been asked not to mention any specific endorsements in their remarks. And, in the interest of

time, short biographical notes for each speaker and candidate are included in your packets, so I won't be making any formal introductions.

You may have noticed that there are a lot of people here speaking tonight. We do have six candidates, and we have a couple of other folks who will be speaking between them. In order to be fair and to let everyone out on time, there are timekeepers in the audience. As a matter of fact, they're sitting right here in the front row. They are going to let the candidates and the speakers know when their time is up. I'm going to be very strict about holding candidates to their time limits and I do reserve the right to cut anyone off. Please hold your applause for each candidate or speaker until the conclusion of their remarks, and please note that there is a simultaneous interpretation being provided in American Sign Language, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. Headphones are available in the foyer, if you need one.

At this time, I would like to introduce the first candidate who will be on stage tonight, Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey, the Republican candidate for governor. And she will have a minute to present her opening remarks. The lieutenant governor. [APPLAUSE]

KERRY HEALEY: Thank you, Janet, and I'd like to thank SkillWorks for holding this forum today, and also to thank you for all of your work on behalf of underserved youths and workers. It is genuinely a pleasure to be here. In my experience, there are two critical components necessary for a thriving economy. First, a stable, low-cost, pro-business tax environment; and secondly, a properly trained and educated workforce. Each is equally important to success in our economy. I often get the opportunity to talk about my roles and my concerns about reducing the tax burden on both working families and businesses, so I'm pleased to have the opportunity to come here tonight, to lay out my agenda on workforce development.

As co-chair of the state's six RCCs, or Regional Competitiveness Councils, I have a unique perspective, I believe, on the needs of each of our regions, and the regions have been brought together, both their economic development efforts and also the region's leading employers and educators, to identify gaps in workforce needs. Thank you.

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Lieutenant Governor. First question. There are nearly 166,000 unemployed residents in Massachusetts. The state's population is shrinking, as we have been reading and hearing, and job training resources are both insufficient and not well coordinated. The first question is, how will you make workforce development, including job training, adult basic education, ESOL, and other essential training, an integral part of your jobs and economic development strategy?

KERRY HEALEY: Thank you, Janet. Workforce development will be an extremely high priority for me, because I realize that it is key to the economic development of this state. I will attack the problem from two different perspectives, because I believe that there are two types of jobs that are going unfilled here in Massachusetts. First, those that demand a very high level of education in math and science, such as engineering or biotech jobs, and

second, those that require less time in the classroom but nonetheless require specialized skills, such as nursing or radiation technologists or perhaps precision machinery and manufacturing jobs. We must have a strategy for both of those types of jobs.

For the first, for the high-tech types of jobs, we need to do the following. First, increase our math and science standards in our schools, including teaching engineering alongside biology, chemistry, and physics. Second, we need to upgrade our science and technology programs in our higher education institutions across the state, just as we're investing in nanotechnology at UMass currently. Next, we need to provide loan forgiveness for students who are entering key professions that are needed in our workforce here in Massachusetts, such as engineers, or nurses, or forensic lab technicians.

And then, finally, we have to look at our other, more mainstream jobs that need to be filled, and we need a different strategy for those. We need to make grants available to students wishing to train to enter high-demand fields that require only short-duration skills training, such as nurses' aides, skilled manufacturing, or pharmacy assistants. We need to clear the adult basic education and English as a second language waitlist, and we need to enhance our 32 One Stop Career Centers that we have around the state. We're already doing a good job, but they could do better. And finally, we need to raise the mandatory age of school attendance in Massachusetts to 18 and create vocational schools and alternative schools that can meet the needs of all the kids in the Commonwealth.

JANET WU: Thank you very much. Now, the state's employers say there are too few qualified applicants to fill the jobs and more training resources are needed, as you have just stated. Over 73,000 jobs in Massachusetts are unfilled, many because workers don't have the right kind of training or education, as you have stated in your first answer. In your first budget as governor, will you provide a public match that will support a workforce competitiveness trust fund available to all workers and job seekers that equals the \$21 million workforce training fund that employers now support through a surcharge on unemployment taxes? And, as you know, and you've heard from the two previous speakers, that the governor, your partner, recently vetoed \$11 million for those trust funds. Would you have done the same thing?

KERRY HEALEY: No, I would not, and I would like to mention to you that there are a number of areas that I would like to invest in in terms of workforce development. First of all, increasing funding for adult basic education and ESOL. Second, loan forgiveness, as I mentioned, for those students entering key demand professions. Next, I would like to invest in expanding high school vocational programs and updating those programs so that they are relevant to our employers here in Massachusetts.

Next, I would like to expand science and technology programs, both in our high schools and in our institutions of higher education. And I would like to pay the teachers who specialize in math and science at a higher rate. I would also like to make sure that short-term grants are available for skills training for low-income individuals who perhaps had a

debt burden that's too high for them to take out loans in order to pursue their education and to get the skills that they need.

I'd also like to expand our One-Stop job centers. They're doing a great job right now, but I would like to see them to be able to expand their efforts to integrate both homeless families and to do outreach to homeless families and to work with our jails and prisons to make sure that there's employment for those folks who are coming out of jails and prison. I also want to make sure that there's always going to be funding for the key, top priorities of our Regional Competitiveness Councils. In the past, we have done things such as the cultural internship program, out in the Berkshires, to encourage kids to stay there in the Berkshires and work in the arts. Something with an employer focus that has come out of our Regional Competitiveness Councils has been the needs survey, to find out why kids who go to Worcester schools often leave the region later, and is there a way to connect better the employers with the jobs and the kids that are coming out of those schools—

JANET WU: Lieutenant Governor, I'd like to interrupt for just one second. You said that you would not have vetoed the trust fund. Did you ask the governor not to veto it? Did you have a conversation with him?

KERRY HEALEY: I would never characterize a private discussion that I've had with the governor, but I can tell you what I would do, and I think that you can tell from the list of things that I would want to invest in that it is not in any way a reticence on my part to—

JANET WU: Would you be willing to support \$21 million for a workforce competitiveness trust fund?

KERRY HEALEY: As governor [OVERLAPPING VOICES] as long as it addresses the needs that I have outlined here. If it is investing in those priorities, yes.

JANET WU: You are committed to that.

KERRY HEALEY: If it is investing in the priorities that I've outlined.

JANET WU: Okay. Thank you. On to the third question. More than one million adults in Massachusetts, that's one out of every three adults, lack the skills to succeed in today's economy. 24,000 people are on waiting lists to go to GED classes or to learn English. ESOL and adult basic education need more funding to provide these services to the adults who need them. Will you as governor propose an \$8 million increase in adult basic education in your first budget as governor, and support increasing it further in subsequent years based on the state revenues and their availability? This increase will help thousands of people to get basic education and English proficiency needed to get better paying jobs and become the skilled workers that employers here in Massachusetts need.

KERRY HEALEY: Well, Janet, I'm glad that we finally have an easy one. The answer is yes. And, as governor, you would never have to worry about lobbying me on this particular

issue. When I was younger and lived in New York City, I had the opportunity to teach English as a second language to recent immigrants, and I saw the impact that those skills had on people's lives. It was transformative. It was amazing to see what would happen. As people could speak English better, they would be able to get a job, they would be able to move better in society, and I absolutely recognized the value of having those skills for all of our workers here in Massachusetts, and I would make the necessary investment, as we have sought to do in the last two budgets, to clear those waiting lists and make sure that everyone has access.

I'd like to make one last point, which is that I believe that English as a second language—and adult basic education—needs to be taught in at least three different venues. It needs to be taught as it is now, with some of the skills training at workplaces. Some workplaces need to reach out and make that available to their workers. But it also needs to be made available through mutual assistance associations and other nonprofits that are grassroots organizations in the immigrant communities. And I would also like to see it offered in our community colleges and in our K-12 institutions that are closer to home, so that people don't have to travel so far to avail themselves of these services.

JANET WU: Would you be willing to go even further and propose more than an \$8 million increase for our job training?

KERRY HEALEY: We have in the past and I would again, yes.

JANET WU: And do you see that rising each year if the state revenues are available?

KERRY HEALEY: I would like to make sure that every year we have enough money in this budget so that we do not have a waiting list. That would be my goal.

JANET WU: OK, thanks very much, Lieutenant Governor, you can now have two minutes for your closing remarks.

KERRY HEALEY: Thank you, Janet. Thank you for moderating this today, and I want to thank SkillWorks again for having all the candidates here to speak a little bit about workforce development. Creating a stable, low-cost tax environment and a proper workforce development plan really is the key to economic prosperity here in Massachusetts. There are many jobs left unfilled here right now because we are not properly connecting our businesses with our schools and our institutions of higher learning. The groundwork is already being laid to correct this problem. The Regional Competitiveness Councils have begun building bridges between the businesses and the schools to identify the gaps and leads that the employers have.

We've also expanded our One-Stop Career Centers and made them much more capable of reaching out to deal with folks who have recently lost their jobs or who are underemployed. And now we are reaching out to the homeless and also to those who are reentering society from jail or prison. I would like to see that expanded.

And next we need to tackle our own complacency and admit that we are falling behind internationally, that we cannot hope to be competitive unless we raise the standards in our schools, both K-12 and in higher education. And we need to admit that our dropout rate is too high. It's unacceptable, and we need to change the structures of our schools so that our schools serve all the kids of Massachusetts, up to age 18, whatever their needs may be. And we need to make sure that our institutions of higher education work hand in hand with our businesses to produce the finest workforce in the country, and one of the finest workforces in the world. And we need to make higher education and job training affordable to those who need it most. As governor, I believe we can do this, and we will do it, because I have the experience and the desire to meet these needs. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Here's a little bit of context on the candidates' remarks tonight. SkillWorks has asked workers, employers, and labor to give brief testimonials on the importance of workforce development. Grace Toledo, a recent graduate of SkillWorks' Boston Health Career and Research Training Institute program, will tell you a little bit about her experience. [APPLAUSE]

GRACE TOLEDO: Good evening, everyone. My name is Grace Toledo. I'm a resident of Mission Hill, and I participated in the Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute program for twelve weeks, in which four of the twelve weeks I interned at Harvard Medical School. The training program made a positive impact on my life with the excellent instructors of YMCA Training, Inc., and help from the Employment Specialists as well as my colleagues.

In the program, I learned a lot, such as medical terminology and how to conduct myself in a professional manner during interviews. The program impacted me but also my daughter Shayla. She watched her dedicated mother, with grit determination to be successful, and I influenced her to "reach for the sky." She saw, too, that I was learning, like her. And school is very important, no matter what age.

I would definitely recommend this program to all who are trying to improve themselves by choosing a career in health care. It teaches you to follow the rules of employers, it pushes you to be dedicated and obtain invaluable experience. This program didn't just help me, but also my family. My companion participated in the same program last August to November 2005. He obtained a good paying job at Children's Hospital as a lab technician, which tremendously helped our family financially. My mother also attended a similar program ten years ago, and has been employed at the Harvard School of Public Health ever since.

This program helps people like me who cannot afford college a chance to receive an education. Finally, I would like to give thanks to all the people who fund these programs. I am very, very grateful for everything, and I wish all of you great success. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Grace. Now I'd like to introduce the second candidate, Deval Patrick, [APPLAUSE].

DEVAL PATRICK: Janet, thank you and SkillWorks and everyone for being here and for having me today. I'm looking forward to the conversation. Some of you, I know here, I've met; many of you I haven't, so let me just say a word or two here about who I am and how I came to the race and why I think this conversation is so important, not just for the campaign but for the future of the Commonwealth.

I grew up on the South Side of Chicago, which is generally not known as the garden spot. I lived there with my mother, my sister, and my grandparents in a two-bedroom tenement, shared a bunk bed with my mother and my sister, so you go from the top bunk to the bottom bunk to the floor, every third night on the floor. But it was a time when every child was under the jurisdiction of every single adult on the block. So if you messed up down the street in front of Ms. Jones's, she would treat you as if you were hers. People treated us like they had a stake in us. I came here to Massachusetts when I was 14 years old in 1970, and I have had a series of remarkable chances, but I know chance comes to the well-prepared. And we need to talk about how we get well-prepared this evening, and right through my two terms of Governor of Massachusetts. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: First question. Mr. Patrick, how would you make workforce development, including job training, adult basic education, ESOL and other essential training, into integral parts of your jobs and economic development strategy?

DEVAL PATRICK: Janet, thanks for the question. First of all, I think this is something that we have studied enough and with all the studies, there still seems to be an extraordinary lack of coordination and frustration about that. I mean, I look at things like the health care industry, which is broad and important here, but not enough nurses, or a biotech industry, which is growing and important, but not enough technicians. I think what we need is leadership, and that's what I intend to provide.

I want to make workforce development—meaning preparing people for opportunities—a central feature of the administration. I think that means that it includes having workforce development as a part of the portfolio of the secretary of commonwealth development. I think it means that every sector is planned around workforce development, so, in other words, if you think about developing particular industries, what is the plan for assuring that those industries will have the people they need with the skills those people need in order for that industry to thrive? And so I think that means better coordination among the leaders of public education, including public higher education, around transitional assistance, and also the involvement of business. And we'll have to be part of a conversation on how it is we plan for the skills we need.

As we think ahead, am I running out of time, am I OK on time? As we think ahead.

JANET WU: I'll let you know.

DEVAL PATRICK: I have a feeling you will. As we think ahead and plan for the next thing economically, I think part of that has got to be a plan for the people. And I think the next thing, economically for us here in Massachusetts is alternative renewable energy. We may affect industry, those technologies and products and services, if we build them and create a center, globally, the whole world is our customer, and there are all kinds of job opportunities that flow from that.

JANET WU: Thank you very much. The second question. In your first budget as governor, will you provide a public match that will support a workforce competitiveness trust fund, available to all workers and job seekers, that equals the \$21 million workforce training fund that employers now support through a surcharge on unemployment taxes. And I also asked the lieutenant governor about the governor's veto. We'd like to hear from you as well about what you thought of Governor Romney's veto.

DEVAL PATRICK: Well, to answer the second question first, not much. But I understand that the veto is or will be overridden, and it should be. I think, though, that the answer to the question about the \$21 million public match is maybe. And I say maybe because, while I support the workforce training fund and the workforce competitiveness trust fund and the extended care career ladder initiative, various of the initiatives we have, I do think we have to ask ourselves the question whether we're getting the most out of the money we're spending. Because I'm frankly just not convinced that we have the coordination, that we have delivered on the promise of one-stop shopping, for example, whether the competition among the agencies, public and partly public, that take a role in workforce development, is in every case as productive or as constructive as I would like. So the answer is, yes, I'm committed to spending what we need, but I don't know yet, frankly and honestly, whether \$21 million is the right number.

JANET WU: Do you have a number in mind?

DEVAL PATRICK: I don't.

JANET WU: Do you think we should reorganize everything that we've talked about?

DEVAL PATRICK: No, I don't. I'm committed to adequate funding, and I'm committed to getting to that fast, and I hope within the first year or two of my administration. But I'm just not sure as I stand here right now whether it's \$21 million or some larger number, frankly, isn't the right number.

JANET WU: And how long do you suspect that it would take you to reorganize and try to make more productive all these various agencies that are spread across the government?

DEVAL PATRICK: Well, frankly, Janet, I think a lot of that work has to be done before I take office. I mean, that's a big part of the transition work. I don't want to presume too much, but that's a big part of the time that gets spent between Election Day and inauguration time.

JANET WU: Is this one of your top priorities before you take office.

DEVAL PATRICK: Gotta be. Gotta be.

JANET WU: Okay.

DEVAL PATRICK: And I expect the folks in this room to help.

JANET WU: And, finally, last question, tens of thousands of people in Massachusetts are on waiting lists for basic education, ESOL, and skills training. Will you propose an \$8 million increase in adult basic education in your first budget as governor, and support increasing it further in subsequent years based on state revenues? This increase will help thousands of people to get basic education and English proficiency needed to get better paying jobs and become the skilled workers that we know that employers need desperately.

DEVAL PATRICK: Yeah, the answer to that question is yes, but with only 6 percent of the known in need being served with current resources, I think we all ought to ask ourselves whether \$8 million is the magic number or whether it's going to be something else over time. I will tell you that it was an ABE program that made it possible for my mother to get her GED when I was a kid, and through that GED to get a job that got us off public assistance. She also got a job in the post office, so I understand how transforming access to ABE and ESOL programs can be for people. I understand that from my own life. But I do think that with, what are there, 400,000 people waiting today for opportunities to get their GEDs and to get skills training for job opportunities, then it is a fair question to ask whether \$8 million is enough, is the right number, and how we build to the right number over time.

JANET WU: And so you are not sure whether that is too much, because of the bureaucracy, or not enough, is that what you're saying?

DEVAL PATRICK: My suspicion is that it's not enough. I'm happy to commit to the \$8 million because that's the question you asked. But the numbers of people waiting and that representing about 6 percent of the known need, leaving aside the fact that there are people who would take advantage of an ABE program, for example, if they knew that there was an ABE program. I'm just not sure that \$8 million is ultimately going to be enough.

JANET WU: And where do you suspect that you will find this money to put into these programs.

DEVAL PATRICK: Well, I've put out a plan to capture greater efficiencies in the current administration, things we're doing that we don't have to do. There are things that we do that we should do that we don't do, for example, like better enforcement of Medicaid fraud and enforcement of the wage and hour laws, which cost us hundreds of millions of

dollars a year. I also believe that we ought to take the surplus in the current budget and wait before we roll back the income tax to 5 percent and fund some of these unmet needs. And ABE and ESOL is one of them.

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Mr. Patrick, and now you have two minutes for your closing remarks.

DEVAL PATRICK: Well thank you, Janet, and thanks to all the sponsors and all the participants for being part of this today. You're very efficient with the timing [LAUGHTER].

There really are three points that I want to get across. The first is the importance of better alignment between our economic development initiatives and the workforce development initiatives. That is, as we think about and focus on the sectors that we want to build and can build and play to our strengths here in Massachusetts, I think alternative renewable energy technology is one of them and an example of them. We need to build into that how it is we create the opportunities for people, our people, to be ready for those jobs, and that is all about how you bring together business and sector focus with the folks who are doing workforce development.

I think we can better leverage the resources we have. We need to change the funding formula, for example, for community colleges, so that when they provide a certificate, or so that they can provide certificates for workforce development training without being penalized or facing financial disincentives to do so.

And I do believe it's important to support ABE and ESOL opportunities because that makes opportunity real for people, and I know that from my own life. Like I said, chance comes to the well prepared. That's not my line. That was the line of Louis Pasteur. And I've had some wonderful, wonderful chances in my own life, but I have been prepared for those chances through opportunities through education, through opportunities through work, summer job opportunities, opportunities to get to know people and understand how they live their lives and what their work lives are like, so I can begin to expand my imagination about what's possible. And this is something we have to do, not just for kids from the South Side of Chicago who get that odd break, that unusual break, to come to a place like Milton Academy, but for all of us. Everybody has a stake and everybody counts. I'm glad to be with you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: We're going to have a short testimonial from Michael Fadel who is the executive vice president of 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. [APPLAUSE]

MIKE FADEL: Thank you, Janet, and thank you SkillWorks for putting on this terrific forum tonight, putting attention on an area where attention has been lacking and where it's much needed. I'm so proud to be here with you tonight, representing organized labor in the Commonwealth and representing 1199SEIU, home to the largest workforce training program, labor management training program in the nation, serving about 40,000 health care workers annually with their training needs.

I'm here tonight to make three very simple points. The first is, the topic tonight is really all about people. Duh. Everybody knows that, but in the bureaucracies of economic development, workforce development, that simple fact is often lost. And for too many years, that fact has been lost in the governor's office, which has focused economic development solely on tax breaks and incentives and has put not together a significant key to economic development, which is a comprehensive worker training program. Such an agenda is critical to developing good jobs in this state and conveying to Massachusetts the high-skills, high-wage state that we all want.

The second point: we need strong executive leadership on this issue and we need it now. For too many years, there's been a lack of interest in adult education and training. The next governor must focus the energy of all relevant state agencies and of all relevant stakeholders to develop an integrated system that works for adult learners, that works for employers and unions.

And lastly, we need greater and more consistent public investment in worker training and adult basic education. The incumbent workers in all sectors of the economy could move forward if the funding were there. In health care, there are dozens and dozens of career ladders that could be implemented with proper funding. Sadly, to compensate for the lack of funding, we have federal visa policies, which decimate the ranks of nurses in developing countries to address the workforce shortages here.

By focusing on these points, the next governor of the Commonwealth will have the unique opportunity to move the economy forward while addressing the aspirations of working families and workers, and meeting the needs of employers. That's good politics. That's good policy. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Mr. Fadel. [APPLAUSE] Chris Gabrieli, also a Democratic candidate for governor. Mr. Gabrieli. [APPLAUSE] Mr. Gabrieli, you have a minute for your opening remarks.

CHRIS GABRIELI: Thank you. It's a delight to be here with people dedicated to something that I think essential to my candidacy for governor. My brother and I have done well in our lives. He's a professor at MIT, and I've had quite a few things go well for me as well. That's the result of education. That is the fundamental premise of an opportunity society, equal opportunity for all, special privilege for none. While I'm proud of what this country does and what this state does, we have a long way to go to reach that vision, and that's why I've spent the last few years working to expand opportunity, for after school programs that give kids more of a chance to be on a level playing field, so they can compete and go on to college. But there are a lot of other people who are already in the workforce who also need the opportunity to get up to the skill level they need to let them succeed. As chairman of MassINC, one of the things I'm proudest of is the work we did when I was chairman that elucidates the fact that one in three workers needs help to even get to the basic 21st century skill level. I look forward to talking about more of that with you through the questions tonight. Thank you.

JANET WU: Mr. Gabrieli, first question. How will you make workforce development, including job training, adult basic education, ESOL, and other essential training, an integral part of your job in economic development strategy.

CHRIS GABRIELI: Great question. First off, the question is, is it an integral part? My support for this agenda starts with my understanding that economic growth theory, modern economic growth theory, tells us that the two biggest drivers in economic growth are the rate of innovation of any society and the skill level of its workforce. Those two things, human capital and the rate of innovation, drive economic growth. So it is very much self-interest, as well as in the interest of social justice, to provide people skills that raise their own ability to succeed and raise the economic growth rate of our collective commonwealth. So, first of all, it is a priority for me because it's a good priority, for both of those reasons.

The second thing you do is you make it an important part of the Cabinet. I have said I will have a cabinet-level secretary of labor and workforce in order to make sure that something that right now is spread across many different agencies, \$250 million, as I understand it, across twelve different silos—there are reasons for some of that complexity, but I think it's also sometimes an enemy of getting things done well—so I will ask as a first step for that secretary of labor and workforce that they focus on, are we doing things well? In fact, I've committed to a top to bottom review of all of the big parts of government in order to find better ways to deliver on what we're doing. So I think, a priority is putting somebody in place who knows how to review all of that and get us to a better place.

The last issue is, are you going to go to bat? And I think that's going to come up in these subsequent questions. But are you as governor, when you go to bat for this as a budget priority, and I can anticipate the next couple of questions and the answers I'm going to give to say, yes, I will. I think it's something that, if you want to hold your head up high as a society and say you truly are giving people the opportunity to work hard, to do well in the society, the very opportunity given to my family, then you must fully and well fund pathways that allow people to get there. And so that will be a very high priority for me as we set our first and subsequent budgets.

JANET WU: That segues easily into our second question. In your first budget as governor, will you provide a public match that will support a workforce and training trust fund available to all workers and jobseekers that equals the \$21 million workforce training fund that employers now support through a surcharge on unemployment taxes. And as I asked the two previous candidates, what are your thoughts on Governor Romney's recent veto?

CHRIS GABRIELI: I would have been interested to hear Lieutenant Governor Healey's thoughts on Governor Romney's recent veto. [LAUGHTER] I will do that. I said I'm going to do this top-to-bottom review, and so I want to be careful in saying that if you do such a review, you want to be open to the results of that review, but the scale of the task is, I think, appropriate. In fact, it's really still a very small amount of money relative to the total

need for help for people. For unemployed people, we need to raise their skills, as well as people who are sidelined and may not even be counted in unemployment statistics because they're feeling defeated by a lack of opportunity in their lives and lack of skills. I was over at the Urban League this morning and there were 20 young and not so young people going there to get their basic Microsoft certification in hopes that they could learn soft skills, in hopes that they would be able to enter the workforce. Their success is crucial for them and their families and for our society.

I also think it's important that we think about funding strategies that bring the private sector in. I'm very interested in the idea of potentially giving tax credits to employers who have not been in the habit of providing training for their existing workforce, and to get them in that habit. I think that's crucial, to draw in private sector employers as partners in this. I'm very interested in getting more of the nonprofits who already participate in this to scale up. I've worked with Year Up as an example of one nonprofit, been an advisor and supporter, because I've seen how much they can do for someone with a high school degree who doesn't necessarily have the soft skills and the information technology application skills to get the good jobs. The combination of the training they give, the apprenticeship they give, and, I might add, very important to their program, a year of college credits, so that the message is that it's not just to get an entry level job, but to steer you on the path towards a college degree, which has really got to be in the target, especially for younger people, as the ultimate goal. Not just enough skills to get a job at all. Enough trajectory to end up in good jobs.

So, I think working with those nonprofits, I've worked a lot with them in after school programs, I know how important they can be and how innovative in basic delivery, and also bringing the private sector into the table in addition to that government funding is what we're really going to need to do if we're really going to change the dynamic.

JANET WU: And, finally, third question. Will you propose an \$8 million increase in adult basic education in your first budget as governor, and support increasing it even further in subsequent years based on the availability of state revenues?

CHRIS GABRIELI: Yeah, absolutely. In fact, I don't think \$8 million is enough, in the end. I want to be careful, running for office, promising everybody every ask they make and every dollar they ask for, but I think there's no clearer signal about whether you're serious about this or not as to whether you're willing to say to someone, and I've been to these classes, and I've spoken, for example, at the Urban College's commencement last year, I was honored to be the speaker there. Now that's college, not this, but the point is that it's the same situation. People who are willing to work at often pretty tough jobs all day long, who go to school at night to get that ABE, to get into a degree, to get that GED, those people are doing exactly what we should honor most and support best, which is, again, that willingness to work hard and play by the rules and get ahead.

Yet the fact is that for every student now in, for example, English as a second language, there's another person on a waiting list, some for as long as two years. That is the wrong

policy, it is the wrong message, it is the wrong values, and I will change that because that is not the kind of leadership Massachusetts needs. I will commit right here, very clearly, to making sure that we do everything we can to clear those waiting lists. Frankly, I think if we do a good job of it, the waiting list will expand, and I think that's great. We know that somebody who gets a GED makes on average \$9,000 more a year. We know that people who learn English second language and get their skills up, we learn that they are able to make more money, they become better parents, they can help their kids with their homework and talk to the teachers in school. They become better citizens, able to evaluate how excellent my candidacy is, or [LAUGHTER], just checking if you're listening, or dealing with complex health care issues and other things that can decide their lives, citizenship challenges, etc.

So it is important that we honor our alleged ethic of equal opportunity for all. I've repeated that several times, because I am someone who's had a lot of success in my life. I know where I came from, I know what got me here, I know what values that commits me to, and, first and foremost, it is that this Commonwealth be a place where everybody gets the better opportunities that my brother and I got. That's the governor I want to be. I would get results. I won't just make these broad promises. I need your support to do that. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: You have roughly two minutes for your closing remarks.

CHRIS GABRIELI: Thank you very much. I'm very proud of SkillWorks, and I know many of you here are involved in it. I was on the board of the Boston Foundation at the time when that was still being incubated and discussed, and then I learned more than I contributed, I feel sure. But then I also feel like the model of winning together—foundation, funders, the governments—working to put people running for office on the spot is something I have a lot of experience with. The After School for All Partnership here in Boston, which was an unprecedented effort in thirteen fun years together, including the city of Boston and private funders, ended up raising initially \$25 million, ultimately \$35 million, and I don't think there's anything I've done in my life that I'm prouder of than the fact that there are twice as many kids in Boston in after school programs as a result of that effort. And it's continuing to expand and it's continuing to improve. An \$8 million grant was recently announced from the Wallace Foundation.

So these efforts to bring people together around problems we all know exist and be able to really push the envelope, or how do we change the equation, is what I support. And you're absolutely right to say, for everything we can do in the private sector, if we don't have public leadership that gets what this is about, as well as being able to make the investments in smart ways that give people in this case the skills they need to even enter the good, sweet part of the economy—

If we don't make that commitment, we won't change, fundamentally, the equation—all the private philanthropy in the world, as helpful as it is—without a government that won't adopt successful programs and scale them up. And not just in eastern

Massachusetts, I might add. This problem is more profound as you get to Pittsfield and Lawrence and Fitchburg and other communities far outside the Greater Boston area.

So I won't take the attitude of the Romney-Healey administration. I will get results. I will not veto the two items they vetoed in this State House bill, both of which were good proposals. \$11 million, as you know, for the workforce competitiveness trust fund, and \$3 million for taking kids who have really fallen off career tracks and trying to connect them back into careers. Those are bad values, those are not going to lead to the kind of results we need. That's why I'm running for governor. I appreciate your time tonight. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Our next testimonial will come from Amos Wanjiru, who is a recent graduate of the class 9 E-team machinists job program in Essex County. [APPLAUSE]

AMOS WANJIRU: Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Amos Wanjiru. I am a native of Kenya, and now I live in Lynn. I would like to thank you all for coming tonight. I'm a class 9 E-team machinist training program graduate. This program is sponsored by Essex County Community Organization and IUE/CWA Local 201 and trains and prepares students to get jobs as entry-level machinists. I found out about ET when I was working as a resident care associate, helping take care of people with Alzheimer's and other memory impairments. In this position, I earned \$11 an hour. I learned that E-Team graduates can start as entry-level machinists at \$12 an hour or more. I was motivated by the opportunity to learn new skills and earn a higher wage, so I applied myself to the training program four days a week while working full time. A counselor was always available to support me.

This training has been extremely valuable. I learned a lot about the machining industry. In addition, I learned time and money management, conflict resolution, and public speaking skills that have helped me at work and at home. Successfully completing the machinist training program has inspired me to challenge myself even more

I would like to express gratitude on behalf of class 9 to the taxpayers and the legislature of the state of Massachusetts for their generous grant that made it possible for us to learn skills that are good for a lifetime. I'd like to request that the candidates for governor make more funds available for programs like this. Good training will ensure that people are properly equipped with skills that they need to succeed in today's job market. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you, Mr. Wanjiru. Our next candidate that I'm going to ask to come out is Attorney General Tom Reilly. [APPLAUSE]

TOM REILLY: Thank you, Janet. Thank you all for being here. My wife Ruth and I live in Watertown. We live in a street much like the streets that you live on. We live in a two-decker in Watertown Square. We've lived there for 36 years, and raised our family. People in that neighborhood are struggling, as people all over this state are struggling. And they know that we're going in the wrong direction, and they're right. Lost jobs, lost population. And they don't understand it, because we're a great state with tremendous assets. Our

greatest assets are people like you. And we're totally lacking in leadership, folks, it's leadership. And that leadership starts right at the top of the governor's office. There is a lack of cohesiveness that is holding us back between the business community and our educational system.

That's the job of the governor, to bring together a sense of cohesiveness for our workforce development system at all the levels of our economy, to make sure it's aligned with our economy. That's what I intend to do. I intend to make innovation the centerpiece of our economy. I intend to build a growing workforce that will sustain that economy. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Mr. Attorney General, first question. How will you make workforce development, including job training, adult basic education, ESOL, and other essential training, an integral part of your jobs and economic development strategy?

TOM REILLY: Well, first off, our workforce has sustained us for centuries. And they've done a good job. But we have to realize that times have changed, we're in a global economy, and it requires different skills. And we're competing not just against other states but other countries. I intend to make our workforce development system get straight A's, being aligned, being accessible, and also accountable. I intend, first of all, to bring our workforce development system and in particular our community colleges into better alignment with the needs of the business community and the regions of the state that they're in. Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. We need nurses, more nurses in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Essex Community College is just starting a new program to both train and graduate those nurses that will meet the needs of a skilled economy.

The second thing is to make it more accessible. And one of the many ways that we can make it more accessible, particularly for our immigrant population and adults who are trying to improve their skills, their language skills, is to work with the adult basic education classes and work—I know, we'll get to this later on—to see what we can do to lessen the length of time that it takes people to get through those programs.

Finally and importantly, to make the system more accountable, to make sure programs measure progress by how well they are turning out and graduating the people that we need and the workers we need to sustain our economy. I'm thinking about a warranty, that the workers that are coming out of those programs and students are really equipped to do the job that they're expected to do.

And finally, review all twelve agencies in state government that provide workforce training systems to eliminate the duplication and make savings, make the best of those savings in the additional availability of those programs.

JANET WU: Thank you. Second question. In your first budget as governor, will you provide a public match that will support a workforce competitiveness trust fund available to all

workers and job seekers that equals the \$21 million workforce training fund that employers now support through a surcharge on unemployment taxes. And as I did with the other candidates, I will also ask you for your thoughts on Governor Romney's recent veto.

TOM REILLY: Well, first of all, our great strength is our workforce, and I am pleased that the legislature extended the workforce training fund to 2008. This has helped train over 172,000 workers throughout the state and helped businesses to be more competitive. I'm also very pleased that the legislature has created the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. It is a very good idea, something that I support. And I'll answer your question, I am very disappointed that the governor vetoed that legislation, and I am very hopeful and very positive about the legislature overriding that veto.

JANET WU: Would you urge your Democratic counterparts in the legislature, people that you have a relationship with, to override that veto.

TOM REILLY: It's just a great program, great concept. In terms of a specific amount of money, in terms of the increase, I'll have to look at that when I get there in terms of making the decisions.

JANET WU: Will you propose an \$8 million increase in adult basic education in your first budget as governor and support increasing it further in subsequent years based on state revenues?

TOM REILLY: First of all, I strongly support the elimination of the waiting list for adults in basic education, and I understand and realize and recognize that there is a tremendous need out there, particularly for the immigrant community. I will invest and I will continue to invest in adult basic education and our goal will be to eliminate the overall waiting lists, which I understand is about 24,000. In terms of the specific amount, I believe it's \$32 million, I can't commit to a specific amount but I certainly am open to it, depending on the budget decisions that have been made.

JANET WU: So you're not committed to an \$8 million increase at this time?

TOM REILLY: Not at this time.

JANET WU: And what will make the difference for you? Other priorities in other programs, or—

TOM REILLY: Looking at the budget in its entirety. When I make a commitment, I do it, and I want to make sure that I have sufficient funds at that time to make that commitment. If that money is available, this would be at the top of the list, high on the list, let me put it that way, of priorities in my administration. I understand how important it is.

JANET WU: One of your Democratic opponents said that he feels that a lot of the money is currently not being spent wisely. Do you agree? Is that one of the things that troubles you about making the commitment of \$8 million?

TOM REILLY: I want to make sure that the money that we are spending now is being spent wisely. I want to get a determination of how much it is going to cost to eliminate and put an end to those waiting lists, and then find a way of financing that, to make sure we have the revenues.

JANET WU: Is it possible that you might cut the \$32 million that is now appropriated for this program?

TOM REILLY: No. No, that's not going to happen.

JANET WU: Okay. Mr. Attorney General, you have two minutes for your closing remarks.

TOM REILLY: Massachusetts right now is an awful lot like I was at eighteen. You're looking at the son of Irish immigrants. There was an awful lot of tragedy in my family's life very early on. By the time I was fourteen, two of my brothers had been killed in horrific accidents, and my father died two years later, essentially of a broken heart. And at that point, I was struggling. I had terrible grades, and I barely graduated from high school. There were some who said that I wasn't good enough to go to college. But I also had family and friends who believed in me and cared about me and saw the potential that I had and encouraged me to go to college and I was very fortunate. It wasn't easy. I worked my way through college and I worked my way through Boston College Law School.

But right now, as I stand here as a candidate for governor, I see the enormous potential that we have in Massachusetts. I described earlier our great state, wonderful colleges and universities, our hospitals. But our greatest asset is folks like you throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. What you need right now, what this Commonwealth needs right now, is a governor who cares as much about this state as people cared about me at that age, that sees the enormous potential that we have, will pay attention, and a governor who has the experience to change things and to make things better in this state. I'm absolutely convinced that with that leadership, and it all starts with leadership, we will get that on track, and we will get this state going in the wrong direction, in the right direction, [LAUGHTER]. I will be that governor that gets us going in the right direction. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Our next speaker is Dr. Gary Gottlieb, who is the president of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Faulkner Hospital and chair of the Boston Private Industry Council. [APPLAUSE]

GARY GOTTLIEB: Thank you, Janet. I'm speaking to you tonight from three perspectives. First, as the president of Brigham and Women's Hospital and a proud member of this vibrant community and a founding member of Partners Healthcare, the largest private

employer in Greater Boston. Second, as chair of the Boston Private Industry Council, and finally as a citizen who believes passionately in workforce development to promote economic development and to help people achieve family-sustaining wages.

The Commonwealth faces significant challenges in meeting our skilled workforce needs with more than half, 55% of all vacancies in greater Boston requiring at least an Associate's degree. Our economy cannot grow, and knowledge-based industries such as the life sciences cannot thrive, without an ambitious plan to invest in our residents. Just as the Commonwealth broke ground in health care reform, we can and we must have a leadership in vision to develop the skills of our workforce.

This is crucial to our economic growth.

Given the small growth of our labor force and the high dependence on immigration, any workforce system must be committed to keeping our children in school and reducing significantly our dropout rate. We need public investment and partnerships to provide opportunities for young people to work in a labor market with the lowest teen employment rate since World War II. We need English language and adult education programs that help move people into the workforce quickly and effectively. We need sufficient capacity at career centers to respond to the dramatic increase of those who are seeking jobs. And we need a public higher education system that graduates students at higher rates and in higher numbers.

In my role as chair of the Boston Private Industry Council, I have seen strategies that can help bridge the gap between the skills of job seekers and the increasing requirements of our growth industries. Workforce boards across the state have come together to advocate for additional resources through the Workforce Solutions Act. The City of Boston, led by Mayor Menino, the Boston Foundation, as well as other local and national foundations, have come together to launch this SkillWorks. Brigham and Women's Hospital and others have experienced the benefit from this initiative, creating career ladders so that our entry-level employees can become surgical technologists, radiology technicians, and even nurses.

Workforce investment makes business and community sense, and I believe it can improve the health of our neighborhoods. I encourage the next governor to provide the leadership to create the workforce essential to economic growth.

I want to thank SkillWorks for hosting this forum. I wish to thank the six candidates for governor for sharing their views on this critical issue. We can make a difference. Working together, we will make a difference. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE] We have our next candidate coming out, Christy Mihos, who is the independent gubernatorial candidate [APPLAUSE].

CHRISTY MIHOS: Thank you. Like everybody else, I would also like to thank Roxbury Community College, SkillWorks, and all of the wonderful sponsors here tonight for putting on this forum. I wish it was a debate. These are serious issues, but it is not as yet.

But I am a businessman in Massachusetts, I run a little company called Christy's Markets, and I have sat across from people coming in to interview for jobs, interviewing them one on one, and it is very difficult. It is very difficult sometimes when they come to a job and they don't have the skills. So I do believe we've got to go back and provide the proper funding for education, at all levels, and not just as aid. The Romney Administration has cut local aid by \$86 million over the last three years in the city of Boston, so that our schools don't get funded properly, and we all lose. We all lose. I love this state. I'm running for governor. It's worth the fight. Thank you.

JANET WU: Thank you very much, Mr. Mihos. First question. How will you make workforce development, including job training, adult basic education, ESOL, and other essential training, an integral part of your jobs and economic development strategy?

CHRISTY MIHOS: Would you allow me one combination? May I answer the second and third questions first with a resounding absolutely, on both the second and third questions, and collect my thoughts on question one? And you can ask me any other questions, but is that possible?

JANET WU: I don't think so. We decided that every candidate is going to—**CHRISTY MIHOS:** But I'm independent! [LAUGHTER] [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: You're not the governor yet. When you're the governor, you can—

CHRISTY MIHOS: But thank you, that's a wonderful question. First and foremost, of the \$250 million in state and federal funds that are provided, I am going to appoint a secretary of labor who will answer to me directly, one on one with the governor of the Commonwealth. And the secretary of labor will dispense those funds efficiently in a one-stop shopping mode and focus. So that's one way we will go about it, certainly.

But another way is, we will cluster economic development regionally throughout the Commonwealth, and go after the jobs that the Commonwealth needs regionally. We were out in Springfield a few weeks ago and we introduced something where we're going to provide Springfield with—\$300 million to the University of Massachusetts system for direct billing for nanotechnology, biotech, all the other things that we want to go for, and then properly fund workforce training and development to those particular industries that we're going to bring forth. So, regionally, it's a wonderful idea. Springfield has been stepped on, stepped over, and stepped around. It's the right thing to do.

And further, further... I'm finished. [APPLAUSE] [LAUGHTER]

JANET WU: Okay, you didn't need all those minutes after all. Second question, and if you feel that you've answered the second question, and I feel you've answered the second question, you can use what time is left over and go back to your first answer.

CHRISTY MIHOS: Thank you very much.

JANET WU: In your first budget as governor, will you provide a public match that will support a workforce competitiveness trust fund, available to all workers and jobseekers, that equals the \$21 million workforce training fund that employers like yourself have now supported through a surcharge on unemployment taxes. And as I have asked the other candidates, we would like your thoughts on Governor Romney's recent veto of this line item.

CHRISTY MIHOS: Well, first, absolutely, to the question about proper funding, because it's important. As an employer and a small businessman I understand that it's important. But I do believe the veto is unconscionable. It's unconscionable to veto something at the same time, at the same time, they're letting \$55 million go through to the Boston Red Sox and their corporate partners in that area. What is wrong? What is wrong with this? Or \$31 million for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority? But workforce training gets zero. Unconscionable! And my sense is that the legislature will vote to override the veto.

But I'd also like to say this. It's great to bring jobs and fund the workforce system properly, but if you can't get to the right jobs that we need to get to, what good is it? So one of the first things I will do as governor of the Commonwealth is that I will fund and get done the Washington Street revitalization project and put fast light rail down Washington Street, just like Beacon Street has, and Commonwealth Avenue has, and Huntington has, because we might have to create jobs in the other parts of the state, the other parts of the city, but if you can't get there, what good is it?

So the Democrat legislature, Democrats for 50 years, Republican governors for 16, have promised you this. And everybody has taken a back seat to the interests of this particular community, so—

JANET WU: Could I draw you back to this question, sir, you are committed to the \$21 million?

CHRISTY MIHOS: Yes.

JANET WU: To this workforce competitive trust fund. Your opponents who are Democrats have not committed to it, but you are committed to the \$21 million.

CHRISTY MIHOS: They don't understand. They don't understand, because they've never hired anybody in the private sector, had to go out there, looking to get people who are well trained and understand how to do the job. So unless you hire people and run a business, you just do not understand how important it is.

JANET WU: Okay. Finally, the last question. Will you propose an \$8 million increase in adult basic education in your first budget as governor, and support increasing it further in subsequent years based on the availability of state revenues?

CHRISTY MIHOS: Absolutely. And if we fund education right, and this state gets started moving again, and we fund local aid the way it should be funded—Go on my website, christy2006.com, and look at Proposition 1. That's the cornerstone of my business and economic revitalization for the Commonwealth: real education reform. Getting the cities and towns the proper money so they can teach kids properly. Getting the right amount of money into the cities and towns of the Commonwealth so they can fund the essential services, like public safety, that each and every night in the city of Boston, and in some of its neighborhoods—in some of the cities and towns that begin with W's, Wayland, Weston, Cohasset, whatever, we would have the National Guard out there. [LAUGHTER] So, I do know my alphabet, sorry.

But go on my website, take a look at Proposition 1. Because unless we properly fund education and properly fund the cities and towns, all we're getting is more of the same. Which is unfunded mandates, real estate taxes going through the roof, and people leaving in record numbers, businesses leaving in record numbers, and who wants to stay, when the state is unaffordable? And the state legislature and the Romney-Healey Administration have decimated the middle class right now, and they're going after everybody else.

JANET WU: Can you give us a couple of ideas where you would cut, where you would get cash to pay for the programs that you want to increase, and where you would get money, as well, to cut these taxes you're talking about?

CHRISTY MIHOS: Well, we don't have to, the money is up there on Beacon Hill. We are taking money over the transom right now. We produced two budgets the last two years with record billion-dollar surpluses. We have \$1.7 billion in the rainy day fund, and three think tanks in the City of Boston say it's going to be a billion dollars each and every year. But, absolutely number one, I would put the Turnpike Authority out of its misery and out of business, number one. And give people back in Western Massachusetts, Central Massachusetts, and Metro West \$140 million each and every year that they've been paying for a road that they've paid for almost twice now. And there are other things; there are more state employees now when the population is declining.

JANET WU: And you now have two minutes for your closing remarks. [LAUGHTER]

CHRISTY MIHOS: Thank you very much. As an independent, I represent 50 percent of the registered voters here in the Commonwealth. That is the largest bloc of registered voters. And it's there for a reason. People have had it with the two-party system. There's not a dime's worth of difference between Democrats and Republicans. They've all sold out to special interests, and that's why I'm not taking any money from any lobbyists, state

employees, state contractors, or political action committees. I'll take their votes, but I won't take their money. [LAUGHTER]

The only people I will answer to, one special interest I will be beholden to, are the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who for too long now, who for too long, have accepted this tale on Beacon Hill that the money has to stay up on Beacon Hill and isn't disbursed properly to the cities and towns of the Commonwealth. That's your money! That's money for the cities and towns! And that's the only way we're going to grow this economy, to provide an education system that is well funded. I'm not for unfunded mandates. I'm not talking about increasing the MCAS scores, and at the same time, cutting funding for education at the local level, cutting back teachers, closing libraries. What are they thinking? What are they thinking?

So what we have to do is properly fund the cities and towns, get education right, and industry will come to Massachusetts. There's no business I know of that's going to come to a state where the local cities and towns are at war with their teachers, where the state government is at war with its cities and towns on proper funding. The money's on Beacon Hill. We've got to get it into the cities and towns and properly fund what is happening each and every day.

I want to be your governor. I'm unbought and unbossed. And I would consider it an honor that you be my boss next January. Thank you very much. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Our last testimonial tonight comes from Margarita Restrepo, who is a member of the executive board of SCIU, Local 615, and she is also a participant in the SkillWorks program.

MARGARITA RESTREPO: My name is Margarita Restrepo. I came from Colombia 20 years ago. I work at Whidden Hospital in Everett.

Because I am a janitor, I have been invisible. Well, no more. Thanks to my union, I have been studying English. Now, I feel good in my job because I can answer questions, give directions, and read instructions. People ask me where things are and I can tell them.

Some people think immigrants do not want to learn English. I want to show people it is not true.

When I came here 20 years ago, there were very few classes for adults. I had to work two jobs. I did not have time or money to take classes. And there are lots of people like me. Like me, there are thousands of immigrants who want to learn English to improve their lives, but they need opportunities. Not just for some people but for everyone.

Like me, there are thousands of Massachusetts residents who work hard and need a good job, but the jobs do not exist.

One of you will be the governor of this state. One of you will need to be a friend to workers. This is our challenge to you. You must unlock the skills of Massachusetts residents and create new good jobs and also improve the jobs people already have.

Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: Now I'm going to ask our last candidate to come out. Grace Ross is a candidate for governor from the Green Rainbow Party. [APPLAUSE] You have a minute for opening remarks.

GRACE ROSS: Great. I love being in this building. I don't know how other people feel about it, but it embodies to me the critically important struggle that this community has had in an ongoing victory in keeping education right here. And I always feel like it's an honor to be here, proud to be with all of you, and I thank SkillWorks for bringing us together.

I'm a community organizer by background, usually have spent my adult life backing campaigns for other people. And you may ask why have I stepped out now to run for governor? The answer is, in talking to people on the street and door knocking and seeing that folks are more hopeless and feel more disempowered now, and I was given a figure recently that told me why that probably was, and that's because the bottom 60 percent, which I think means all of us, are doing worse than we were five years ago.

So when we talk about job training, I want to put it in a context. A context of unemployment: the government figures are too low, because they measure who's collecting unemployment, not who's actually not working. Underemployment, where lots of us are working and not making enough money to live, and overemployment, with those of us who are making enough money but don't have time to live. So there are signs that something is wrong, and we've got to do something about it. What I know is that we must and we can.

JANET WU: The first question is, how will you make workforce development, including job training, adult basic education, ESOL, and other essential training, an integral part of your jobs and economic development strategy?

GRACE ROSS: Well, they have to be, obviously, because we have to have the skills to do the jobs that are out there. I wanted to step back for a second, though, and talk about the two assumptions in that question, economic development and the development of jobs. It's great to have the skills, but if the jobs that you need that pay enough to survive aren't there, then it's not really going to help us.

I'm offering something fundamentally different from what you're hearing from the other candidates in terms of economic development. We've had at least a couple of decades of the idea that the answer is to bring in a big company and give them a big tax break, and that's how we're going to get them and that's how we're going to get the jobs. What will

happen to that is that those big companies aren't invested in our local communities. They'll move on, the money that they make goes out of our communities and suburbs; we're experiencing a starvation in our local communities for money. There's plenty of work to be done renovating houses, fixing up our communities, but the money's not there to pay for it. So I'm offering something different. We need to do something that's been proven in lots of studies to work. We need to do things like increasing the minimum wage to a living wage. We need to provide universal health care. We need to make housing affordable.

And as we move the money into the hands of the regular people, they're not going to outsource themselves. I don't know about you, but I'm not putting my extra money in my offshore tax shelter. So we really need to look at the question, if we bring the money in that way, guess who it helps? It helps small businesses. Small businesses provide about half of our jobs. They tend to be local, they tend to be the kinds of jobs that we're looking for when we're looking for jobs and we don't have the ability to travel long distances. And it puts money back in our communities, both in our pockets as workers, but also in the pockets of small business owners who are also local investors in our communities.

It actually kind of balances out the playing field for small businesses, because when they're competing against the Wal-Marts, they tend to pay very close to minimum wage. They can't compete, but when the Wal-Marts have to pay for health care and provide the same kind of income levels, then small businesses do better, we get jobs, and we get the money to survive.

JANET WU: Thank you. And your second question. In your first budget as governor, will you provide a public match that will support a workforce competitiveness trust fund, available to all workers and job seekers, and that equals the \$21 million workforce training fund that employers now support through a surcharge on unemployment taxes? And I'll ask you what I asked all the previous candidates, your thoughts on Governor Romney's recent veto of this line item.

GRACE ROSS: I was there. I oppose the veto. We know that we need the money to do the skill development. It needs to happen in the context of having those jobs to fill. I certainly support the \$21 million, partly because I know that a lot of the experts in this field, those of you who are on the ground, have said, that's how much money you need, and I trust your leadership. One of the things I think about leadership, it comes from the communities and from the grassroots and from the people who actually are living the experience.

Obviously, we need to assess how it gets spent, and we've got to deal with these issues around coordination. I know a lot of folks, as a community organizer, who want ESL classes, want GED classes, and they're not in my region. I've worked in MetroWest, which is rural and small cities, and suburban, and people can't get to the training courses that are there. So we definitely need to get the coordination.

Then we need to look at the reason why—In the materials, the businesses have identified about a huge need for folks with Associate's degrees or better. If anybody's been watching all the press coverage about who's leaving the state, it's folks with Bachelor's degrees.

Does anybody see that there's kind of a mismatch here? If the jobs are here, why are folks leaving? I think we need to look at the larger issues that the state is responsible for, like living wages that are on a scale that people can afford. Housing, we need to deal with affordable housing. We need to deal with universal health care. And we need to create jobs where they can be. And it's interesting that Deval Patrick has picked up on one of my favorite topics, finally, which is that global warming's coming down on us very hard and fast, and it's a huge growth industry. If we find a way to save our communities, we're also going to save ourselves. And there's a lot of jobs to be made retooling our energy dependence and where we're getting energy from. And a lot of those will be union jobs and will provide good technology and skills for all of us. So, let's make it happen.

JANET WU: Finally, the last question. Will you propose at least an \$8 million increase in adult basic education in your first budget as governor, and support increasing it further in subsequent years, based on the availability of state revenues?

GRACE ROSS: Based on the availability of state revenues, yes, but I think we also need to look at the need, and I think the need is way beyond \$8 million. Yes, we can do \$8 million in the first year, I'm sure, but I think we're going to find that if we really meet the needs and if we create a workforce and a living force of people who can speak to each other and who have the skills necessary to move our economy forward, we're going to find it's worth a much bigger investment than \$8 million.

I also wanted to say that, you know, we're talking about funding adult education and ESL, but part of the reason we're needing to do that is because we have a huge dropout rate at this point. We are not providing the funding that public education needs to provide smaller classrooms, which is how a lot of us got through school, and we need to deal with the MCAS requirement that's making particularly lower-income and students of color drop out of school faster. So we need that money, but we need it not just in those programs, we need it in education in general. We've got to cut the fee structure for our higher education institutions as well, so that we continue to serve the folks that are now being priced out again, the low-income students and students of color.

And then we need to make programs ESL and adult education available in our local schools and in those institutions of higher education, and moving backwards, fund them in the workplace. A lot of the unions have fought for basic education and ESL classes through the union structure as a way of reaching workers who otherwise might not have the time available, either during their work schedule or their day schedule to go to such classes. So we've got to find places for them, but we've also got to prepare our younger students so that they're not dropping out, and the rest of us who might want to go back for further degrees will be able to afford that and not endanger our future economic

survival or indenture us to a job that we don't want, because we've got student loans we can't afford.

JANET WU: Very quickly, where would you get this extra cash for these programs? Would you take it out of the stabilization or rainy day fund, or would you cut other programs, and what other programs would you cut? You've only got a few seconds, if you could answer that very quickly.

GRACE ROSS: I believe in raising revenues. We've also got a billion dollars in sweetheart breaks for corporations. We've lost about \$3 billion because people at the bottom are paying a higher percentage in total taxes and fees than the folks at the top, and if we just even out the percentage we're all paying, we get \$3 billion more a year, and there's more like that. The money's there. We live in one of the richest states in the richest country in the world, and we've got the resources. We've just got to decide to put them toward what we all need.

JANET WU: And you have two minutes for your closing remarks.

GRACE ROSS: Well, I guess I've said it. I think that what's really important here is that we start to understand that education and job training fits in with a life cycle that we're all trying to live and that training needs to happen where we can afford it and where we can fit it into our schedules. Right now, most of us are working longer hours for less money. Many of us don't get to see our friends or our family or our kids, and I think our whole society is suffering from that.

I've talked about the concept of a beloved community, whether it's the state level, our beloved Commonwealth. I grew up in New York State, and when I came here, I was very excited about the concept of being in a commonwealth. I thought, what a cool idea. The wealth being used for the common good. Wow. [LAUGHTER] And I still think that's a good idea.

So I think that there's a fundamental values question here, you know. Deval Patrick referred to something that a number of us have talked about. Reilly has too, about neighborhoods where, when you did something wrong and your parents weren't around, you knew it would get back to them anyway because someone else's parents were around. Our kids don't have those kinds of communities, and the issue of the amount we get paid at our jobs, the number of hours we have to put in, the availability of jobs, and then the job training necessary to get us the jobs we need, are all part of that overall picture, but we need to make the decision, are our lives going to become about our communities and our children and our future and beginning to care about each other? Not like, in New Orleans, where folks got left behind because nobody could figure out how to evacuate them. Or is it going to be about the way it is now, where we're putting all of our resources in our communities into trying to entice some more big businesses in to come save us.

I think we can save ourselves. We always have. We are the people who got the 40-hour work week. We ended slavery. We got the vote. We built the battered women's shelters that were a means of escape. So let's reclaim our job training program, but let's do it in the context of reclaiming the economy, which really belongs to us. [APPLAUSE]

JANET WU: That concludes our program tonight. This was *Building a 21st Century Workforce*, a forum on jobs and opportunity, with the candidates for governor.