

JANET WU: 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]