

JANET WU: 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]