

JANET WU: 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]