

My Report to You

An update for Bourne, Carver & Wareham

From State Rep. Susan Williams Gifford

October, 2010



More Jobs, Lower Taxes, Changing Beacon Hill

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More jobs, lower taxes, changing Beacon Hill. These are not simply words on a campaign mailer. I have made these my policy focus as your state representative.

Whether it has been economic development through funding for Buzzards Bay development projects or by preventing the closure of Wareham District Court, I have always been acutely aware of the need for long-term, sustainable economic development to create and maintain good jobs in our area.

On page 2 I talk about some specific examples of what I have done and what I will continue to do to promote private sector job creation.

The tax burden has gotten

out of control. I lost the fight to cut spending instead of raising taxes in 2009. They voted for higher sales taxes, adding a tax to alcohol, a nursing home tax, registry fee increases and more. They did this to fund an increasing state budget. I stood up and was one of only a few to vote against that budget. They now talk

about increasing the gas tax and adding a progressive income tax. My colleagues are out of touch.

On November 2nd, we have the chance to send them a message. Read my take on the ballot questions on page 3 and about our tax policy on page 4.

I wish Beacon Hill had more people joining with me in protecting taxpayers and putting local aid ahead of wasteful spending on growing state government. Unfortunately, the special interests have a strong hold on so many people up there. I am proud to say that I'm fighting for the rest of us.



Susan

Newsflash!!

- Election Day is Tuesday Nov 2nd
- October 21st Mass Jobs Report says towns lost 1,400 jobs in Sept. while State Government added 400!

Accessibility - Job #1

While I have worked tirelessly to ensure you have an effective voice on Beacon Hill, I have always believed that my primary role is to answer directly to you.

I get thousands of calls every year from people like you. Whether they need help wading through the red tape of government or want

to share their opinion on an upcoming policy matter, I have always been there to take your call - and I always will.

I take great pride in living here, shopping here and dining here. I cannot tell you how often I am stopped at the grocery store or out at dinner or at

the gas station. I am thrilled that people feel they can approach me at any time with any question or issue.

Whether you meet me in town, call my office, attend monthly office hours or make an appointment to meet me at my District Office - my top priority is being available and accountable to you.

Illegal Immigration Continues as Hot Topic *Perry Amendment Sees More Election Year Support Gifford Backs It For Second Year In A Row*

OFFICE HOURS

Held one Friday a month at the following locations. Check your newspaper for the date and time each month or call 508-295-5999.

Of course, meetings may also be scheduled by appointment.

BOURNE:
Town Hall, lobby

CARVER:
Town Hall, Room 205

**WAREHAM: 191
Main St, Suite 213F**

Illegal Immigration is a hot national and state issue. The Arizona Law was the talk of the nation for months. On Beacon Hill, a proposal by Sandwich State Rep. Jeff Perry grabbed local headlines even though his identical 2009 amendment got little attention.

Perry's Amendment would require proof of legal residency in Massachusetts before state benefits could be provided. That means if you cannot prove you live here, you cannot get benefits paid by our state tax dollars. The proposal was limited to just a few of the dozens of publicly funded services available now to illegal immigrants. The move was brought up as a cost-savings measure and given the current financial condition of the state, every

dollar saved will help get more money for local services.

Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, the measure failed. For the second year in a row, the prevailing position was to cut local aid rather than cut benefits for illegal immigrants. While ludicrous, in 2009 they blocked the Perry amendment and instead cut local aid AND raised more than 5 taxes, including a 25% increase in the sales tax.

The truth is that there are no perfect answers, but to place a larger burden on taxpayers struggling to stay in their homes, through local aid cuts and higher taxes is the wrong direction. In these difficult times for citizens and legal immigrants, the burden of supporting illegal immigrants is unfair, inequitable and unnecessary. We need leaders

who have the courage to make difficult choices, and who have the ability to say no to spending measures which just do not make sense.

I supported the Perry Amendment in 2009 and 2010 and it is just one example of the many times I have stood up for common sense over special interests and partisan positioning.

Nationally, we must address the problem of illegal immigration. While the proposed solutions vary widely, the discourse on the topic is finally progressing. As a state, we must have the ability to make and enforce local rules, but the federal government must step up to make this a more manageable problem for the states.

Jobs and Economic Development

Part of the job is getting funding for local economic development projects, like the \$800,000 delivered to Wareham for community development and fixing up older homes seniors in public housing, which funded construction jobs in Wareham. Some of the work is making strides to create a more business friendly climate so jobs do not leave this state, like freezing unemployment insurance rates and reducing the burden of the cost of health care for small businesses. It is also being available when constituents who have been hammered by the economy need help navigating unemployment, MassHealth or retraining programs.

My record on these matters is clear and strong. One of the priorities this year has been ensuring Wareham

District Court stays open. The court, which brings hundreds of people a day into that area, was slated for closure. The move was not expected to save much money for the state, as they would move the employees to other courthouses, but it would mean fewer customers for Wareham and Carver businesses, more cost for police departments and ultimately property tax payers, and would be a real disservice to those of us in this area. So far we have been successful in keeping to court open.

That is one of many matters where I have taken the lead to grow or preserve our local economy. Through tax policy, easing of regulations or specific funding for local projects, jobs will continue to be at the top of my list.

Rep. Gifford gets 11 local stops on Tourist Board "Great Places" in Massachusetts.

Onset Beach
Edaville Railroad
Cape Cod Canal Bike Path
Bicycle Trails of Carver

AD Makepeace Store
Cranberry Bog Farms Trail
Tremont Nail Company

Plymouth County Cranberry Country Rts 28/58
Herring Run Rec Area at the Cape Cod Canal
Porter Thermometer Museum
Aptucxet Trading Post Museum

Top Legislator x 2



Susan collected top honors from the Mass Marine Trades Association and the Mass. Sportsmen's Council in 2010. Her work on behalf of the district's interests was noticed by both groups and each provided her with recognition. The Marine Trades group praised her for "protecting public waterways and widening opportunities for small business growth" and the Sportsmen's Council gave her credit for "protecting the Commonwealth's most valued recreation conservation areas".

Susan said, "when you are doing good things for your district, groups like this sometimes stand up and notice. These are both honors which reflect my support for our local economy and local natural resources."

Rep. Gifford Keynotes Upper Cape Tech Graduation



Rep. Gifford spoke to the 156 graduates at the Upper Cape Technical High School in Bourne this spring.

She jokingly told the largest Upper Cape Tech graduating class that their parents are proud, "Now would be a good time to ask for money."

She told parents not to be nannies, butlers, maids or ATMs, but to support the graduates and challenge them to solve their own problems.

Susan advised to "work hard, play hard and find something good in every single day". "Don't forget where you came from and never lose sight of where you're going."

Question 1

Repeal Alcohol Tax

This is an easy Yes. Taxing a tax is wrong. Adding more pressure to businesses is the wrong answer in a tough economy. We pay the tax at the wholesale level now. To add a sales tax on top of that excise tax is patently unfair to businesses and consumers and is just plain bad policy.

Question 2

Affordable Housing - 40b

I will vote yes. I have been fighting to make some minor changes to 40b to allow towns to better comply. Beacon Hill leaders have refused to make any changes and it is ludicrous that people have had to bring this topic to the ballot box to get them to open their eyes. By getting us back to the drawing board, I hope we can finally fix some of the flaws in this law. Affordable Housing is a real issue that I am not turning my back on, but 40b is a flop.

Question 3

Sales Tax to 3%

I voted against the sales tax increase, but this question is to bring it to 3%, not back to 5%. I agree that 5% is the right number, for now. Advocates argue that if we vote no, we are telling Boston leaders that we agree with 6.25% and they are right. The truth is that 3% may be too tough right now and 6.25% is just plain wrong. I support the idea of sending a message and I hope my peers hear the message loud and clear, but I disagree with this reduction to 3%.

Casinos or Racinos? Beacon Hill Fails Again

Do you believe that casino gambling is a good answer to some of the economic and revenue problems of our state? Well I am not sure, but the Beacon Hill leadership and Governor Patrick, agreed that it is. In fact, they made it a priority for 2010.

How sad is it that even when they agree, they cannot get it done? Speaker DeLeo was beholden to his hometown racetracks who needed slots and Patrick and Senator Murray were focused on casinos, surely in part due to the massive lobbying money focused on them.

So, when push came to shove, nothing happened. A "compromise" bill

passed the Legislature, but was vetoed by the Governor. Days later one racetrack closed its doors, laying off its last workers. A few weeks later, another one. I am not saying racinos are the answer, but this was their supposed answer to creating and saving jobs and the leadership on Beacon Hill failed again.

I voted for the final bill, even though there were some flaws. I voted against my party leaders when it came to a measure to allow slots only through a bid process, rather than no-bid deals for race tracks. My party leaders voted with the Democrats on that, and I understand their desire to preserve jobs, but if

we can get an extra \$10 million or more by putting the slot licenses out to bid, then we owe it to the taxpayers to do that. While I lost on that vote, I made sure my party knew I was voting for what is right - and not blindly along party lines.

I look forward to having more folks on Beacon Hill who, like me, will stand up and fight for the interests of their constituents. Next year, there will be more people willing to tell the leadership of both parties when they are off-base. People who will stand up and fight to preserve local aid, taxpayer rights and to create an environment to foster job growth. If that happens, we all win.

Legislative Update

Of many matters of impact locally, I want to report on a couple.

#1. I successfully fought to get the costs of the U.S. Senate Special Election reimbursed to towns. The measure provided an extra \$48,000 to our towns during a difficult budget year.

Since cuts to local aid have been pushed down, over the objection of a few like me, victories like this are even more important.

#2 Prescription Advantage was on the chopping block in this year's budget. It is simply baffling to me that they think it is ok to hire thousands more state workers while cutting programs to retirees fighting high costs of health care.

Along with several of my peers, I fought to get it moved up on the priority list and finally got it funded. The program provides tangible help to struggling seniors yet it was not a priority.

Wrong Tax Policy

The past two years have seen our tax policies de-rail. Proposals to increase the gas tax from 19 cents to \$2 a gallon, increasing income taxes back to 12%+, and making back-door changes to allow property taxes to go up more than 2 1/2% a year. These are just a few of the many tax proposals I helped beat back.

Unfortunately, there were some significant tax increases which were enacted over the objections of a few of us. They raised the sales tax by 25%, added a tax on nursing home beds and started taxing alcohol.

Taxpayers have had enough and have taken the issue to the people in two ballot questions this year.

As Beacon Hill leaders decry the reduction of the sales tax, new figures are released this month

which say cutting the sales tax will add nearly 30,000 new jobs. It can be hard to know who to believe.

I have always believed, as I do now, that tax cuts stimulate the economy. This is never more important than in difficult financial times. You may remember the ads run by Scott Brown featuring President John Kennedy embracing this same premise.

I believe that tax increases are only a way to sustain growing government and not a way to get people back to work.

That is why I promised to never support increasing your taxes. It is a promise I have kept - and will continue to keep.

We need to tighten the belt of state government, not keep feeding it candy!

The Gifford Committee
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Wareham Boys Basketball Receives a Citation from State Rep. Susan Gifford after winning the Boys Division 3 Championship.

Looking forward to another great year in local sports!