



Frost: Introducing Alan Khazei

By Toby Frost/Columnist

Thu Nov 05, 2009, 05:51 AM EST

Lincoln - Last Sunday afternoon, I carved a precious hour out of my crammed schedule to go to Concord to meet Alan Khazei, one of the four Democratic candidates for Ted Kennedy's Senate seat.

I couldn't have made a better choice.

Sarah Compton, who introduced Khazei, said she'd met him a year ago, and couldn't believe she'd never heard of him.

His reaction?

"A lot of people haven't!"

That was an example of Khazei's quick, sometimes playful responses — but he offers far more than witty repartee.

Compton, who also worked on the Obama campaign and said she'd been ready for a break, joined Khazei's campaign because she felt compelled to. She said that she has come to know, trust, and believe in him and his "progressive compass."

Who is Alan Khazei?

His Italian mother is a nurse, and his Iranian father a doctor. Yes, his father came from Iran, but Alan grew up here — and I have never, ever heard anyone who sounded more genuinely and idealistically American. (By the way, he pronounces his name "K-Z" — rhyming with "Daisy").

On Oct 21, Boston Globe columnist Scott Lehigh wrote a piece, entitled "Khazei's Dynamic Flair," a reaction to the presentations of the four candidates for Kennedy's seat at an Oct. 18 forum in North Andover. Lehigh doesn't generally reveal great enthusiasm for political figures, but he did this time.

Paid for by Citizens for Alan Khazei.

PRINTED IN-HOUSE.

“The real story ... turned out to be citizen activist Alan Khazei, who sparkled where the [other candidates] plodded,” he wrote. “Although I tend to be suspicious of candidates who want to start at the top, Khazei, 48, has long been a change agent.”

Khazei, a Harvard Law School graduate, is the co-founder of City Year, which pays young people a stipend to spend 10 months doing community service.

In his campaign for Senate, he is calling for “Big Citizenship.” As he presented it to us on Sunday, this platform includes:

- An economy that works for everyone.
- Change through community efforts, because innovators and entrepreneurs, not government, drive change.
- Public/private partnerships to “recapture America with a good job for everyone who wants one, and support for small businesses.”
- Universal health care, including medical malpractice reform. Khazei reminded us that Kennedy is the reason Massachusetts has embraced universal health care.
- Using the climate change crisis for economic opportunity and national security.
- Breaking down barriers like “Don't Ask, Don't Tell”
- Stopping casino gambling, because it would fundamentally change the state, and because every dollar gambled would result in three dollars in costs to the community.

And while Khazei has had experience in Washington, and knows how it works, he is adamant that he will refuse all PAC and lobby funds.

Khazei also did a great job with our Q&A, but I was blown away when we ran out of time at the end, and he invited five or six individuals waving their hands to ask their questions, and then remembered and answered all of them, without notes.

We don't have a lot of time to mull over this election — the primary is Dec 8.

To find out more about Alan Khazei, or to offer your support, go to his Web site (www.alanforsenate.com) or call his office at 617-695-2526.