

# THE HUFFINGTON POST



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## Politicians and a Dark Horse

Politicians almost always dwell near the bottom of polls reflecting public respect. Yet, almost always, Americans who vote do so for one politician or another. That's because they are almost never given a choice.

Let's agree that a politician is an elected official who wants to make public office a career. The conventional way to do that is to occupy some amorphous "center," make as many people happy as possible, know how to "work a room" -- that is, schmooze and charm -- and never exhibit innovation, let alone courage.

Ironically enough, the Massachusetts contest to replace Senator Edward Kennedy, one of the most courageous politicians of our time, offers one candidate who is a public servant, not a conventional politician. Alan Khazei, one of the founders of City Year, the prototype for AmeriCorps, is as close as we have to a Mr. (or Ms.) National Service.

Alan Khazei has never held nor even sought public office. Yet here he is campaigning for the U.S. Senate to replace a political icon. He has ignited public interest in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the country by his demonstration of grassroots political and financial support. He refuses PAC money and he offers responses to the challenges of the day that are new, different, and creative. His campaign theme is Big Democracy, the responsibility of citizens to take control of their everyday political lives.

For those of us who have the soul of the darkhorse, Khazei represents the same hope Barack Obama did in 2008. If you haven't heard about him now, you will very soon and, possibly, in a big and surprising way.

Paid for by Citizens for Alan Khazei.

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