



ALAN KHAZEI

EDITORIAL ENDORSEMENT

DECEMBER 5, 2009

Impressed with his insight, depth of knowledge on local, national and international issues, ability to build broad-based coalitions and grassroots networks, we recommend Alan Khazei in the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate. He is exactly the kind of man that Washington needs.

No, he is not an insider like U.S. Rep. Michael Capuano, nor experienced in statewide politics like Attorney General Martha Coakley, but Khazei brings a fresh perspective to this race that we embrace and support.

As the founder of City Year of Boston, Khazei led the national service movement and has been a champion of civic engagement and entrepreneurship for more than 20 years. He not only believes in the power of people making a difference, his determined race to pick up the torch carried so far and so well by Sen. Ted Kennedy is an extension of his deep belief in public service.

He calls this torch "Big Citizenship," which challenges all Americans to serve their country. "Big Citizenship means that being an American is more than paying taxes and voting once every four years. It means more than complaining about social problems while we leave them for someone else to solve. It means each of us must all engage together in solving the most complicated problems of our time."

A Big Citizen is a teacher who signs up to teach in the toughest school; a senior who shares his or her lifetime of knowledge to local civic organizations; a corporation that decides going green isn't just good values, it's good business; a dad who learns English so he can help his kid with homework.

Although he has never held elected office, Khazei is no stranger to politics and knows how to get things done. Just look at what he did to get Congress to approve a new national service program: He worked with Democrats and Republicans, business executives and local activists to make it happen. He is a skilled coalition builder and his efforts will result in hundreds of thousands of volunteers making their communities better places to live.

While the candidates in the Democratic primary are similar on many issues, Khazei is arguably the most progressive in his ideas, infusing his traditional party values with pragmatic ideas, such as investing stimulus dollars in jobs creation, a position he staked out early in the campaign.

We do not agree with all of his positions on important issues, which is true for each candidate in the Democratic primary race, but Khazei is polished and articulate, draws his opinions from a host of experts and isn't afraid to take a position outside the populist point of view.

On local matters, we were not impressed by most of the candidates' knowledge of Cape and Islands' issues — except Khazei, who supported regionalization efforts here and ways to strengthen the tourist economy. The other candidates could not fully articulate even one local issue of consequence, and there are many from which to choose. It's not the only reason Cape residents should vote for a candidate, but they should feel comfortable in the belief that their interests will be represented not only globally but also locally.

In choosing to run for Kennedy's seat, clearly Khazei has dedicated a lot of energy and thought to the race and still it's fair to say he is the dark horse candidate. He entered the campaign with the least name recognition, no elected experience and no statewide political base. But he possesses so many intangible gifts and has such potential that we cannot help but support his candidacy.