FORWARD, TOGETHER
Moving Beyond Polarization and Gridlock in Washington, DC

by
Chris Stockwell, Independent Candidate for U.S. Congress
Massachusetts 6th District
O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears.

America! America!
God mend thine ev’ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.

America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.

Excerpts from “America the Beautiful,” an American patriotic song
Written by Kathleen Lee Bates, and composed by Samuel A. Ward
Combined music and poem published 1910
Forward

In 2012 my book “The Swing Vote: The Untapped Power of Independents” was published. I wrote that book because as a journalist covering American politics and government at the local, state and national levels for many years I have grown increasingly concerned about the partisanship and mounting influence of special interests and money on the legislative process. While researching “The Swing Vote” I traveled the country for several years talking with voters - the people to whom American politics should belong but hasn’t for so long – and hearing their concerns and frustrations about the system.

Increasingly our politicians have put personal ambition before national interest. The two political parties no longer seem able to work together and our government has grown unresponsive and dysfunctional, unable to meet the significant challenges facing this nation.

Polls show public trust and satisfaction in our political leaders, parties and institutions at record lows and public engagement in the political system is declining.

More voters now identify as Independents than either Democrats or Republicans. “Unaffiliated” is by far the fastest growing group of voters – recently measured by Gallup at 46 percent of the electorate. In Massachusetts, a majority of voters are unaffiliated.

But centrists and Independents are not being represented by the political system and the disconnect between so many voters and the people elected to represent them is eroding trust in our political system and its effectiveness.

There is an enormous desire for something different and that is why Chris Stockwell’s Independent candidacy for Congress is so important. Political change will not happen from inside the system. It must be leveraged by shifting the incentives driving political behavior, empowering Independent voters and electing socially tolerant, fiscally responsible, environmentally conscious centrist Independent candidates like Chris Stockwell.

Chris Stockwell is not a career politician controlled by partisans and special interests. He will represent all of the citizens of the Sixth District.

By electing centrist Independents like Chris Stockwell to office we can form a wedge to forge legislative compromise and serve as a bridge between the two parties making problem solving and governing possible.

There are many talented people with a great deal to offer who don’t run for office as Independents because they have no support network and because of the many institutional barriers to entry into the political system. What Chris Stockwell is trying to do is incredibly difficult and he deserves enormous credit for taking the plunge and mounting a campaign to talk about these important issues.

In January 1776 Thomas Paine published a 60-page pamphlet titled “Common Sense” which became one of the most important documents in American history. Paine used clear, simple and straightforward arguments to make the case for American independence and the creation of a democratic republic to be governed by the people.

Sadly, many Americans believe that hard-won democracy is slipping away along with the American dream because of the influence of special interests and money. Our dysfunctional, polarized political system controlled by political and party elites seems incapable of dealing with the serious issues and choices facing this nation.

We are at a crossroads. We can continue to do things the way we have been doing them and expect a different result - not likely - or make a fundamental change in our political life that will benefit all citizens, improve our democratic institutions and insure the future strength and prosperity of this nation.
Independent voters today must assert their rights and demand true democracy from their leaders. They must make their voices heard, they must insist that the two political parties listen to them and they must take back the system.

We must decide as a nation and a people if we will continue down the path of division and dysfunction or if we will rise up and take back our government from the parties and special interests which control it.

In the crush of everyday responsibilities we have lost sight of how important it is for citizens to be vigilant and active to safeguard our democratic institutions. Voters have to get up off the couch and get involved.

The United States faces real and very serious problems: security threats posed by terrorists who want to harm this nation and its people; our massive national debt and deficit; our aging population which will strain our financial resources and require changes to entitlement programs including Medicare and Social Security; our crumbling infrastructure; our loss of a manufacturing base; our need to create good paying jobs in this country and to invest in research and technology so that we can compete globally especially with rising powers like China and India; our need to do away with our reliance on foreign oil and find new, sustainable energy sources and security threats.

We cannot solve these problems by fighting and blaming each other. Finding solutions to these problems will require our working together – Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

In “Common Sense” Thomas Paine wrote “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”

Too many Americans, especially Independent/Swing voters are frustrated and disillusioned with the political system and resigned to its current state. They think it’s impossible to change anything and there’s no point in trying. But change is what democracy is all about and we do have it in our power to begin again.

The effort by Chris Stockwell and other Independent candidates like him around the country is essential to that change.

The United States has always been a beacon of freedom for the rest of the world and risen to the challenges it faced. We cannot cede our leadership position and the future because it seems too hard to try.

On June 17th 1825, fifty years to the day after the Battle of Bunker Hill, the first major battle in the Revolutionary war, Daniel Webster spoke at the ceremony to lay the cornerstone for the Boston monument which commemorates that battle. “Let our age be the age of improvement,” Webster said. “Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its powers, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered.”

This is an effort that is worthy to be remembered.

I hope voters who feel ignored, fed up and shut out of the system will join this campaign, get involved and speak out. Together we can change the system.

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AN URGENT CALL
TO THE TRUE AMERICAN MAJORITY:
RISE UP AND BE HEARD

A case for building a credible and overwhelming response to the current gridlock and well documented leadership failure of America’s far right and far left fringes.

CITIZENS
OF
AMERICA,

The United States federal debt crisis of 2011 proved to all reasonable Americans that our legislative processes are crippled by the loud, powerful, bullying voices of the fringe(s). By October, 2014 we have seen no improvement at all. Polarization and gridlock rule the day and little progress has been made to solve for the important issues of our time.

We are tired of the antics of the national parties. Together, they have created gridlock and have failed to lead and to govern responsible.

Most of us populate the center-left and center-right quadrants of the political spectrum, away from both fringes. Yet, the fringes rule our country. They do not speak for most of us.

How can we, the true majority by any measure, win back our country? Win back reason?

Reasonable Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, rise up! Unite together and be heard.

I. Introduction

My name is Chris Stockwell and I am running as the Independent candidate for the US House of Representatives in the Massachusetts 6th District. I have no political playbook to show me a proven path to victory. I have no party apparatus to lean on. I have no high paid consultants from out of state devising my strategy; no million dollar budgets. I have no Political Action Committees (PACs) or Super PACs backing me in hopes of gaining influence as they secure for me a seat in Congress.

I am outgunned by the Republican and Democratic parties who are desperate to win this seat in Congress. I am a David amongst two mighty Goliaths. But what I am offering to this race are new ideas and a vision for how to move this nation forward.

My campaign has a vision for a better tomorrow and offers a path forward that is original and bold. All over the Sixth District voters are responding to this message. The Democratic and Republican campaigns propped up by millions of dollars aren’t focusing on the most important issue of all: that the political system in Washington, DC has been broken by the parties themselves, and it cannot fix itself.

I have courage and conviction. I have the strength of family, friends, colleagues, and community. They’ve got the money, but our campaign has the answers. We are on the right side of history, and we’re going to write it, together.

This is a big election. It’s our chance, as Independents, as well as Democrats and Republicans who are fed up with the status quo to rise up and make our voices heard. It’s our opportunity to help a struggling nation by introducing a new vision for change.

I am not running to represent the Republican or Democratic parties. I am running to represent the people of the Sixth District of Massachusetts – all of you.
I am asking now for your help, and to join me in this important effort. Please donate some of your time to this campaign, talk to your friends, and send this message to others in any way that you can. Hold an event or plant a sign in your front yard or in your window, or even contribute a few dollars.

As your US Representative in Washington I will listen and I will serve you with integrity along with all the wisdom and courage that I can muster. Please vote for me, the Independent, on November 4th.

Chris Stockwell

II. Why I am Running For Congress

The upcoming election for the Massachusetts 6th Congressional District needs to be about more than who will replace the Hon. John Tierney as our next Congressman. It is an opportunity to begin fixing our broken political system.

We need new approaches in Washington, DC. The current approaches aren’t working. The underlying problem is partisanship and gridlock brought on by our uncompromising national political parties. While they battle, our social and economic divide widens. Businesses leaders see continued risk and uncertainty in Washington’s dysfunction, and so refrain from major job creation initiatives, keeping the economy from fuller recovery more than 5 years after the Great Recession’s end. We remain saddled with $17 Trillion in debt with no plan to confront it.

So many Millennials feel disenfranchised, powerless, and don’t see why they should vote because nothing ever changes. Both sides of the great political divide stand at attention, bayonets drawn, and feet firmly planted - in cement.

All across the country independents are stirring. Right now, Independent candidates are challenging the system. Independent Greg Orman may win his Senate race in Kansas. Independent Jim Jenkins of Nebraska is polling strongly and just gained the endorsement of the Lincoln Journal Star. Former Republican Senator Larry Pressler, running as an Independent, is neck and neck with the major party candidates in South Dakota’s senate election. Their campaign vision and ideas are very similar to mine – Washington is broken and the parties can’t fix it.

Now is the perfect time to elect an unaffiliated Independent to the US House of Representatives. It is the best and boldest path forward for us all. We need to send a resounding message to the national parties: Since you aren’t working together to find solutions to the important issues of our time, we’re not going to elect your candidates.
We need to chart a better path forward that over time will allow new political leaders to emerge from both parties and from the ranks of the unaffiliated who will come together to bring good governance back to Washington.

I am running because I believe it is incredibly important to try and fix our broken political system. I hope that you can help me by spreading this message far and wide. Time is running out but we can do this together.

III. Who am I?

I am one of the normally silent, Moderate Middle Majority of hardworking Americans who expect our leaders to get things done. Joanie (my wife of 29 years) and I have been busy these past few decades raising our family and trying to do the right things for our communities and for society. I’m an experienced businessman of 30 years, and also an active community volunteer for many causes. I have a wide range of professional and life experiences.

I’m an Independent (“Unenrolled” as they call us here in Massachusetts), which means that I am not affiliated with any political party.

My Personal Story

Upbringing and Education. My father’s family landed in Ipswich in 1671 and settled in the North Shore and western Massachusetts. I was born in Syracuse, New York in 1961 and grew up in Farmington, Connecticut. My Mom and Dad raised me and three brothers and instilled in us the value and importance of public service. My Dad is a retired physician (the kind who made house calls!). My Mom has been active in her community for 50 years. She has been a member and chair of the town Board of Education for many years, and the first female chair of the Town Council, Farmington’s governing body. We all went through the Farmington public school system K-12, as did my future wife and her family. I attended Northwestern University, graduating in 1983 with a degree in political science.

After two years working in Minnesota, I returned to Chicago to attend Northwestern’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management, earning my Master’s in Management (MBA) in 1987.

Husband and Father. I began dating my wife Joanie on October 7, 1977. We were juniors in High School, at the time. We married in 1985, and over 29 years of marriage we’ve been very busy raising three children who are now ages 16, 21, and 23. Our children each attended Marblehead public schools, and my sons have been further educated at the University of Massachusetts – Amherst.

I have first-hand knowledge of the joys and struggles of raising a family in this economy, buying and maintaining a home, trying to get ahead; supporting the community with what little time is left over; working 60+ hour weeks; trying to save for college and retirement, etc. I’ve been doing my level-best for my family and for our community my entire adult life.

Business Man and Job Creator

Highly valuing private enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship, I’ve spent my career helping develop startup, small and larger businesses. I’m a senior vice president at GEI Consultants, Inc., a consulting engineering and scientific firm based in Woburn that I joined in 2006. We are experts in geotechnical, environmental and water resources engineering and ecology, and have completed wonderful projects across the 6th District since the 1970s. I lead the marketing effort, and am a member of the executive team reporting to our president. We’ve grown 130% during my tenure to $104 Million in sales FY2015. During that time, we’ve expanded from about 300 staff to nearly 700, and expanded from 17 to 34 offices across America.

My 30-year business career also includes being the 3rd employee in a software startup that grew to over 50 staff; a billion dollar international company who’s Danvers-based US operations doubled in size during my 5 years leading its North American marketing and sales; and a dotcom that I created and co-founded.
just months prior to the 2000 crash, bootstrapping for several years while releasing a solid, best-in-class service. Common across my roles has been planning for enterprise growth and expansion. If jobs, job creation and economic growth are important to you, you will want to pay close attention to my qualifications, and compare them with the other candidates.

Community Leader. I’ve always played a significant and supportive role within our community. I’ve been a coach for more than two dozen youth athletic teams in Marblehead. As my first two children went on to UMASS Amherst, I turned my attention to supporting non-profits as both a youth mentor for an area non-profit based in Lynn called RAW Artworks, and as a supporter of Essex County Community Organization (ECCO), which is very active across Northeastern Massachusetts, most recently in supporting the ballot initiative and passage of Minimum Wage legislation in Massachusetts. I’ve also been active in my Episcopal parish as a leader and choir member since 1994, including two terms on the leadership team (Vestry), as well as membership on the successful new rector search committee in 2010.

IV. Finding My Political Voice

During the housing crisis and ensuing economic collapse in 2008, I watched in frustration as Washington politicians and the two parties failed to address and resolve many of the serious issues facing the nation. So many leaders were asleep at the wheel – regulators, politicians, citizens, and top business executives. Like many of you, my frustrations mounted.

Though I have been a member of and voted for candidates from both major parties in the past, I increasingly saw that neither party truly represented me.

The debt ceiling debacle of 2011 convinced me that Washington was broken. In a Pew Research poll taken during the height of the crisis, respondents used words like Poor, Terrible, Disappointing, and Childish. 2% offered a positive assessment. 75% of Republicans, 72% of Democrats and 72% of Independents all volunteered negative assessments. The poll suggested that there was an enormous group of reasonable, Americans who want leaders to work together to move America forward.

I became convinced that to change the tone of debate in Washington it would be necessary for the energized center to come together across party lines. America’s sensible center left and center right voters, joined together by country – not by party interests – need to elect new leaders to make the changes the political parties refuse to make.

American Moderate

As a result of the debt ceiling debacle of July/August 2011, I began to write, creating my own website and blog to share my moderate beliefs to help others gather greater courage to stand up to ideologues at both ends of the political spectrum.

Who are the moderates / centrists interested in this mission?

We are Independents, we are Republicans, and we are Democrats. If united in purpose, we can become our country’s most powerful force. We are voices of reason. We are centered. We see a bigger picture.

We demand a just society, with safe cities and towns, and more opportunity for a well-educated, well prepared workforce (at all levels). We understand the importance of American leadership in science, in technology and in business, including advanced design and manufacturing, and we know that innovation leads to more and better jobs.

We believe in the vital importance of the Arts to assure a well-rounded, vibrant and creative society. We understand the critical role played by America’s infrastructure, and understand how important it is to maintain and to improve our roads and bridges, water ways and water resources, and produce cleaner energy while meeting long term energy demand.
We understand the importance of a strong national defense to protect our vital interests and to defeat those enemies that seek to destroy America. We understand the important role that America plays in the world and seek over time to help create sustained peace and greater prosperity for all people.

We do not agree on everything, but we are able listen, understand, seek common ground, and gain compromise to create progress on many fronts.

**Singular Belief: Progress**

Most Americans who consider themselves somewhat left or somewhat right on the political spectrum share at least one thing in common: we believe in progress and want government to work and our political leaders to focus on problem solving, not personal or party ambition.

Progress is that singular issue that most of us are able to rally around; where we take our stand - our litmus test. Our passion is to improve lives, over time, in a responsible and sustainable manner. Improving lives includes assuring freedom, safety, dignity, and opportunity.

We believe real progress is driven by gifted leadership. We believe the great leaders seek progress for the many, not just for those funding their campaigns or sharing similar belief systems, or social or cultural backgrounds; our leaders are called to lead all people.

We seek to create a better tomorrow, without fear of what tomorrow will bring. We do not wish for things to remain as they are, or move backwards. The world is ever changing. New generations replace old. New challenges loom that must be dealt with smartly.

**V. Deciding To Run, and Next Steps**

It wasn’t easy to make the decision to run. I have a strong marriage and great kids. We are close and we enjoy each other’s company. I don’t relish the idea of spending all my time away on the campaign during the glorious summer and fall months, or living in Washington, DC most of the week if I win. In addition, I have a job and career that I enjoy, I’m good at and my company benefits from my expertise.

I’ll take a pay cut if I win the 6th district seat. I’ve got college tuitions and “Parent Plus” college loans to pay off for years to come. I am not doing this for financial enrichment. I will never, ever work as a paid lobbyist after I serve in Congress unlike so many politicians.

But I am doing this because I think it is so important. I came to the conclusion that I needed to step forward to try to help chart a new path with many other Independents and moderates around the nation who are doing the same thing in their districts and states. And so after several years of deep reflection, with the support of my wife and family, about 100 friends who had offered their thoughts and advice, as well as my company president and board of directors, I decided that I would take the plunge.

I took out my nomination papers in June and began the signature gathering process supported by 30 volunteers. We collected about 3,700 signatures in June and July, submitted them to more than 30 town and city clerks in the District, and to the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

During the signature gathering process, I collected more than 1,500 signatures myself and the response that I received was overwhelming. I heard voter dismay over the current state of polarization and gridlock. I heard from hundreds of Independents and moderates of both parties about the need to really shake things up in Washington. I was encouraged to proceed by well over 90 percent of the voters who I spoke with at fairs and train stations, on front stoops and at supermarkets; outside post offices, and on town and city sidewalks. I could tell that their concern for our nation and their encouraging me was genuine.
VI. An Independent Joins the Race

With almost 1,000 more signatures “certified” than the 2,000 required, I was officially on the November 4th ballot. There would finally be a real choice “between” a Democrat and a Republican - an Independent! Our team and supporters were certainly thrilled.

On September 10, I held my press conference announcing my candidacy for the 6th Congressional seat. The event was timed for the day following the Democratic primary. We held the press conference at Lynn Arts, Inc. in Central Square – a perfect spot for me because I think that advocating for the revitalization of Lynn should be a most important job for the next Congressman. Members of the press joined some friends at the event, and we were off. I spoke on WBZ-AM and WRKO-AM that day, saw my image on TV for the first time, and was front-page news across the district. The race was on.

Over the next few weeks, I visited towns and cities around the district. I held meet the candidate functions in a number of communities. We left leaflets on the doorsteps of thousands of homes, during which times I enjoyed meeting hundreds of people on their porches. I said hello at train stations and farmer’s markets, and chatted with a few thousand spectators while walking in parades.

This is a three-way race and I aim to win. I am not a fringe candidate and shouldn’t be treated as such. I represent the concerns of the Moderate Middle Majority of Americans, so many of whom are disenchanted with the national parties, their methods, and the polarization and gridlock that they and their elected representatives have brought us. I am registered as Unenrolled, as is 55 percent of the 6th District. Many of these voters are looking for real change, not more of the same.

VII. Electing an Independent

So what can you expect to happen when you help elect me to be your next Congressman? Unquestionably, you’re voting for change.

On the issues, I tend to be like many of you: fiscally responsible and socially inclusive. In the next section I will explain my positions on a variety of issues of concern to voters in the 6th District. Before I address some key issues, let me first explain how I will work as an unaffiliated member of Congress in a House of Representatives that is accustomed to Democrat blue and Republican red, not Independents.

A vote for me is a vote for greater impact. As an Independent, I believe that my voting record will be watched more closely than typical freshman Republican or Democrat legislators. Both parties may vie for my support on key legislation since I represent the Moderate Middle Majority, and having my support will allow a party to stake further “claim” to the Center as the parties approach the 2016 presidential elections. My uniqueness will certainly attract attention – and hopefully further support – for the District that may come in many forms and from many sources.

Members of Congress “conference” (Republican) or “caucus” (Democrats) with their party. Participants set their party’s legislative agendas, select their committee members and chairs, and hold their elections to choose various Floor leaders. Suffice it to say that freshman members of the conference or the caucus rarely hold significant sway. But they do get placed on committees.

I tend to lean neither Democrat nor Republican but rather see myself in the Center. As such, I may conference/ caucus with either party. I look forward to requesting interviews with both. Should my interview requests both be accepted, I will base my decision on which party to participate with based on how I am received, what I am offered, and how such offers, if any, will impact the 6th District. Those who vote for me can trust that I will do my level best to do what is in the best interests of the District and the nation.

While there is risk in my non-partisan approach, as a freshman Congressman who will limit myself to no more than 4 terms in the US House in any case, losing an assignment to become the low ranking member of a committee is I think a small price to pay for
shaking up the system. In addition, time not spent on committees will be spent instead on studying issues, policies, legislation and gaining a better sense of where the 6th District stands on important issues facing the nation. Making the right votes based on our shared beliefs is a most important function of a Congressman. In addition, I would focus on the 6th District itself, supporting new strategies for regional economic development and other initiatives that we will undertake together, outlined in the next section.

As the Independent Congressman, I will receive more attention in Washington and nationally than the other 6th District candidates ever could. We will set an important example that I hope other districts and candidates will follow. We’ll have charted some of the toughest parts of the course for them. I will lend my support to other credible Independent congressional candidates and party-affiliated moderates across the country, campaigning for their election or reelection.

I believe that as America elects more unaffiliated Independents and moderate party-affiliated candidates to Congress, the national parties will alter their more divisive approaches to governing our nation or risk further erosion of their power and control. Courageous statesmen and stateswomen will rise up from the parties and reach across the aisle - bridged by Independents - to craft the visionary legislation and policy that we desperately need to begin resolving the important issues of our time.

This is a great opportunity. Please join me. I need your help, and I ask for your vote.
Platform Preface

Albert Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results. Today we have a U.S. Congress composed of Democrats and Republicans who have a shamefully low job approval rating of less than 15%. It is insanity to keep sending Democrats and Republicans to Congress, expecting a different result. Voting for either is a wasted vote, if what you seek is progress and change.

Chris Stockwell is not a politician. He is a husband and father, a businessman, and a resident of the Sixth Congressional District of Massachusetts who has become disenfranchised with the current political dichotomy in this nation, but who has a positive and powerful vision for change.

We need a peaceful revolution against the poorly functioning two-party system. In 1776, this nation declared her Independence from a tyrannical monarchy. We must declare our Independence from the current two-party duopoly that has lost both its compass and the trust of the American people.

A Gallop poll recently found that unenrolled voters nationally are at a record high 42%. In the Sixth District, 55% of voters are registered as Unenrolled, while 33% are registered Democrats and 12% are registered Republicans. Another Gallop poll found that just 26% of Americans were satisfied with the two major parties.

The high commands of both major parties have been strategically masterful in convincing voters that a vote for an Independent candidate is a wasted vote. Prognosticators for the parties spread this myth. Voters mark ballots for the candidate they find least objectionable. Worse yet, they sit on the electoral sidelines, disenfranchised, not even showing up to the polls.

A vote for Chris Stockwell is a vote for “real change.” Independent voters need no longer be a disenfranchised plurality. A vote for Chris Stockwell is a vote for a rebellion against the two major, undeserving parties which cannot extricate themselves from their ideological and partisan straightjackets. A vote for Chris Stockwell is a vote for a “progress over partisanship.”

It is insanity to think that sending only Republicans and Democrats to Congress will result in anything but continued petty partisan wrangling, one-upmanship, and continued gridlock. It is time for the majority of voters in the 6th District who are disenchanted with the two party system to rise up and vote for a sensible, true Independent who views the issues on their merits, not through a partisan or ideological prism, and whose ultimate goal is to bridge the divides created by these parties, bringing good governance back to the United States of America.

Let change begin right here. Elect the Independent, Chris Stockwell, to Congress.
Issues Close to Home

✓ A True Independent

Democrats should know that voting for me will not turn this seat “Red” for the Republicans. Republicans should know that voting for me will not keep this seat “Blue” for the Democrats.

Instead, we will return this seat to the people for a while.

✓ Constituent Services

No matter what happens on Election Day the 6th District will have a new representative in Congress. I will work to make the transition as seamless as possible to ensure excellent, uninterrupted constituent services for everyone. I hope to retain many excellent, experienced staff who currently work in the congressional district offices in Lynn and Peabody.

My office will serve everyone in this district equally without concern for their political affiliation. My votes in Congress will be cast based on what I believe is right for this district and the nation issue by issue and will not be determined by a party or partisan political leaders.

✓ Jobs

6th District Economic Development Transformation Council (The 6D-ETC)

Few regions in the world can compete with the 6th District’s winning combination of market access, talent, education, creativity and innovation, diversity, work ethic, and quality of life. I have thirty years of experience in small, medium and large-size businesses and know how to create jobs.

I propose a new kind of partnership between the region’s leaders in business, labor, finance, education, economic development, government, culture and the arts, and other community organizations to create the Sixth District Economic Transformation Council (6D-ETC). We’ll help local businesses launch and expand, and recruit overseas businesses to locate here in Northeastern Massachusetts. We’ll develop and carry out this plan, and I will be its leading proponent.

✓ Investing in our Fisheries

We need to strengthen this vital industry which harvests the healthiest of foods for our population. I support the recently appropriated $75 million in disaster relief funds for our fishing industry and we should be investing much more in this vital industry.

I will advocate for dramatic increases in federal funding of fisheries to assure a continuing supply of the planet’s healthiest meat. I will carry on the fisheries work of Congressman John Tierney and proactively seek his advice. I will work to improve on the Magnuson-Stevens Act which regulates our fisheries, and I will do my best to help NOAA officials, environmentalists and fisherman find common ground.

✓ Saving Union Hospital

If Union Hospital’s acute and specialty care health services are consolidated at Salem Hospital, Lynn will become one of the largest cities in America without a full service hospital. This is unacceptable, would harm Lynn homeowners and businesses, and would make it harder to attract new businesses to the city and the region. Lynn should not be without a full service hospital.
Working for Millennials

Congress is spectacularly failing the millennial generation. We simply cannot leave the rising generation with fewer job opportunities, a polluted planet, and a $17 Trillion federal debt burden and underfund programs like Social Security, which few Millennials believe they will ever take advantage of despite paying into the system. We need to plan for our future and for theirs. Courageous politicians need to face the important issues of our time, and resolve them.

Climate Change and the 6th District

I support immediate action at the federal, state, and local levels to consider and bring about effective solutions to the short term challenges of extreme weather and longer term reality of sea level rise (SLR) – particularly in the waters off New England and the Northeast, where SLR occurs three times faster than any other region on earth.

I will facilitate creation of our own 6th District’s “10 Tips for a Smaller Carbon Footprint,” an educational program that we can later share with families, communities and districts across the nation.

Reforming Federal Politics

Term Limits & Lobbying

I pledge to serve no more than four terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and promise that I will never serve as a paid lobbyist after I am no longer in Congress.

Campaign Finance Reform

There is too much money in politics. It harms our democracy. It is disingenuous to voice support for campaign finance reform and not disavow special interests, supportive big money PACs and super PACs who contribute to your campaign. I won’t accept money from special interest groups. I’ll only accept money from human beings.

Endless Campaigning

Americans live in a perpetual political campaign cycle controlled by the Republican and Democratic parties, their big money PACs and super PACs, lobbyists, corporations and other special interests. They give money to campaigns in order to get something in return. Members of Congress feel forced to spend hours every day dialing for dollars to support their next run for office.

I am running to be your Congressman, not a permanent campaigner. I will begin campaigning in the next election cycle no earlier than June 1st of each election year, regardless of when my opponents begin their campaigns. I believe that my constituents will be very supportive of this pledge. I know that my family will.

Voting Reform

We need to make it easier for all citizens to participate in our electoral process by making it easier to register and vote. We need online voter registration and should move Election Day to a Saturday to encourage voter participation. Tuesday voting was established (in 1845) so that Americans could attend church on Sunday, travel on Monday to their polling places, and vote on Tuesday. Tuesday voting is a relic of the past.
ELECTING INDEPENDENTS

We need new approaches and fresh ideas in Washington. We need to elect Independents to reinvigorate our democracy. To expect the parties to bring about the changes we need is like expecting the foxes to redecorate the henhouse. Voting Independent is the best thing you can do at this time for this district and the nation.

THE ECONOMY

IGNITING A FULLER RECOVERY

Polarization and gridlock between the two parties is the root cause for America’s prolonged weak recovery from the Great Recession. The failure of our politicians in Washington to lead has hurt so many Americans in so many ways. Washington is the problem. Change must start from the outside. A vote for a party candidate is a wasted vote if what you seek is to change the status quo.

We need bipartisan economic legislation and policies that focus on solving important long term issues. Bipartisan approaches will signal to businesses that Washington is working again. Greater certainty and confidence will spark broad investments in new markets, new products, technologies, plants and equipment. A fuller recovery will bring more and better paying jobs, raising the standard of living of all Americans, and increasing government revenues. Bipartisan political leadership is the key to unleashing private enterprise, the great job creation machine.

REDUCING HARMFUL REGULATION

Small businesses are saddled with too much regulation. We need to reduce unnecessary regulation to help foster growth and let the free market thrive. For instance, local community banks should be empowered to invest and reinvest in our communities, and not be saddled with excessive, unproductive compliance requirements intended for the big banks.

We can reduce unnecessary regulation and at the same time ensure strong - or even stronger - regulatory oversight protecting consumers, our health and the environment.

COMPREHENSIVE TAX REFORM

From my first day in office I will advocate for reintroduction of the Simpson-Bowles deficit reduction plan, a bipartisan plan to reduce the federal deficit through comprehensive tax and entitlement reform. This plan would simplify the tax code, eliminate many loopholes and lower the overall corporate tax rates. Republicans and Democrats in Congress must come together with President Barack Obama to pass comprehensive fiscal reform.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

To balance our federal budget, we’ll need to find ways to reduce federal government expenses and increase tax revenues. It will take sacrifices from most everyone. Politicians will need to find the courage to compromise. I will advocate for the following:

Invest in what works, and disinvest in what doesn’t. Cabinet Secretaries and Administrators should prioritize their department’s programs based on the level of effectiveness (as defined by the Secretary). The top third most effective programs (“A” priorities) might actually see funding increases; “B” priorities could receive flat or reductions in funding; “C” priority programs would see more dramatic cuts. Department chief executives know their programs best. Invest in what works. Disinvest in what doesn’t.

- Move beyond gridlock. The best way to start resolving gridlock is to elect more Independents to Congress, showing parties that the more they disagree, the more influence they will lose. When Washington passes bipartisan economic legislation and policy, the economy will begin full recovery. A healthier economy will generate more taxes.
- Entitlement Reform. Non-discretionary, so-called “entitlement” programs make up two-thirds of federal government spending. Courageous leaders must tackle “entitlement reform” if we are to have any hope at all of balancing budgets and reducing our $17 Trillion debt. Everyone except our most elderly citizens will need to help – from the wealthiest among us, to the middle class, and the poor.
Dealing with the Debt

According to The 2014 Long-Term Budget Outlook report (Congressional Budget Office, 7/15/2014), the “total amount of federal debt held by the public is now equivalent to about 74 percent of the economy’s annual output, or gross domestic product (GDP)—a higher percentage than at any point in U.S. history except a brief period around World War II and almost twice the percentage that existed at the end of 2008.” This does not include tens of trillions of dollars in unfunded liabilities.

At nearly $17 Trillion, we have saddled ourselves and succeeding generations with an enormous burden. We need to deal squarely with this issue. It starts with laying out a more sensible path forward, which will remove risk and uncertainty so that industry has confidence to invest its trillions of dollars of cash in new ideas. Smart business leaders will invest in growth when they see a more certain path forward. That means more jobs for Americans. More spending and more jobs will bring more tax revenue to government. With a turnaround in full swing, I'll advocate for the creation of a Debt Reduction Trust Fund, where certain percentages of tax revenue are earmarked to directly pay down the national debt.

Audit the Federal Reserve

A 2013 Rasmussen Poll found that 74% of Americans believe the Federal Reserve should be audited. I couldn’t agree more. The time for transparency regarding our nation’s money supply is now.

Energy Policy

I support a national energy policy that includes a broad mix of clean and renewable energy sources to support base load energy demand as utilities retire aging coal-fired power plants in the years ahead. I strongly favor movement away from fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy, and believe that a successful outcome is most likely when accomplished gradually over a period of two decades or so. To achieve greater independence from fossil fuel, industry, government, and environmental groups must work toward common goals, including finding ways to compromise to streamline permitting processes to speed up projects and reduce costs.

Natural Gas and Fracking

Natural gas is a cleaner major energy source that can help bridge America’s transition from more harmful coal-fired power to clean sources of energy. I favor strong regulatory oversight of the natural gas industry, particularly hydraulic fracturing, to help assure least possible damage to our environment.

Renewables: Solar, Wind, Water

I strongly favor renewable energy as a vital part of our clean energy supply including solar and wind power, and support expansion of hydro-electric power at existing sites and locations where minimal impacts result, particularly in innovative ways such as large-scale pumped storage where feasible.

Keystone XL Pipeline

I support the Keystone XL pipeline because it will give the United States greater control and reduce dependence on oil from the Middle East. One thing is certain: a pipeline will be built. It will either bring oil south, eventually to the port of New Orleans, or west through Canada to Canadian ports bound for countries like China and India, economies with enormous energy demand and less proven concern for environmental impacts.

I view the Keystone XL Pipeline project as the last major project in US history involving fossil fuel. It is a wiser overall strategy than continued dependence on Middle East oil.
Education

College Loans

Crushing levels of student debt are a burden to young Americans and their families. The federal government offers our largest banks tens of billions of dollars to invest free of charge while at the same time earning considerable profits off higher interest rate returns from college students. I support legislation which would allow students to refinance their federal student loans at pre-2013 rates, and would further support loan interest rates tied to the same favorable lending rates that big banks enjoy.

I favor stronger state and federal funding in education. I favor a strong and stronger community college system. I favor dramatic increases in funding for research and development, including the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, the source of so many breakthroughs in medicine, science and technology, innovations which launch new industries.

Public Education

My wife and I both attended public schools (K-12) and so have each of our children. High quality public education is an essential part of a sound economy, strong communities, and provides opportunities for advancement for all. I support strong programs in science, technology, engineering and math, and as a hiring manager myself I know first-hand how important it is that we graduate students who are strong in reading comprehension, effective writing, communications and the arts.

Parents of children in failing public schools should have the option of sending their children elsewhere. There should be no monopolies when it comes to educating our children.

Health Care Reform

The Affordable Health Care Act (ACA/Obamacare) is a flawed program that experienced a highly flawed introduction and needs to be overhauled in key areas, including cheaper plan levels and alternative coverages for small businesses. We’ve been dealing with a crisis in healthcare for decades. The ACA is law, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. I advocate continuation of the ACA through 2018 but also believe Congress should work to improve it. During 2017 we should conduct an independent, non-partisan review of the ACA to determine its overall success or failure. If return on investment has not been met, I would then vote for its eventual repeal.

Veterans Benefits

We have a solemn obligation to our nation’s veterans. The recent scandal at the Veterans Administration highlights the need to be vigilant in caring for our veterans. I support stronger veterans’ programs and benefits. I support ending the terrible patient backlog at VA facilities, and vouchers for veterans to use at a private hospital if they cannot get a medical appointment in a timely manner.

Immigration

I believe in a path to citizenship for long time law abiding undocumented immigrants.

Central American children are crossing our border illegally because there is no opportunity and safety at home. But we cannot afford to take in, house, feed and educate everyone who wants to come to this country, and are not obliged to do so when entering the country illegally. We need a stronger, more secure border.

We also need transformative solutions to the issue of illegal immigration across our southern border. To stem the tide, we should partner with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras to offer better lives for their citizens through improved infrastructure, public safety, and economic opportunity. Transformative policy and innovative partnerships will assure a more peaceful hemisphere, grow stronger trading partners, and reduce illegal immigration from Central America.
Reproductive Rights

I favor a woman’s right to choose. Women should be able to make their own health care decisions and have unfettered access to health services.

Marriage Equality

I believe the issue of marriage equality is one of the most important civil rights issues of our time. I believe that people should be able to marry whoever they want. I believe that gay couples should be afforded the same legal rights as straight couples.

Gun Control

This divisive debate will be with us for decades to come. The right approach is to focus on enacting sensible legislation that deals with the issues that are most destructive for our society. “Reasonableness” needs to be the mantra when considering the right to bear arms and gun control. We must focus on federal legislation dealing with the connection between gun violence and mental illness and agree on reasonable legislation that will keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill. I support universal background checks and closure of the gun show loophole.

Criminal Justice Reform

Too many Americans are incarcerated for too long for committing non-violent crimes. I will support reduction of sentencing guidelines for certain non-violent crimes, often related to the sale or possession of illegal drugs. The financial expense to taxpayers is too great. The costs to families and our society are too great as well.

I support strong regulatory oversight of larger banking and other financial institutions. I support stiff prison sentences for those who commit financial crimes, particularly when legions of innocent employees or investors are harmed. We have seen time and again that the free market cannot correct for lack of moral compass until it is too late. The larger the institution or size of the financial instrument, the greater should be the oversight, as those pose the greatest risk to the greatest number.

Foreign Affairs

Middle East

ISIS/ISIL, better named “Daesh,” an insult which means to trample down and crush, or, a bigot who imposes his view on others is not a religion or a nation-state but rather a group of murderous thugs that must be removed to protect all people.

Daesh shares a similar ideology of extreme violence and oppression as al-Qaeda or Boco Haram. This shared ideology has no regard for human life. Hezbollah and Hamas are not different from these other terrorist organizations as long as it is their stated intention to cause the destruction of Israel. The same can be said of Iran.

I agree with the Obama administration that we should not commit troops on the ground at this time, but this is a dynamic situation and we must be open to do what is necessary along with our allies to defend America, Israel and innocent people everywhere by removing this threat.

I support involvement of military advisors, air support, and use of highly trained special operations forces on the ground to remove the threat of Daesh. I believe that together, the United States – with the strongest possible support of Arab nations and other allies – can fulfill a common mission to root out and remove Daesh.
Christopher John Stockwell

Age: 53

Family: Married for 29 years; 3 children (23, 21, and 16) educated in public schools and University of Massachusetts.

Career: Senior vice president at GEI Consultants, Inc., a $100 million 650 employee engineering and scientific firm headquartered in Woburn with offices across America. Successful 30-year business career also includes software, management systems, product testing, dotcom and web, in small business start-ups, medium-size, and large companies.

Education: BA in Political Science, Northwestern, 1983
MBA in Marketing and Management Policy, Northwestern Kellogg Graduate School of Management, 1987

Community: Coach for more than 20 youth athletic teams. Elementary school PTO fundraising drive chairman. Active in non-profits. Active churchgoer, leader and choir member.