



Responses from Congressman Stephen Lynch (D-South Boston) Candidate for US Senate

1. Do you believe adult basic education is a right or a privilege? Should we have a social contract for adult basic education the way we do for K-12 education?

I believe that access to quality adult basic education is a right that stands as a testament to America's promise that every individual should enjoy a decent standard of living. Accordingly, I view every dollar invested in adult basic education and workforce development as a dollar dedicated towards honoring this sacred commitment.

2. Currently our state has many residents who lack access to adult basic education services either because there is no program in their area, the programs in their area have long waiting lists or there are scheduling, transportation or child care barriers. What steps would you take to correct this lack of access?

I believe that we must provide dedicated funding for adult basic education and workforce development in order to expand access to these vital services and mitigate the impact of situational and other barriers to adult learning. In particular, I would strongly advocate for the enactment of legislation to reauthorize the landmark *Workforce Investment Act of 1998*, which included the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*, to better ensure that adults have access to meaningful education and workforce development services. In fact, I am currently a cosponsor of H.R. 798, the *Workforce Investment Act of 2013*, introduced by my colleague, Rep. John Tierney, and I would support the enactment of such legislation to reauthorize the *Workforce Investment Act* and the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act* in the United States Senate. In addition, I would also strongly support continued and dedicated funding for Adult Basic Literacy Education Grants and Language Acquisition Grants, as I've done throughout my congressional career. These programs play a vital role in terms of ensuring that America's workforce is better prepared for positions that require higher levels of literacy and English language skills. Similarly, I will continue to advocate for dedicated funding for our federal TRIO programs so that we may afford individuals the opportunity to pursue the American dream through enhanced academic services, mentoring, and financial guidance.

3. Efforts are underway at the state and national level to raise the quality and standards of adult basic education programs and services to be comparable with that of the K-12 system, yet the ABE system receives only a small fraction of the funding that goes to the K-12 system. What would you do to increase the resources allocated to adult basic education in order to promote the development and professionalization of the field?

I would strongly support a robust reauthorization of the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act*, through which the federal government supports a variety of critical adult education and English literacy programs at the national and state levels. In particular, I am committed to the enactment of a reauthorization bill that would provide meaningful resources to assist states in enhancing their curricula, best practices, performance standards, program evaluation activities, and professional teacher development initiatives for the benefit of all adult basic education stakeholders.

4. What do you believe should be the vision and purpose for the adult basic education system, in good economic times and bad?

I believe that the purpose of our adult basic education system is to afford every participating adult the opportunity to enjoy a decent standard of living by assisting them in obtaining the educational, language, and professional skills necessary to secure quality employment. In addition, I strongly believe that the vital role played by our adult basic education system becomes even more significant during difficult economic times.