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I N D E P E N D E N T
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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?*

- Adult Basic Education should be considered a right, since it stands to benefit both the state and its citizens by providing many residents with enhanced opportunities for employment or career advancement, which in turn will reduce unemployment and help generate positive economic activity.
- I do believe we have a social obligation to provide adult educational opportunities, since our government should never be forced to tell anyone that they are not able to further their education because the opportunities don't exist for them.
- One of my priorities with regards to Adult Basic Education will be to ensure that the instruction offered is keeping pace with the needs of the state's workforce and the technological requirements necessary for employment or advancement in certain disciplines.
- This will include a focus on computer and IT training, service-based instruction, the healthcare industry and other need-based sectors.
- As Governor, I want to ensure that every individual receiving Adult Basic Education is gaining professional skills that are relevant and essential to finding a job or advancing their employment.

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?*

- With regards to regions without programs, my administration will conduct a thorough analysis of the current services offered statewide to determine which regions are currently not represented, as well as the level of demand for educational services in these regions.
- I will establish a close working relationship with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and, as I will explain in my next answer, will review and reorganize the Department's criteria for selecting organizations and allocating financial resources.
- My administration will also determine which educational disciplines are "priority" sectors for non-represented regions and will prioritize those sectors when expanding Adult Basic Education.
- In reviewing the infrastructure of our Adult Basic Education system, we will examine the reason for programs with long waiting lists and determine how to use current allocations more effectively to hire more instructors, add additional classes or increase class sizes without sacrificing educational quality or incurring significant costs. Individuals who are barely surviving financially don't have the luxury to spend a long time waiting on a list for the opportunity to better their career options.
- I will work with higher education leaders to create ways for community colleges and other state universities that offer Adult Basic Education to provide childcare and transportation options – such as carpool connections or shuttle services from MBTA stations – for individuals who require them as a condition of enrollment.
- As part of our efforts to reorganize Adult Basic Education expenditures and add additional classes, we will look at options for scheduling classes at a wider variety of time slots to ensure that those who already have employment obligations are not deprived of a chance to further their education.

3. *What steps would you take to maximize the percent of adult basic education dollars that support activities leading to quality instruction without sacrificing accountability?*

- Currently, the annual budget line item for Adult Basic Education states “grants shall be distributed to a diverse network of organizations which have demonstrated commitment and effectiveness...and that are selected competitively by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.”
- The first steps my administration will take regarding this issue will be to review the criteria by which these organizations are selected, how much money they are allocated, how that money is being used and how effective these organizations have been at providing quality adult education in previous years.
- Based upon this review, my administration will implement a series of recommendations that will add greater effectiveness to selection criteria and ensure that earmarks for Adult Basic Education are utilized by organizations in the most efficient possible manner.
- For FY11, Adult Basic Education was granted \$27.95 million in its line item that is intended for distribution to statewide organizations, as well as a federally funded Adult Basic Education grant for \$10.27 million.
- As with most state expenditures, I believe that we need to utilize the resources we already have more efficiently rather than throw greater amounts of money at the problem. As Governor, I promise to take the financial resources we already have and apply them in a manner that allows us to provide high-quality Adult Basic Education to our citizens in an accessible fashion.

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

- The primary vision and purpose of adult education should be to provide individuals looking to begin or further their careers with the resources necessary to succeed. Adult education should be one of the state's many policies and strategies to help further job creation and unemployment reduction.
- We also need to provide consistent funding, accessibility and sustainability to the state's adult education system.
- I have always supported the Quinn Bill, which encouraged police officers to earn degrees in criminal justice and provided educational incentives through salary increases.
- Likewise, I believe the Commonwealth should look to provide similar incentives and programs for other employment disciplines so we can help our citizens gain employment or attain higher-paying jobs.
- As Governor, I will also leverage my administration's relationship with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and with our community college system to implement more effective content, performance and professional standards for Adult Basic Education programs in Massachusetts.