



# The Elly Report

Ideas, Vision, & Values  
in Worcester County

Local Perspectives

## Municipal Labor Unions: Time to Invest in Their City

by Michael Mague

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[worcestercountyrepublicanclub.com](http://worcestercountyrepublicanclub.com)

### Calendar of Events

July 30, 2005, 1-4pm  
**Mass Republican Assembly State Convention**, Radisson Marlboro,  
Contact Michael Potaski,  
[mikepotaski@hotmail.com](mailto:mikepotaski@hotmail.com)

August 15, 2005, 9:30am  
**State Rep. Karyn Polito's Charity Golf Tournament**, Pleasant Valley Country Club, Sutton, Contact Ron Bertelli, (508) 798-3070

September 5, 2005, 9-11am  
**Labor Day Breakfast, WCRC and WRCC**, Holiday Inn, Worcester,  
Contact Jerry Horton, (508) 852-8338

September 22, 2005, 7:30pm  
**Massachusetts Republican Party State Committee Meeting**,  
Contact MassGOP, (617) 523-5005

September 25, 2005, 12-6pm  
**2nd Annual Family FUNdraiser**, Uxbridge, Contact Kevin Kuros, (508) 278-0404

April 28-29, 2006  
**Massachusetts Republican Party Convention**, Lowell Convention Center, Lowell, Contact MassGOP, (617) 523-5005

**Y**ou can see it coming again. Threaten to reduce city services and wait for the taxpayer to succumb. In March 2005, City Manager Mike O'Brien recommended a plan to fund Firefighter's Local 1009 arbitration award by laying off 60 firefighters. In May, he noted that to maintain the existing service level in the School Department he would have to eliminate 95 teacher positions. The same old game needs a change of rules or outcomes.

There are presently 9,000 City employees and retirees whose health insurance premiums consume nearly 15% or \$60 million of the proposed \$497 million 2006 budget. Those employees are predominantly members of the municipal employee unions: police, fire, teachers, and city

employees. Also covered under health insurance programs are elected officials, city council, or school committee members. City employees who work over 20 hours per week are eligible for benefits, including health insurance.

No one will deny that health coverage is a much coveted adjunct to municipal employee wage packages. However, the cost of such benefits have nearly doubled from 8% of the total city budget in 1996.

Something has to give, or somebody has to give. City Manager O'Brien sensibly suggested that something should be the employee share of health care premiums. He is proposing a series of employee health insurance reforms that could save the city \$3.15 million annually.

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Heritage & Faith

## The Judiciary: The Weakest Branch?

by William Gillmeister, PhD

**J**ames Madison, primary author of the US Constitution and 4th President, believed that the judiciary would be the weakest branch of the new government. Yet Thomas Jefferson saw the judiciary becoming a "despotic branch" should the other two branches fail to keep it in check. Which one is right? Both. The weakest has become the strongest.

Madison proposed the three branches of government to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, finding support in Isaiah 33:22, "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; it is He

who will save us." Under the terms of God's Covenant with His people, the Hebrews, God ruled. That is, all three branches of government were under the power of the one true and righteous God, aka theocracy.

Our Founding Fathers understood the difference between a theocracy and rule by men. They understood and firmly believed in the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden and the implications of sinful man. They knew that if all three powers were vested in one authority, then that authority would quickly become cor-

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rupt. Each power had to be conferred in a single authority and each authority had to be able to protect itself from encroachment by the others. The U.S Constitution provides the checks and balances, such as impeachment, advice and consent, the veto of the President, and others.

The Massachusetts Constitution is explicit in Article XXX of Part the First that no branch may exercise the powers of the others. Yet four judges of the Mass Supreme Judicial Court ordered the other two branches to rewrite the State Constitution (drafted by John Adams) that defines marriage as between one man and one woman. The Governor and Legislature believe they have no say in what the State Constitution means, but must bow to the whims of the SJC. A few brave legislators are attempting to remove the four justices who violated the Massachusetts Constitution. Few others have the fortitude to exercise their duty.

A sad effect of the usurpation of power by a few unelected anointed, and the acquiescence of our elected officials, is the driving of God out of the public square, despite the will of the People. James Madison wrote, "the belief in a God All Powerful, wise, and good, is so essential to the moral order of the world and to the happiness of man, that arguments which enforce it cannot be drawn from too many sources nor adapted with too much solicitude to the different characters and capacities impressed with it." The judiciary's driving of God from the public square undermines the "moral order of the world and...the happiness of man," and our very ability to survive as a nation. "We the People" have become the weakest branch. We must demand that our elected officials more forcefully perform their duty to restore judicial integrity. Our freedom, the ideals of western civilization, our survival, depend on it. ER

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In case you missed it, The Worcester Regional Research Bureau published a report (05-01) in February 2005, "Condition Serious, Prognosis Uncertain: The Impact of Municipal Employees Health Insurance on Massachusetts Cities." One of its findings is that "Worcester's high premium and contribution rates result in the City paying more than \$1200 more per employee each year than the average city surveyed -- at least \$6.6 million per year." Translate "the city pays" to "the taxpayer pays." This year's property tax bill increase reflects those rising health insurance costs.

The *Telegram and Gazette*, in a March 3, 2005 editorial, insisted that to get this line item in check "city employees will have to pay a share of cost more in line with current norms." They further suggested that the "city must adopt a 75-25 cost split similar to those of the private sector or state employees."

Candidates Corner

## Worcester School Committee Candidate, Michael R. Theerman, MD

**D**id you know that Worcester public school children rank 347th out of 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth in academic performance? This is a looming disaster for our students and an embarrassment for our city.

We all know that the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) have always had challenges. As an urban system, it has a disproportionately high number of non-English speaking students and special needs youngsters. This places an added burden as teachers try to educate and integrate these young people into our society.

Another obstacle is the bilingual program for Hispanic students. Mass voters replaced bilingual with English Immersion two years ago at

## The Elly Report

*Founded by Harvey Ball, Jr. in 1991*

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To advertise contact Debbie McCarthy, [mccarthy75@charter.net](mailto:mccarthy75@charter.net)

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So again this summer we are faced with contract negotiations with the municipal employee unions and the attendant posturing and near extortion. This time there is too much at stake. Let's hope that the interests of the taxpayers and the future of this city supercedes the union's self interest. Haven't we done this before? ER

the ballot box. Yet Worcester retains the program based on an outdated consent decree signed in the 1970's. We need to remove this barrier to learning English.

Another concern is the size of classes. Some classes started this past year with over 30 children. It is not possible for teachers to maintain order and instruct properly in classes that large. The problem is that we have too few teachers in the classrooms. Over the last 3 years, the WPS laid off hundreds of teachers and closed three schools, even though they received more money each year. They must learn to control spending.

I will work to correct these problems, as well as the high health insurance burden in the school budget. ER

Around the County

## Sinister Survey: The Public School's Dirty Little Secret

by Mike Haire

Parents and grandparents, hold on to your hats! You probably thought it couldn't get any worse after a Lexington parent was arrested for trying to remove his child from a kindergarten class where objectionable material was being presented, and a Saugus family was upset when their second-grader was exposed to explicit sexual material, including the terms "vaginal secretions" and "semen." Well, sit down.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), an instrument of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is used in the public schools

to question students about their sexual behavior. Some local schools have taken this document, added their own questions about oral sex, and introduced it to students as early as the sixth grade! Since 1998, 10 and 11 year-old boys and girls in the Shrewsbury Public Schools have been asked, "Have you ever engaged in oral sex?" "How old were you when you had oral sex for the first time?" "With how many different people have you ever had oral sex?" The same questions are asked about intercourse.

Shrewsbury said these questions were added because President

Clinton's escapades put the topic of oral sex in the media, and the schools felt that it was their duty then to question students. Unfortunately, notifying parents of these "additions" was not considered a priority or duty. According to the school, parents might misinterpret these questions! Misinterpret sex questions?!? It's obvious there has been a deliberate attempt to keep parents in the dark.

What is needed is a clean slate of elected officials, ones who understand that parents want and need to know what is going on in the schools. After all, we're talking about the values and morality of our children!

### Shrewsbury, Worcester, & Beyond

The same YRBS is also used across the US. Worcester starts the survey in 7th grade, not much better than Shrewsbury. Parents in Worcester haven't been informed, either.

Parents everywhere need to contact their local school officials and demand to see the YRBS and other materials the school is using that pertain to human sexuality. Parenting is the job of parents and school officials need to understand that.

*"I have wondered at times about what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through Congress."  
— President Ronald Reagan*

Around the County

## Affordable Housing, a Market Solution

by Chip Davison

Much has been said lately concerning the availability of affordable housing. The solution lays in free market principles—supply and demand. Like everything else, housing is affected by market forces. Therefore, market forces can and should be applied to the issue.

Basic economic principles tell us that when something has limited supply, the cost increases with constant or rising demand. We can see this trend in housing. As land for building is declared off limits or as new construction is limited, the number of new homes (supply) remains limited. However, people still need places to live and this provides us with constant and, in some places increasing, demand. Land is limited or restricted for new construction when laws are enacted to preserve "wetlands" or "open space." Zoning laws, which require minimum standards for new construction, such as two-acre minimum laws, restrict the available land

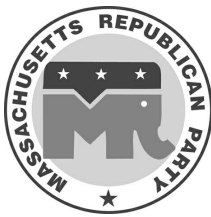
and ultimately drive up prices.

Restricting access to land for building also has the opposite effect of that intended. Pushing houses farther apart in the name of preserving "open space" has the effect of using more land for housing than otherwise could be used. Preserving "open space" should take into account that it may be necessary to build more units in higher concentrations, like apartment buildings. This will make available more units for housing, while saving "open space," thus increasing the housing supply.

Housing will become more affordable when more houses (greater supply) are made available to meet current and future demand. When builders and landlords are allies in the search for affordable housing rather than enemies, and when zoning/building laws reflect this partnership, housing will become more plentiful and more affordable. This is essential for a market solution. ER

### Parents Legislation

Legislation is pending in Boston that requires schools to obtain prior written approval from parents before children are exposed to explicit material, known as an "Opt-In" policy vs the current "Opt-Out." Mass House Bill 1050, which has a large sponsorship from liberals and conservatives, mandates a statewide "Opt-In" policy for public schools. Call your elected officials and demand HB 1050 become law. Our children have been subjected to this intrusive, explicit survey too long. ER



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**The Elly Report—Ideas, Vision, & Values in Worcester County**

**PASS IT ALONG!**

National Issues

## **Social Security, the Hard Facts**

by Chip Davison

**H**ere are some facts about the current Social Security system. Workers contribute a flat 6.2% of gross income to the system and employers match that sum with an equal amount for a total of 12.4% of gross income. For the taxpayer, these “contributions” are not eligible for refund when filing an income tax return. That money is off limits and lost for good.

Today the retirement age is 65 years old, the same as when the system was established in 1935. Many changes have taken place in those 70 years including increased life expectancy. In 1940, the average life expectancy from birth for all races of either gender was 62.9 years. In other words, most people at the time of inception of the program would not even live long enough to receive a benefit. In 2000, the average life

expectancy for all races of either gender was 77.0 years. That means people today will live to collect benefits for at least 12 years past the age for which they are eligible to receive benefits.

Along the same line, in 1940 when benefits were first paid out, there were 50 workers paying into the system for each person receiving a benefit. By 1970, the number of workers paying into the system to provide benefits for each beneficiary was 4. Today, this number has shrunk to 3 and, 35 years from now when I’m retired, the number of workers contributing to my retirement will be 2. With the number of retirees increasing faster than the number of workers to support them, the current system will start running a deficit in only 11 years, starting in 2016. This means the reserves built into the system to this point will start eroding to provide the same level of benefits to the point the system will run out of money in 2042, right about the time my colleagues and I will be eligible for retirement. The simple progression of the increase in scope of the system has led us to a point where the current pay-as-you-go system is simply unsustainable.

### **Why Reform?**

Doing nothing means a train wreck of epic proportions down the road.

Doing nothing means eventually, taxes will need to be increased to maintain the same level of benefits or benefits will need to be reduced to maintain pace with the taxes paid. When I’m retired under the present system, my two daughters will be supporting me. I wouldn’t want to increase that burden on them and I don’t think most people would. As reducing benefits does not appear to be an option, regardless of your political point of view, that leaves two options: increase taxes or change the system.

Only a system that includes privately held accounts can maintain a sustainable Social Security system. Program specifics are negotiable and President Bush has stated that all options are “on the table.” If maintaining some kind of Social Security system is the goal, better to make those changes now, while time and money permits than wait until the possibility of change and available options disappear. ER

### **Women’s Republican Club of Worcester County**

The WRCWC meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month at The Manor Restaurant in West Boylston, 11:30am. Join us for interesting programs, delicious lunch, and lively discussions. Contact Pat Knox, (508) 829-7132.

### **The Elly Report Needs You**

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