

Opinion

## **Guest Commentary: Brookline PAX endorsements**

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Posted Aug 19, 2018 at 6:43 AM

The silver-lining to our D.C. nightmares is nationwide progressive/liberal passion/energy, including many who'd been naïve-distracted-complacent. Exciting new candidates, like Bronx's Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and new activist groups proliferate, but triggering my fear, like Harry Belafonte (about civil-rights activists), whether "we have a struggle, but not a movement." By community organizing and working in coalitions like Progressive Democrats (Massachusetts), PAX ([brooklinepax.org](http://brooklinepax.org)) has fought since 1962 for everything now jeopardized.

With a diverse board of 45 liberal activists (near-evenly male/female), our endorsements, by at least a 60 percent vote, are based on questionnaire responses, public records and much personal knowledge. This fall, we're enthusiastically endorsing — along with incumbent endorsees Treasurer Debby Goldberg and Sen. Cindy Creem — four fabulous, new candidates, each making a clear/compelling case for rebuilding a sorely-needed progressive "movement" — and for your vote!

### **Tommy Vitolo for state representative (Pcts. 2-4, 6-13):**

Brookline has a stellar tradition of liberal statehouse leaders — Mike Dukakis, Jack Backman, Cindy Creem, Frank Smizik (former PAX chair). With Frank retiring, we have an outstanding candidate to sustain our tradition of speaking truth to power, skillfully tackling our most intractable challenges. Tommy's been passionate — and effective — on innumerable progressive issues, including years of recruiting/organizing new activists. He's masterful at community/grass-roots bridge-building.

Town Meeting members (“TMMs”) are our legislature, where we debate \$300M annual budgets and laws governing physical spaces and social interactions.

Tommy excels there, drafting/leading more progressive warrant articles than anyone. His speeches have changed vote outcomes. In polarizing times, he always listens to colleagues, often finding common ground, a sorely-needed skillset for Beacon Hill. Check out [tommyvitolo.com](http://tommyvitolo.com) — e.g. TMM endorsements being 161-30 Tommy-Rebecca!

We all know his opponent, Rebecca Stone, very well, and appreciate her town service. But her main efforts, the School Committee (“SC”) and as TMM, are very disappointing. Though our recent SC concerns have been painted as being “beholden” to teachers’ unions, and though, yes, we’re proud to long support unions, our concerns go far beyond recent SC’s anti-union-ism. The SC, in long erosion, lost touch with our community, embracing top-down, wrongly directed non-leadership — like tepid responses to high-stakes-testing and charter schools, weak diversity hiring, and pathetic public comment at meetings. As TMM, she’s shown no leadership on politically-difficult or cutting-edge issues, indeed an imperfect voting record on some matters of public health, racial/social justice, climate-change.

Brookline/Massachusetts needs Tommy!

### **Nick Carter for governor’s council (“G/C”)**

Nick’s a clear choice over 20-year incumbent Marilyn Devaney. The G/C screens state judges, but is a disgrace. Nick’s 25-year trial attorney experience, and outstanding judgment, integrity, and progressive values ensure sorely-needed excellence for this crucial responsibility. He’ll push for sorely-needed diversity and better criminal justice reforms, where Devaney is Herald-ish-retro. As President T. fills federal courts with ultra-conservatives, Nick ([nickcarter.org](http://nickcarter.org)) will improve our state courts — including choice, LGBTQ rights, gun control and dire environmental concerns.

### **Josh Zakim for secretary of state**

Josh has a urgent vision for expanding voter rights/protections, and a stellar history of progressive leadership — leading 2014’s efforts for Boston’s Trust Act, prohibiting police from detaining people based on immigration status, becoming

a “sanctuary city.” He’s pledged to fight the insidious 20-day-pre-election registration deadline, to implement same-day and automatic registration, and other common-sense reforms. Massachusetts — under 24-year incumbent Bill Galvin — been far from the forefront on these issues. We should be — now!.

### **Jay Gonzalez for governor**

A former Brookline TMM, where he led a Community Preservation Act campaign, a board member of Trust for Public Land and Gov. Patrick’s A&F secretary, Jay has made universal access to affordable, quality early childhood education a major priority, and also crucial environmental issues, public transportation, real (not milquetoast) criminal justice reform, and social/racial justice (like protecting immigrants and progressive taxes). He’s not only a true and passionate progressive, but his experience in the private sector and state government will actually deliver for our values. If progressives will see through fake news about Faker Baker’s conservative non-leadership and ephemeral invulnerability, Jay will be our governor, not just a real liberal, but a real Leader!