



Mihos promises reform if elected governor



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GHS

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Watertown — Independent gubernatorial candidate Christy Mihos thinks Massachusetts residents are leaving the state because it is "corrupt and mismanaged."

Mihos, a former Republican and businessman who has his own chain of convenience stores, experienced corruption firsthand, he said, and if elected governor in the fall, vows to makes sweeping changes in the government.

People in Massachusetts are voting "with their feet" and leaving the state, he said, emphasizing the need for reform.

"We don't have anyone in either party, young or old, proposing new ideas," said Mihos' running mate, former Democrat John Sullivan of Winchester.

Mihos' ideas once got him ousted by former acting Gov. Jane Swift from his position as a board member on the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority in 2001. Mihos said he was removed after he attempted to establish a peer-review system for the Big Dig. Following the death of a Boston woman after the roof of one of the Big Dig tunnels collapsed on her car, he's bringing the idea of oversight back to the forefront.

He and fellow Independent running mate, Sullivan, said their views on the Big Dig may make or break their campaign, but aren't their sole platform.

The pair shared some of their other priorities with the staff of the Community Newspaper Company last week.

Preventing the "brain drain," or loss of hundreds of thousands of educated workers each year, is a key component in the commonwealth's future, they said.

Monetary burdens could be reduced by increasing the amount of state revenue returned to the cities and towns in local aid from about 28 to 40 percent, through his reform plan, which he calls Mihos' Proposition One.

School systems wouldn't be as reliant on the School Building Authority, fees for buses or extracurricular activities; and police departments would have greater success at preventing shootings and other increasing violent crimes with more local aid, he said.

"It's additional funds to spend their money the way they want to spend it," Mihos said. "It's their prerogative. If [shootings] happened in towns that begin with 'W', we'd be calling out the National Guard."

Mihos also calls for the removal of the tolls from Weston to the New York border of the Massachusetts Turnpike which, he said, brings in more than \$140 million each year - far too great a price tag for drivers, according to Mihos. Mihos said the tolls collected have already paid for the project.

Property taxes also need to be kept down, Mihos said. Citing Cape Cod, where he and his family reside, as an example of out-of-control property tax increases. Under Mihos' control, the assessments would remain the same until the owner sells, regardless of time or alterations.

The increased local aid could in turn help cover the loss of tax revenue, he said.

But he wasn't clear on how to fund the increased aid.

"The state doesn't have a problem at all with revenue; it can't collect it fast enough," was all Mihos said. "The money is coming in hand over fist, but it's going to special interests and not to the cities and towns that need it most."

Mihos and Sullivan are also prepared to make changes to the educational system at all levels, they said. Mihos would appoint himself chairman of the Board of Directors at the University of Massachusetts, while Sullivan would become chairman of the Board of Education.

They did not elaborate, however, on what sort of changes they'd make to the system, but showed enthusiasm for any discussion about transforming the state.

"I highly recommend your running for office as an independent - it's the most fun I've ever had," he said.

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