

People are saying:

Dawn Harkness is the best choice to represent Framingham!

The Boston Globe Thurs., September 11, 2008

The 6th Middlesex District lies entirely in Framingham - a town of 65,000 with challenges that require thoughtful representation in the State House on many issues, including commercial development, environmental health, education funding, and services to the elderly and immigrants. In a strong, three-candidate field for state representative, **challenger Dawn Harkness stands apart for her energy and versatility.** The Globe endorses her bid.

Harkness, an attorney who drives a green ambulance that runs on waste vegetable oil, can appear unorthodox at times. But the Framingham Town Meeting member has taken a traditional route in politics, serving with distinction on several town boards. Her efforts on behalf of the town's Greener Framingham Committee could help her play a statewide role in helping to attract alternative-energy companies to the state. **And her grasp of fiscal issues is firm,** as displayed this week at a candidate forum, where she made a measured case for casinos as a means to **increase state revenues for education and property tax relief.** Harkness is also an unapologetic supporter of public charter schools, which are driving school reform in Massachusetts.

Pam Richardson, the one-term incumbent, has been a consistent voice for public education funding. Challenger Chris Walsh is an architect with strong ideas about redeveloping downtown Framingham.

But it is **HARKNESS** who would serve in the tradition of Deborah Blumer, the district's independent-minded, straight-talking state rep who died in 2006.

THE METROWEST DAILY NEWS Thurs., September 11, 2008

State Rep. Debby Blumer died suddenly two years ago, just three weeks before ballots were cast in which her re-election was uncontested. Framingham Democrats scurried to find a replacement, with Pam Richardson emerging from a crowded field at a hastily-arranged caucus.

While voters in the 6th Middlesex were cheated out of a full-fledged campaign then, this year's race has made up for it. Seeking re-election, Richardson faces a pair of strong challengers from her own party, Dawn Harkness and Chris Walsh, and they have been going at it for months. Since there is no announced Republican running for the seat, next Tuesday's Democratic primary is the vote that counts.

Pam Richardson has grown in office. She is more comfortable discussing a range of issues, while two years ago she seemed to lose her footing when the subject veered away from education, which, as a former Framingham School Committee member, she understood. She is familiar with the nuts-and-bolts of legislative initiatives, which is often an incumbent's advantage. She takes credit for bringing increased school funding and a major water infrastructure grant to Framingham, perhaps more credit than she deserves.

Chris Walsh is an architect who professes sympathy for the concerns of small business owners. He's a Town Meeting member who has sought to appeal to those concerned about social services expansion. His special interest is historical preservation, and he has some good ideas on how to reinvigorate Framingham's economy while enhancing its appearance.

Dawn Harkness is an attorney and longtime activist, particularly on issues of environmental protection and equal rights for gays and lesbians. As a Town Meeting member, **she has been a strong voice on such diverse issues as alternative energy, social services, government transparency and education funding.** She makes no effort to hide her strong opinions, but works hard to find common ground with those who disagree.

Richardson is a reliable vote for the Boston pols who run the House; more a follower than a leader. Walsh is likable and committed, but his vision is more suited to town office than the state Legislature.

Harkness is the strongest of the three: A public servant who does her own homework and builds her own coalitions, who listens carefully and speaks with confidence, who thinks outside the box and moves ahead of the curve.

We offer **DAWN HARKNESS** our strong endorsement in Tuesday's Democratic primary.