



## An Interview with Our State Representative

Jack Krivit, Senior  
Editor-in-Chief



Last week, I was fortunate enough to interview Lori Ehrlich, the State Representative for the 8th Essex District. With the election approaching, Mrs. Ehrlich gave me her opinions on the four Massachusetts Ballot Questions.

### 1. Voting yes on Question 1 would allow the Gaming Commission to issue an additional slots license. In your opinion, why or why not should people vote "yes" on this issue?

*The proposed slot license would go to a developer to build in the city of Revere, a place which many agree is poised for economic growth and revitalization. The mayor of Revere and its residents have all expressed their resounding disapproval at the proposal through a local vote, and it's clear that a slot parlor is not the right fit for this community. Slot parlors tend to be designed to entice some of the most vulnerable individuals to play, and the data does not suggest that the revenue that this parlor would generate would be enough to outweigh the problems that it would cause for residents and the community.*

### 2. Question 2 would authorize the approval of up to 12 new charter schools or enrollment expansions in existing charter schools by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education per year. What is your personal opinion on this Question and why should younger voters think similarly?

*Question #2 is the ballot question that most directly affects young voters because it deals directly with education paradigms and funding. The question of Charter schools is immensely complex, involving a constitutional right to a good education, billions of dollars of taxpayer money, and contested facts on both sides of the issue. What is clear is that Massachusetts has been given the number one spot for our public schools and actually ranked 9th in the world among other countries. There is much we are doing right, especially here in Marblehead, but school success is not always even and we can always do better.*

*I am voting no on this question. While everyone agrees that some schools in the state badly need improvement, enshrining the drastic expansion of an unproven public/private system in state law and shifting taxpayer dollars to privately run schools with less accountability is not the answer. Opening so many charter schools every year with limited state funds available for education has the perverse impact of diminishing the ability of underperforming district schools to turn around their performance. Many charter schools do great work, including and especially here in Marblehead. But instead of investing in the opening of new schools I would prefer to see us invest in struggling schools instead. We do a great job of educating children in Massachusetts so the examples of how to do this right are all around us.*

### 3. Question 3 would prohibit certain methods of farm animal containment. Why should registered high school voters be concerned with this issue?

*I've been an advocate on animal welfare issues for my entire time in office, and I work closely with the MSPCA on many of those issues here at the State House. The cruel and extreme confinement of veal calves, egg-laying hens, and pigs, has been of concern to me for many years, and voting yes on this issue is a simple matter of making the humane choice. For most high schoolers voting in this election, this is probably their first time making their voice heard through their vote. Recognizing that you are able to use your voice in a way which speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves is an extremely powerful privilege, and I hope that high schoolers will think about that when they head to the polls to vote on this issue.*

### 4. You are an advocate for voting yes on Question 4, which would legalize marijuana similarly to alcohol. Why will voting yes on this issue be beneficial for high schoolers who are registered to vote?

*High schoolers would not be immediately affected by this ballot initiative because it would remain illegal to use marijuana until age 21, but there are still compelling reasons to vote for legalization. I personally supported the decriminalization of marijuana back in 2008, and have long felt that marijuana should be treated like alcohol: not available to children, regulated for safety, and revenue collected on its sale. Prohibition has not been effective at deterring the use of cannabis just as it was not effective at deterring alcohol use, and in fact has been detrimental to communities by enabling mass incarceration and the black market. It is better to have legitimate businesses who check ID, are subject to quality controls, and pay taxes than feed an illicit market run by violent drug lords.*

*This ballot question is far from perfect, I have concerns about the safety of so-called edibles written into the initiative and the question of how to test for drugged driving. However, doing nothing and keeping marijuana illegal will not enable us to solve these issues, so the first step in meeting these challenges is voting yes on Question 4.*

### 5. Why, in your opinion, is it important for registered high school voters to cast their ballot this November?

*All of the animosity and hatred which has unfortunately made its way into the rhetoric of this presidential election has at times made me feel discouraged about the course our country is taking, but I feel lucky to live in a place like Massachusetts, because people here constantly remind me that civil, peaceful, and reasonable conversations are still possible. In particular, I look at many of the young people in our community and I see and hear voices of compassion, empathy, and a desire for progress. Your hunger for growth and change, paired with your acceptance and understanding of people's differences, will speak louder than the hateful ideology and prejudice we've heard all year. This presidential election is going to impact you more than probably anyone else who will cast their vote this year, because who you choose to put in office will have significant impact on your ability to afford college and get a job, the climate you will live in for decades to come, and the way that you and your peers relate to one another and treat each other.*

## Stress Alert: When Hobbies Become Something More

Eleanor Mancusi-Ungaro  
Reporter in the Field

Most people have at least one hobby-something they do to help them pass the time that they don't have to be good at, or that they enjoy learning. I myself have several, but the one I devote most of my time to is playing the piano. Although I don't plan on going into a music career, I spend some time each day working on music and perform a few times a year in group concerts. At times, however, music becomes something less of a hobby and more of a constant source of stress. Am I good enough at the piece I'm learning? Is this worth the time I'm putting in? How do I compare to other kids my age? I was surprised to learn that some people look at music and see something incredibly different.

This summer, in a discussion on music, I mentioned that I played the piano, and had for several years. Usually, when I say that, people respond by saying that they used to play, or by asking if I am considering a career in the arts. The person I was talking to, however, gave me a response I had never heard before: "Oh, that'll be great for college." Suddenly, the way I saw playing the piano changed. This wasn't a hobby anymore; it was something to capitalize on and use to my advantage. In the weeks that followed, I began to look at my musical skills not as a marker of how far I'd come, but as a warning that I needed to push myself further. Instead of wondering if I was proud of myself, I wondered if other people would be impressed by me. Music was no longer a simple hobby, but now a source of stress disproportionate to the time I was putting in.

Oftentimes, the line between something you like to do and something you know you have to do is blurry. We find sports we like to play and try to receive a varsity letter in those sports. We discover that we like to write and apply for more demanding English classes, and we fight to take double science classes when understanding the world brings us joy. It's when you cross that line into work without remembering that whatever you do in your spare time is a hobby that stress piles up.

So, what do you do to solve this? Take a breath or some time off, and remember that not everything you do has to be done to perfection. It's wonderful to love your work, and you don't have to make what you love work. As those around me try to fill their lives with extracurriculars and devote almost all their time to each one, I will try and remind myself and my friends that to enjoy something, you don't have to be the best or the most dedicated. All you need to do is remember that your hobbies are just that: hobbies, not careers.

## Don't Boo, Vote

Amber Born, Senior  
Editor-in-Chief

The election is almost here. People tend to regard that fact with some mixture of relief and fear: relieved that we won't have to hear about it anymore and can pay attention to something else for a change, but afraid that the wrong candidate is going to be elected. I don't remember anyone being this scared in 2012. Sure, some people kind of thought it would be nice for Obama to be reelected, and others were basically on Team Romney, but neither side felt that if their guy lost, it would be the end of the world. Times have changed. Either you think that Hillary is the most dangerous candidate ever and it's imperative we elect Donald, or you think Donald is the most dangerous candidate ever and it's imperative we elect Hillary. Or you could be one of those people writing in Evan McMullin or Bernie Sanders, but if you're doing that it's really just because you don't like either major candidate, and you're trying to salvage your own conscience without doing anything constructive.

I had intended for this article to be funny, but as the election grows closer I'm realizing that the whole thing really isn't as funny as I used to think it was. This is actually an important election. Both sides like laughing at their opponent, but either way, once we pick a candidate, that person is in charge of the United States of America for the next four years.

I wish I could vote in this election. I'm a little more than three months too young. If you're eligible to vote, you have to take this opportunity. Both sides acknowledge that this is a very important election. I know it seems not to matter who you vote for because Massachusetts is always going to go Democrat, but it does matter. It also matters for yourself. If you sit out this election, you don't want to later feel that the wrong candidate was elected. And it matters for the election process itself. If everybody in Massachusetts decided their vote didn't matter and stayed home on Election Day, a single person could show up at the polls, write in Joe Biden, and he would get all of Massachusetts's 11 electors. Which, now that I think of it, would be kind of cool. He deserves it.

So don't boo, vote. Vote your conscience, vote your intellect, vote your emotions, vote for Marco Rubio for all I care. Just take advantage of your right to vote, because even if we pick an absolutely terrible president, at least we had some say in it.

## Quote of the Day

*"Half of the American people have never read a newspaper. Half never voted for President. One hopes it is the same half."*

-Gore Vidal

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