

BETTER JOBS NOW PLAN ANNOUNCEMENT

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On the very first day that I announced my candidacy for Mayor, I told the people of Boston that my campaign would be about better schools, safer neighborhoods, and real economic hope and opportunity for everyone. I talked about making Boston a city where anyone who wanted it could find real economic and social mobility – words that really mean working hard and getting ahead. The American Dream.

America's cities were always places where people could come, work hard, sacrifice, and know with almost complete certainty that their children and their grandchildren would do better than they had. My own grandparents came from Italy and landed at Jeffries Point in East Boston early in the 20th century. Their grandson was not only the first member of the family to go to college, but he went on to law school, was elected to the Boston City Council, became the Suffolk County District Attorney and now he's working hard to get elected Mayor!

But that kind of social and economic mobility, so certain in the past, has been harder and harder to realize, not only in our cities but throughout our society. I decided to run for Mayor because I don't want cities like Boston to become home only to the rich and the poor. I am running because I want our cities to be places where working families can raise a family in safety and security, where good jobs sustain them, and where parents know that their children can get the education they need to compete in a competitive, knowledge-based economy.

And that's why today, on Labor Day, I am announcing what Boston needs more than anything else: "Better Jobs Now" – my plan for Boston's future. Each and every one of you, each and every citizen of Boston, has a place in this plan. It was written for you. It's a roadmap for how we keep and how we grow our middle class. It's about keeping and growing jobs in every corner of the city and in every economic sector.

From the small businesses that line our neighborhood main streets to Boston's largest employers headquartered downtown, it talks about strategies to help them grow and reducing the red tape that gets in the way.

It talks about better jobs now in high tech and start-ups – encouraging their growth, making sure that Boston remains competitive with other cities, and stopping the brain drain that sees so many college graduates go to other cities to innovate and grow their businesses.

It creates career pathways for better jobs now in our health sector and teaching hospitals and how we make the growth of our colleges and universities translate into jobs and stronger neighborhoods for Boston residents.

We look at transportation and housing and how we turn these critical needs into real job opportunities in construction, but also better, permanent jobs and increased investment in our neighborhoods, so instead of reacting, we are positioning Boston for long-term growth.

It speaks to our tourism and hospitality and service sectors and how we give workers in low skill jobs opportunities to improve their skills and move up into better jobs, and those with no jobs skills the chance they need to enter the workforce.

It speaks to better jobs now and more jobs training opportunities in the construction and the building trades and ensures that more of those jobs go to Boston residents, and especially people of color and women.

We look at the chance for better jobs now in a greener Boston economy.

It underscores my commitment to young people, from a lock-solid commitment to summer and year-round jobs to the creation of world class vocational-technical schools.

It calls for greater recognition of the economic benefits of our arts and cultural communities and how we promote them, grow them, and incorporate them more fully into different aspects of our economic growth and planning strategies.

And it spells out my commitment to bring rationality, direction and results to Boston's patchwork of jobs training programs.

These aren't pie in the sky ideas, and I can assure you that we won't break the city's budget with them either. But where there are needs and demands, and where meeting those demands

promises more jobs, more growth and more opportunity for Boston residents, my plan aims to take advantage of those opportunities by leading the way.

A major centerpiece of my plan is its focus on closing the employment gap that has existed between white and black workers and other people of color for centuries. In fact, last week, on the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech, I released this portion of the plan.

Closing the employment and income gap between black and white Bostonians will require both short and long-term solutions. That's why at the very beginning of this campaign, I declared that one of my goals as Mayor would be to make Boston the first city in America to close the educational achievement gap between white, black and Latina students. I made this pledge because I truly believe that, as hard as it will be to achieve this goal, it is within our reach and to settle for anything less would be to sell current and future generations short.

I believed that if we could finally deliver on the promise of a great education to all our kids, then the poverty, the dependency, and the crime that claims so many could be replaced with real hope, real opportunity and that Boston would be the great beneficiary of the energy, the ideas and the leadership of an entire generation, and not just a portion of it.

Since declaring this as my priority, just about every other candidate running has fallen in line and declared that they would try and do the same thing. I don't say that to criticize my opponents or praise myself, but to highlight what happens when we set the right goals. Once we made the case that closing the achievement gap was truly attainable and within our reach – and it is - then to aim for anything less was simply unacceptable.

The educational achievement gap has been a problem unto itself for too long, but it's also been nothing short of a moral disgrace because we know that when we fail to educate people, then we are putting barriers on people's God-given right to reach their full intellectual, economic, spiritual and social potential. When I'm Mayor, one of the things you will never again hear is the excuse that kids can't learn because they're poor. Every child is capable of learning and education is the means by which we break the bonds of poverty.

But rooted in this same educational achievement gap are other disparities – especially economic - that have negatively affected communities of color for generations. A major component of my *Better Jobs Now* plan seeks to drive jobs, job training and real economic hope

and opportunity into every corner of Boston, but with a special emphasis on closing stubborn employment gaps that have persisted in communities of color.

According to the Boston Public Health Commission, white males in Boston face an unemployment rate of 9%. Latino males face an unemployment rate of 19%. And black males face an unemployment rate of 32%. One in three young black men is unemployed. One in five Latino males can't find jobs. But dig down deeper and the picture only gets more grim. Even among those who are employed are too many people who are not getting ahead, but only persisting from one low-skill, low-wage job to the next. We've seen this reality playing out on our TV screens for weeks as service industry workers have taken to the streets in search of better wages.

As part of my plan, I call for an increase in the minimum wage and for Boston to reevaluate what its living wage should be. I focus hard on jobs and skills training and summer and year round employment. Each of these elements goes to the root and speaks directly to the populations who right now, are living on the farthest margins.

For those of you who believe that this problem is intractable, I am telling you today that it's not. In fact, the scope of the problem is defined. According to the Boston Private Industry Council, there are approximately 12,000 young men and women in Boston who are high school dropouts and unemployed high school graduates who, without further education and job training, will face a lifetime of low employment prospects and bouts of poverty. Creating educational, vocational and employment pathways for this population is critical and as Mayor, I intend to do it.

There are billions of dollars' worth of new growth and development projects already in Boston's pipeline. Our next Mayor has an opportunity to leverage those billions into an unprecedented era of economic opportunity for Boston and its poorest communities. As Mayor, I will make it a priority and will bring together the entire Boston community – our educational institutions, major industries and employers, organized labor and the building trades, the small business community, health, housing and social service providers, community organizations, and residents themselves - to coalesce around a shared goal of making Boston a city where economic opportunity and social mobility are available to anyone and everyone.

I am under no illusion that the solution here goes beyond a jobs plan, but will also require bold leadership in education and in jobs training. It will require addressing public health problems like teen pregnancy and fatherlessness that cut off economic mobility at its root and virtually guarantees mothers and children lives of poverty and higher exposure to other social risks. And

it will require a continued commitment to smart-on-crime policies that focus on prevention and intervention and steer young, low-level offenders toward more positive pursuits.

All of this underscores that fact that the underlying issues that create barriers to full employment across racial lines are longstanding and profound. But we must begin somewhere and I am convinced that Boston should lead the way, as we have so many times in the history of this country. And while it is absolutely true that no Mayor and no city will be able to accomplish this alone, someone needs to act as a convener, to raise the issues, assemble the community, and create a shared set of goals and benchmarks. As Mayor, I am committed to doing this.

I want to do this in a way that respects those in need and the taxpayers who sustain our social safety net. I don't believe in a sink or swim logic and simply defunding social programs. But I am committed to repurposing those programs so they are, at every step, encouraging and enabling self-sufficiency, responsibility, and pride. This is in keeping with a social compact that I believe the vast majority of people fully support, where compassion for those less fortunate is met with respect for taxpayers and systems that more consistently and efficiently produce the kind of positive results we all want and hope for others.

This will not be the work of one Mayor or one administration, but the work of a generation. There is so much to do, but there is also a young generation of Bostonians who possess more energy, more idealism and more enthusiasm for our city and its future than ever before and because of them, I am convinced that we are up to the task.

Over the next three weeks, I intend to carry this message of hope and opportunity to every neighborhood of Boston. But I need your help. From the beginning of this race, I have been willing to take tough stands and set big goals. It's because this race has never been about me, but about all of you. Our next Mayor can be a truly transformative figure, but only if we are willing to dream big. It was here in Boston that the dream of an independent nation came to life; where the dreams of the abolitionists challenged the conscience of the nation; and where the dreams of public education, public transportation, and public health were first practiced and proven. But the work isn't done.

So if you believe, as I do, in my dream of a Boston where economic and social mobility are possible again, then work with me, campaign with me, and speak for me. Talk to your friends, talk to your neighbors and let them know that a vote for Dan Conley is a vote for our families, our neighbors, and for the least among us. It's a vote for hope, for opportunity and for *Better Jobs Now* for Boston.