



# CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE VOTER GUIDE 2018

## DEMOCRATIC



Jeffrey  
Ballinger



Alexandra  
Chandler



Beej  
Das



Rufus  
Gifford



Leonard  
Golder



Daniel  
Koh



Barbara  
L'Italien



Bopha  
Malone



Juana  
Matias



Lori  
Trahan

## REPUBLICAN



Rick  
Green

## INDEPENDENT



Michael  
Mullen

## Vote on Tuesday, September 4th

This voter guide was created using the answers from UTEC's 2018 Youth-Led Congressional Candidate Forum on August 15, 2018.

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## Congress is considering the adoption of comprehensive criminal justice reform to focus on getting better recidivism outcomes. If you're elected and you get to lead on any criminal justice reform related issue, what issue would you lead on and why?



**JEFFREY BALLINGER:** I'm speaking a lot on the trail about job creation, but really understanding what the jobs of the future will be. I'm in favor of restarting the Division of Economic Research at the National Labor Relations Board that was shut down in the 1950s during the Red Scare. But we really need to know what jobs are coming two years out, five years out, and ten years down the road. I've lived outside the US for about 15 years and I've seen where businesses do this. Businesses can anticipate what they need in their workforce but in America it's left to chance. Our businesses are short-term oriented. We really need to know what job skills are needed so we can help our youth train for those jobs, and that will lower the recidivism rate more than anything if there are good jobs to go into.



**ALEXANDRA CHANDLER:** When I look at this issue, I agree that going after the decriminalization of marijuana at the federal level has to be the number one priority because of the disparities in the application of marijuana laws to people of color, to poor people. Not any bill will do; I will support Senator Booker's marijuana justice act which includes expungement so we're not just going forward doing the right things but restoring the ability of people to participate in their communities. The honorable mention goes to reducing and I would say eliminating cash bail. I will support Senator Sanders' effort in that regard. Overall to make progress we have to look at this as an eco-system. Criminal justice reform requires racial justice, social justice and economic justice.



**BEEJ DAS:** I'm the only one on this panel who's actually sat on a Federal Court. I was the law clerk to the chief judge of the district of Maryland. I did a lot of drug sentencing work. We have to expunge the records of a lot of African Americans who had been imprisoned. I'll tell you a story: Frank Dickerson was someone I sentenced to 30 years in prison. My judge, who was a conservative Republican judge says what can we do to downward depart from the federal sentencing guidelines. At the time nothing. We need to allow judges to depart for equitable reasons on drug sentencing. Number two: private prisons have got to be out and state courts we need to make sure federally on the 14th amendment we do that.



**RUFUS GIFFORD:** Mandatory minimums. Truly they disproportionate penalize people of color and people of less economic means. You can't take away the value of community when you come to criminal justice reform more broadly as far as I'm concerned. The Federal Government has an enormous role to play to help organizations like the one we're sitting in right now, like UTEC to help them continue to provide services to the community. As far as I'm concerned, that kind of holistic approach to criminal justice reform is what we should be focusing on as well.



**LEONARD GOLDER:** I look at the whole criminal justice system from two perspectives: I used to be a social worker and I've also done criminal defense work. Two things I'd emphasize: we've got to get rid of these so called crimes against one's self because our prisons are overloaded with people who basically committed a crime of drug possession. Those are people that need treatment, not imprisonment. The other issue is that we need to make sure that when we do pass laws that involve criminal penalty that they're colorblind and that they don't disproportionately impact people based on economic status.



**DANIEL KOH:** We need to finally end the senseless war against marijuana once and for all. It has held back people for a long time. It has disproportionately affected people of color for far too long and it's time we finally got some sense and had federal legalization of marijuana once and for all. That is where the future is. It will actually help us address the opioid epidemic and it's finally time we do that so we finally end this senseless war.



**BARBARA L'ITALIEN:** I would like to go to Washington and do exactly what we did here in Massachusetts which was to pass sweeping criminal justice reform. To eliminate the school to prison pipeline, to decriminalize minor infractions for marijuana and other substances. I want us to make sure we're not locked into mandatory minimums. I think we need to do away with those as we did here in Massachusetts. I think we can and will do better. I think we should not be engaging kids in our criminal justice system as young as age 7. I think that's outrageous and voted against that. We wanted to raise that in the Senate. I also believe and am really grateful to the UTEC folks who came to my office - because I'm a State Senator - over the last 6 years to talk about expungement. I think it's critically important that we do that.



**BOPHA MALONE:** Just like a lot of the young adults here, I came here as a refugee and I was able to have organizations like Girls Inc. that helped me to become who I am today. Because of that I've been able to achieve my American Dream and I truly believe that everyone can as well if we get rid of - instead of having a criminal justice system, we should have restorative justice where people and young adults have programs like UTEC and Girls Inc. to help them and mentor them as opposed to continuing to imprison them.



**JUANA MATIAS:** Criminal justice reform is something I'm very passionate about. We need to repeal federal mandatory minimum sentences. We need to get rid of for-profit prisons. We need to have actual robust rehabilitative programs in our prison systems. Yes we passed a great bill in Massachusetts but there's more we could do. We invest about \$50,000 a year to incarcerate people but when they're released we spend no money to insure they have access to substance abuse services, job training, education services, and it's unfortunate because yes the rates of incarceration in Massachusetts have gone down but they have disproportionately gone up for communities of color. I've seen friends and family members go to jail, come out, and have a life sentence that does not allow them reintegrate into society successfully. In order to have true comprehensive criminal justice reform we have to look at things not just from the court system but what happens after release.



**LORI TRAHAN:** We need to end mandatory minimums sentences for nonviolent drug offenses. If we want to reduce recidivism we have to end the perpetuation of continually bringing up a background like banning the box. The Common Application has already gone forth with banning the box and we don't ask about criminal backgrounds for college applications and nor should we for job applications. Famously this week we've got California inmates in the correctional facilities who are fighting wild fires and they might not be allowed to become a firefighter when they get out of prison. That's just wrong and we need to end that practice.



**MICHAEL MULLEN:** The issue that I would like to focus on is removing the profit motive in the criminal justice system. Having private prisons is no place that business should be doing, this is an area for government. I think this is the same for things like bail, things like probation. Today people are ending up in debt or prison essentially. Towns and jurisdictions are getting revenue from things like this and it's not what it's for.



A majority of the young adults at UTEC have struggled with some form of mental health needs that have led some to struggle with substance abuse and dealing with suicidal thoughts - particularly those who are or have been incarcerated. Just last year, UTEC lost multiple youth to overdoses and suicide. If elected, what role could Congress play in building more support mechanisms for young people like us?



**JEFFREY BALLINGER:** Just a year ago, 60% of House democrats voted for a defense bill \$57 billion more than Trump was asking for. This has got to tell you only one thing: that the industry, the lobbyists, the defense industry had those people in their pockets. So we've got to cut that defense budget and what are we going to do if we don't? We're never going to help people they way they need to be helped. This is a discretionary pie. What you're giving to the pentagon you're taking away from all sorts of social benefits. We also need to have a financial transaction tax in America and we have to fully fund the IRS. For every 45 cents you spend on the IRS you get \$100 in revenue and since 2010 we've just been cutting the number of people at the IRS.



**ALEXANDRA CHANDLER:** To really build support mechanisms you need to look at this as a whole ecosystem. The number one thing I would see is that for people to really have the best access to the mental health providers available we have to have a single-payer health care system. Services need to be individualized to provide you with what's best for you whether it's mental health or addiction treatment all integrated together. Then within the prison system that's where Federal law comes in and we need to establish very clear statutory right to appropriate treatment. That also involves getting rid of private prisons. We can't have the profit motive getting in the way of having the best care-givers in place. This disproportionately effects communities of color where there's a lack of cultural competencies in healthcare providers and for LGBT people. I'm a transgender woman myself and I can tell you that I had mental health issues as a youth and I had no idea how to get proper treatment.



**BEEJ DAS:** I think we have to view these things as very personal. Our healthcare system has impersonalized a lot of these decisions. We had a drug overdose on our campaign in our office. Having to make a phone call to a father saying that we just found your son overdosing and we're taking him to the hospital makes you realize that this is an issue that affects all of us and that happens everywhere. Fundamentally that's what you have to realize support systems are not in place in our society throughout the whole scale, meaning from early childhood mental health to drug prevention, all of those things need to be augmented and improved. That's a fundamental issue that we're facing. All of us have similar prescriptions in terms of funding but I think those are the changes we need to make philosophically.



**RUFUS GIFFORD:** My answer to the question long-term big picture has got to be Medicare for all. We need to combine mental health services, services associated with addiction, with the larger healthcare industry in the United States. To me the only way to effectively deal with this is to push for a Medicare for all type system nationally. Now that is an ultimate goal and that's going to take a few years and we can't just wait for that to happen. We need to continue to work with what we've got. I was part of the team that helped pass Obamacare in 2009-2010 in the early years of the Obama administration. The expansion of medicade was very important to helping continue to treat mental health. We now still have states that have no adopted the expansion of medicade under Obamacare and of course Obamacare is under attack. The new Congress has got to do everything in its power to strengthen Obamacare, continue to expand medicade and ensure people have coverage.



**LEONARD GOLDBER:** We need a strong mental health system and that means strong community mental health centers, substance abuse counselors, and drug treatment centers. Most important we need good outreach. Good outreach to schools because that's often where problems arise. So we need people in the school system who can identify problems and catch them at an early stage. I agree that we need a strong health care system that pays for, allows, and does not stigmatize the whole issue of mental health.



**DANIEL KOH:** We need to finally end the stigma around mental health in our society. If you break your arm, someone signs your cast. If you've got an issue mentally people ostracize you. That is wrong. Each one of you in this room sees the world differently, learns this world differently and loves differently and we need to respect that diversity. I would fight for funding for the Stop The Stigma program campaign in Massachusetts to supplement it. I grew up with a learning disability. I would take medication in the bathroom stall because I was too afraid that someone would find out that I had a mental issue. We can't have that in our society anymore. We need to be comfortable with mental health so people can feel comfortable to come forward and realize that they're not crazy but that they're just someone who sees the world differently and that's the beauty of America.



**BARBARA L'ITALIEN:** I look at this through so many lenses. I'm the mother of a child with autism who struggles with depression and anxiety. Two of his friends died of overdoses in the month of April. I look at it as a former case manager and understand that mental health parity while on the books both in our state and federally, has never been realized. There is absolutely stigma associated and we need to do more and we do need to do this through a Medicare for all program. I'm proud to be the person on this stage who has been endorsed by Mass-Care because I fought for health insurance coverage for my son and many others who were struggling and not getting treatment for what they needed. I do think we see a lot of self-medication going on with opioid abuse for folks who feel like they have very dim prospects. The don't have a job, they may have ended up incarcerated and we have to stop the issue of segregating and putting people into isolation. It's a real problem and we have to get our hands around it.



**BOPHA MALONE:** I do believe in the Medicare for all system and addressing the opioid epidemic. But just like the young adults here, I'm a product of programs that work because of the fact that growing up I had these issues. As I mentioned early because of Girls Inc. and what they did for me, I was able to overcome these things. So what I would do in Congress is to advocate for funding that supports programs like yours and in partnership with other programs, to make sure that we create jobs for you guys to make sure that you feel hopeful instead of hopeless that you're going through all these issues. A lot of time it's just having role models and mentors being around. For me growing up, even though I experienced all these things, I had role models and mentors that helped me to overcome it. They helped me to get into school to have a good education and I was able to have a good job as well.



**JUANA MATIAS:** We need to recognize not only when people are in prison are they suffering from mental health issues, but also at the arraignment process are we assessing people for the mental health concerns they have, the substance abuse concerns they have, and as a state and federal government we need to invest more money to ensure that we're assessing people's issues so we're resolving the real root of what's causing them to perpetuate and get involved in crime. We also need to make sure that our prison system has the resources, the case workers, the mental health providers within the prison that can assess what people are going through and making sure that even once they're released that we have long term case workers that can help these individuals maintain their job, continue to combat that substance abuse that they're struggling with, get access to education and job training opportunities. These are all of the comprehensive things we need to do if we really want to give people the opportunity to successfully reintegrate into society. Until we do that we don't really have a criminal justice system that's trying to resolve our issues.



**LORI TRAHAN:** I'm going to talk about opioid addiction because I think it goes hand in hand. Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill disproportionately are impacted by the opioid epidemic. I would support making sure our emergency professionals have better access up front with better access to naran and more treatment, and rehabilitation resources for those who are struggling with addiction. I would also bring in early education into our schools so we can prepare our young people for the pitfalls of addiction. Massachusetts has done a fair job at instituting prescription caps and treatment but the federal government has not done their part in stepping up. Finally, we have to hold the pharmaceutical companies accountable for their role in the opioid epidemic as well as you know like the big tobacco industry where they over-marketed their addictive products to our young people and the same thing is happening today. As a member of Congress I will go down to take that head on.



**MICHAEL MULLEN:** My wife is a social worker working in the area of child abuse. They take a multi-pronged approach where you have your legal professionals; you have your social workers, your mental health professionals. I think you need that in this situation as well. I think we need to publicize that and show the evidence-based behind that. Secondly I don't think we can treat mental health separate from physical health. I think any health care reform needs to include mental health as a key component to that. As a society I think we're making key steps in that direction but I think we have a long way to go and that we need to have that as a holistic part of our health care systems.



**At UTEC we also focus on learning about a wide range of social justice topics. Racism is still a topic that we often discuss. What policy idea would you advocate for that could make the 3<sup>rd</sup> district the most anti-racist district possible?**



**JEFFREY BALLINGER:** I think we really have to address the policing issue. It's just unacceptable that we have young black men often targeted and harassed by the police. I'm sympathetic with what police have to deal with day in a day out but I grew up in a pretty racist place: Gary, Indiana. It was second only to Newark in terms of white flight, that means people leaving the neighborhood when it's changing and it affected me deep down inside. I really feel like we have to address this issue seriously and talk honestly about what didn't work. The Federal Housing Authority, 50 years old this year, did not work. It was not enforced. So unless we get serious and tell our children about the failures of our government, we can't just go on our saying "oh we fixed that, we passed a law 50 years ago," we didn't fix it.



**ALEXANDRA CHANDLER:** We need to focus on Title 1 funding. I've been the Vice President of a Title 1 school in Washington D.C. that my son went to. It was 90% students of color and about 10% were in transitional housing or homeless. Those Title 1 funds lead to before care, aftercare, better instructional care, better instructional quality, and those services were not just about helping those kids. It's about their parents, it's about the whole family. That nutritional assistance for the kids that's an ability for those parents and those relatives to hold down a job, to be involved in their communities, and to rebuild their lives that reduces recidivism if that's an issue and it really just creates that ecosystem that I talk about. Anti-racism means racial justice and economic justice and it's great on so many levels.



**BEEJ DAS:** I grew up as a brown kid in a white neighborhood, so racism, race relations, is very personal to me. We've come a long way. When my Mom starting teaching at the University of Lowell in 1972, she used to wear a sari to work every day. Back then it wasn't that we celebrated diversity, we tolerated it. Today we're getting a little closer to the celebration of our differences but we're not there yet. So I think at the federal level, we need to one: celebrate our diversity through our immigration policy, two: strengthen federal hate crime legislation. We've taken a step back under this administration and we need to take those steps back. I think fundamentally and philosophically we must celebrate diversity, it is the strength of America that makes the diversity picture so beautiful.



**RUFUS GIFFORD:** I support all the policy initiatives that have been put forward so far. Ultimately from a policy position you do need to deal with all the policy issues of economic and racial justice but I'm not going to focus on the policies. I'm going to focus on the cultural phenomenon because if you're going to weed out racism from a society you can't legislate your way out of it. Honestly what you need to do is invest in organizations like UTEC. You need to invest in the strength of community. You need to get people sitting around a table, having a dialogue, putting forward their issues, looking each other in the eye, and talking about the issues that concern them. Building up community organizations, creating community organizers just like UTEC does, that is what we have to do and frankly the federal government does have a role in providing funding and building these organizations up.



**LEONARD GOLDBER:** I would start with schools because that's where we start with young people. We need schools that are diverse and we need schools to teach the acceptance of diversity. At the same time, as young people grow older, they need educational opportunity in terms of their advancement in life and what they're able to do. I think if we can provide those opportunities, and teach those values, I think we'll go a long way to reducing those kinds of problems we have in society.



**DANIEL KOH:** I don't believe you can successfully address issues of diversity if you don't have diverse voices at the table. Congress historically has been overly Caucasian and vastly underrepresented with regard to diversity and we need to send more diverse voices to Washington. We also need to make sure we're hiring people of color in positions where they can lift other people up. I was proud to be chief of staff under Mayor Marty Walsh where half of his cabinet was people of color and if I'm fortunate enough to be elected, my staff will be the most diverse staff you've ever seen in Congress. Second, and perhaps just as importantly, we have a racist as President of the United States. We need to impeach this president who is setting an example that it's okay to go on Twitter and put racial slurs on there to stoke the flames of what we saw in Charlottesville. If we impeach President Trump, I think we'd make a lot of racial progress in this country and I fully support it.



**BARBARA L'ITALIEN:** I think we have to look at education as a huge issue. We need a strong, single, public education system that is fully funded. Education is the great equalizer in life. It brought my Dad from a triple decker in Lawrence to be able to get a college education through the GI bill after serving in WWII and it really altered the course of the life for myself and my seven siblings. I think that a strong public education, not charter education, not voucher education, but public education. From universal Pre-K, K-12, and extending so that people can get a college education and be prepared to meet the 21st century economy. So I think that is the single-most transformational thing we can do, is reject the tax cut that was given to the top 1% and reapportion money towards a strong and unified public education system.



**BOPHA MALONE:** I would take a holistic approach, I don't think there's any one thing that's going to solve this. I have my daughter sitting here and it's really nice because she goes to a public school system where there's so much diversity and when she talks about her friends, we love the fact that it's just names. She doesn't go into colors and I love that. We teach that at home, it starts there first. Second, I do agree in the way of our president. I'm afraid. When the TV is on and he's talking I get her out because I don't want her to hear the things he's saying because it's not right to have our leaders saying these things. Also education, education is key.



**JUANA MATIAS:** There's not one thing that's going to address the institutional racism we continue to see being perpetuated. I come from the community of Lawrence which I have the honor and pleasure of representing in the Massachusetts State House. I saw for generations, how the public school systems failed thousands and thousands of students and we have privileged politicians who talk about public schools but who weren't there ensuring that our students, students of color, students who come from poor working class households, had access to the same academic opportunities as students from other parts of the state. 60% of students in this state, MA was just considered the number one state in public education in this country, 60% of colored students, African American and Latino students cannot read at a third grade level. We have one of the highest achievement gaps in this country. So I think the most important thing we need to talk about is education equity. It's really easy when you come from a privileged community to talk about public schools when you're not there seeing certain public schools, like the ones in Lawrence where we have receivership in place, where students do not get the education deserve, not move ahead and get what they need.



**LORI TRAHAN:** As someone who grew up in Lowell, I saw the impact of community policing on the City of Lowell. It strengthens the bonds of trust between neighborhoods and the community and the police department. I think there's more that Congress can do. I think that we need to support legislation to end racial profiling. I think we need to set up national guidelines on the issue of force by police officers. I think we need to give police officers the tools and resources they need: state of the art trainings in escalation practices and bias. That's something I'd like to work on so it's contagious across the district.



**MICHAEL MULLEN:** Immigration reform. Today immigration is used as something that you can point to people and it's a problem because "it's that group, or that group," and it ends up being very divisive so I think we need to solve that. I think we need a program that provides a path towards citizenship that has clear enforcement going forward, and I think it needs to be modernized. I think if we can address that and not have that be an issue that can be used to divide us, I think it will be something that can bring us together and help solve things on the racial front.



## UTECH young adults struggle with finding stable housing. If elected, including funding, how would you address this situation - that is so real in the Merrimack Valley - for young adults?



**JEFFREY BALLINGER:** It has to do with what you're doing right here at UTECH. I feel at home at UTECH because I'm a lifetime organizer and we've got to organize. We have not had unions free to organize in this country since 40 years ago when I tried to organize in the J.P. Stevens campaign, the Norma Rae story, I was on that campaign. I couldn't go to a worker's house and say the federal government protects your right to organize because I didn't believe it anymore. We tried to fix the labor law reform in 1977, it was filibustered for five weeks by the conservatives. They've only made things worse since then. They say regulation is bad, government is bad, people getting together is bad. Where's our response? The Democrats have been bought by the same corporate interests. They're raising money from the same banks, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies. We can't raise that voice because we're bought and paid for. I want my party back.



**ALEXANDRA CHANDLER:** I look at the affordable housing crisis in this district first from the funding perspective. What we need to do is get enhanced HUD funding including section 8 funding, because waitlists for affordable housing are ten years in some of our communities. Then what we also have to do is make it so that big developers don't have to be part of the solution when these grants come in. I've been talking to community organizations in Lawrence and other places where you have to partner with a big developer to carve out a certain segment of the housing that you can then make affordable. We need to find a way for the municipalities themselves, smaller scale organizations, similarly situated to UTECH, who can then access these funds themselves so then the housing can go right in the communities that need it, not marketing to those wealthy that will also be part of those developments. Then we have to look at transportation so we can build our housing in lower cost areas that then connect people to jobs, to healthcare, and to child care. Again, it's all an eco-system.



**BEEJ DAS:** We have to look at the systemic issues as to why this is happening. Gentrification and the success of the university has really helped this problem. The university's tuition right now is \$28,500 a year. If you can afford that in Lowell, that's the reason we're kicking out a lot of people who can't afford their housing anymore. I live a couple blocks from here and am sad to say I'm part of the problem. My rents rival those I would pay in Boston. So we don't have the jobs to support that kind of cost structure, yet we're forcing people to do just that. It's not fair and we need federal grants that will support housing supports that allow young people to get a start in life without having to suffer and face homelessness.



**RUFUS GIFFORD:** One of the things that really frustrate me about the Trump administration is his appointment of his cabinet. We have an education secretary who seems to hate public education, we used to have an EPA administrator that seemed to hate the environment and we have a HUD secretary in Ben Carson that seems to not care about this issue, something that falls squarely in his lap. Since the onset of the Trump administration, we have seen affordable housing programs slashed, slashed, slashed. Since - actually it was just today - that Secretary Carson overturned Obama-era civil rights ordinances in housing alone. This is something that we just simply need to turn around, at a time where this crisis is incredibly real, the federal government should be investing more in affordable housing programs, not slashing them.



**LEONARD GOLDER:** I have over twelve years' experience on the planning board in my town so I'm very familiar with some of the problems we have in dealing with housing, especially in terms of creating diverse housing, and one of the problems is if we live in an area that is very highly desirable, people want to live here, that creates more demand and higher rent, but not enough supply. So we really do need to create a greater supply of housing and we can't go back to the year of the 1950s when we built public housing. Public housing doesn't work, we've seen that. So we have to require people who are building private housing to set aside more housing that's affordable. In my town for example, every five houses that you build, one of them has to be affordable. What my town considers affordable, I don't consider affordable, so what has to be done is the affordability rate has to be lower and it has to be incentivized to create more housing and more affordable housing so that we're not shutting people out of where they can live.



**DANIEL KOH:** We should all agree that no matter who you are and how much money you make, that you deserve a home that is comfortable and affordable. That's how we should all start. This campaign, we've gone around to talk to housing experts in Haverhill, Lowell and Fitchburg, and the one commonality that everyone says is the problem is supply. We need to increase the supply of housing in a way that's inclusive. So how do we do that? When I was chief of staff to Mayor Walsh in Boston, we were able to create more housing by simply working closely with the public land that the city owns on itself and be able to put it out to bid in exchange for affordable development in those areas. There's opportunities throughout this district to do. Secondly there's this huge opportunity with the new Opportunities Zones program at the federal level. It will allow us to build more supply of housing, it will allow us to build more affordable housing to increase that supply so that when people come to our government agencies, and they need that housing, we're able to give it to them. That's what we need to do on the federal level and we need to do it right now.



**BARBARA L'ITALIEN:** I will say that representing the City of Lawrence, housing is one of the most vexing issues I deal with every day in my Senate office. We have long wait lists. We do help with writing grants and helping to access historic tax credits to convert some of our mills into housing, but it's disheartening when 700 people show up for 70 apartments that are beautiful, and it's great for those 70 people, but clearly supply is an issue. But we need a whole range of housing. We need starter housing for people. We need apartments for young people that have just graduated from college and can't afford a home. We need options for adults who are downsizing and maybe want to stay within their community. We need a whole range of housing. A lot of what's being produced right now is apartments but I think we also ought to have single family homes, not unlike what happened after WWII. People want to live in their own single family home and I think we need to find ways to create those opportunities as well.



**BOPHA MALONE:** First of all, I'm very sorry that you're struggling for what you're going through because no one should be going through that. Obviously this is a major issue and in going around the district, this is one of the things I hear a lot, is affordable housing. Ordinary people aren't getting access to normal living. Basically I think in Massachusetts, right now, there's over 17,000 people who are homeless. This is up in the past ten years due to no fault of their own. Basically unpaid medical bills, loss of jobs, so I think it's important to create jobs and make sure that people have at least the minimum wage to be able to afford housing.



**JUANA MATIAS:** After immigration calls in my office, the most amount of calls we get are in regards to housing and housing needs. One bedroom apartment that would have cost you, four years ago about \$900 is going \$14, \$15,000 in the City of Lawrence. I think what we need to look at is the fact that federally we have been disinvesting in federal housing grants every year and we need to do more reinvesting but we also need to look at where we're setting up these affordable housing units. We can't continue to segregate poor people to live in a certain community. We need to create affordable housing in other communities, change our zoning laws so that what happens is, you come to Lawrence and you build ten affordable housing units, the people that live there are largely poor, low incomes, that means that our tax base is not supplemented by these tax payer dollars, our schools are being affected by this so I think we need to look at the way we're doing federal housing policy and make sure it's equitable and across district lines. Then we also need to talk about housing. Giving people access to home ownership. Those are things I would fight for in Washington.



**LORI TRAHAN:** Travelling around the district, I saw some great models that I would like to see spread across this district where public and private partnerships with nonprofits are using municipal land are using public land to increase public housing stock. But look, the cost of living has gone up, the price of housing has gone up. What's really daunting is that wages have stagnated so I'm going to take this second just to talk about more innovative paths towards education that get people into good-paying jobs, get them the skills they need by promoting trades and technical training, community college programs that get our young people, not just to college, not just in that college lane where they can bank on a lot of debt, but also in to our community college programs that get them the credential they need in order to get a good paying job in our economy and afford a home.



**MICHAEL MULLEN:** First of all, we need to enforce the laws that are on the books today so we need to enforce the Fair Housing Act, I think that's a start. Second we need to look for opportunities where the government can step in and provide some of those opportunities to provide swaps, to provide those places where you can partner with the local communities, because that's where the zoning laws are, that's a lot of the place where we're losing our ability to build stock. Lastly, one of the reasons I'm running as an Independent, is I think that the whole political and electoral system that we have today doesn't work and is too tied to special interests. Real estate lobby is a big lobby, they have a big influence with the elected officials in this country. I think we need to add transparency to that, I think we need to put reasonable limits in place, I think we need to repeal Citizens United and enforce the transparency and disclosure laws that we have on the books today.



# Closing Statement: Why does the UTEC community deserve your vote?



**JEFFREY BALLINGER:** Thanks for coming out, folks. My name is Jeff Ballinger and if I'm your Representative, I'm going to be vocal down in Washington. I'll tell you a story about a wind turbine company just down the road in Ayer. They had their technology stolen by their biggest customer, a Chinese company. In 2011 they went from 900 employees to 200 overnight. Now just last January we won the first ever criminal case: intellectual property theft against a Chinese company and you would think maybe somebody from the Energy and Commerce Committee would call one of the workers and the CEO and the engineer down to talk about this, because I read in the Wall Street Journal - there's nothing in the Globe, nothing in the Sun, it was a huge victory. Now we have to be more vocal, you know what, because we weren't, they settled for \$57 million even though the court in January last January said the company suffered \$800 million damage. Now that's because nobody spoke up.



**ALEXANDRA CHANDLER:** Thank you everyone and thank you for what you do for Lowell everyday. I'm excited for what you're going to do for Haverhill because I live in Haverhill and UTEC's coming to Haverhill and that's great. I'm running because I believe that I can best get things done in Washington for ordinary people. I worked in the intelligence community for 13 years after joining after 9/11. I'm also running because I want to be the voice for the vulnerable. You're looking at someone who as a transgender woman has been threatened for being who I am, I've been beaten up for being who I am, I've been discriminated against for being who I am. So I will be a voice for all the vulnerable, wherever you are, whoever you are, and I will be a voice for those who are here, but those that also don't have the UTEC to help them. I have a very progressive agency of racial, economic, and social justice. I invite you to look at it at alexandrachandler.com. We take no corporate PAC money, our median donation is \$27. Get involved in our campaign and let's really transform our politics and our country. Thank you.



**BEEJ DAS:** Good evening everyone, my name is Beej Das. I am running to be your next Representative. One of the reasons I'm running is I listen very well. This experience has been such an amazing pleasure for me because I've gotten to know all of you and your values and your views over the last year or so in a way that nobody who hasn't gone through the process that we've all gone through can really see. If you truly listen to the voices of this district, you will understand that this is an incredibly diverse district. It will take an incredibly diverse individual to represent that district. I am a constitutional lawyer, own a small business, have 75 employees, pay payroll every week, pay healthcare when my company shut down for six months, I've paid salaries and healthcare for that entire period. Compare that to National Grid that locks out its employees, I am a champion of the working class. I am from Lowell and I intend to serve you very well if on the 4th, I get your support.



**RUFUS GIFFORD:** Thanks everybody and thanks to UTEC. When I came here several months back and was just so overwhelmed and inspired by the work that Gregg and all of you guys do every single day. You all are rock stars, truly, truly. Tonight has been nothing, exactly what we expect. My name is Rufus Gifford. I live down the road in Concord with my husband. I have the great privilege for working for President Barack Obama for ten years and the last four I was the United States ambassador to Demark. After Donald Trump was elected President of the United States, I felt compelled to come home, throw my hat into the ring and step up my level of service to run for office. Since then I've hit the road, gone diner to diner, coffee shop to coffee shop, in every single one of the 37 cities and towns in this district. I've listened, asked questions, tried to understand what made every single community in this remarkable district tick. That's what matters and what I've learned on the doors, what I've learned from those conversations is that we've got to stand for something. This election is 20 days away and I humbly ask for your support.



**LEONARD GOLDBER:** Hi I'm Len Golder. I grew up in Chelsea in a gateway community and a lot of my life's work has been in human services as a social worker, a public defense attorney. So I have an understanding of the human services system. What needs to be fixed and what needs to be improved. Programs like UTEC are a great example. I just want to make one quick comment, not about Trump, but his lawyer Rudolph Giuliani because he made a comment on his philosophy on how you build a community when he was Mayor of New York. He said, "you fix broken windows." That way everything gets improved and looks great. Well my idea is, you don't fix broken windows, you focus on fixing people's lives. You improve their lives and if they are broken, you fix those problems. Not the windows, but the people. If I'm elected to Congress, those are the kinds of programs I want to focus on to help improve people's lives and I'm not worried about the windows.



**DANIEL KOH:** Thank you everyone. My name is Dan Koh and my family comes from two different parts of the world, Lebanon and Korea, to this district and lived the American Dream. I'm running because that American Dream story is under attack and in order to get all of the amazing things done that we've talked about tonight, we need to pick someone who's going to stand up to this president and fight for the values we believe in. So instead of taking away healthcare from 23 million Americans, let's be proud to say that we need a single-payer system in this country once and for all. Instead of a tax break to the top 1% and corporations that don't need it, let's increase money to the social innovative fund that gave an amazing grant to UTEC. And instead of discriminating with a racist travel ban, let's open up and make sure that we're welcoming our immigrants to this country. Let's make sure that we have a pathway to citizenship and instead of these cuts that we're seeing at the federal level to education, let's double down and have the best public education system this world has ever seen. That is what this campaign is all about; fighting for what makes America truly great. I humbly ask for your vote on September 4th. Thank you.



**BARBARA L'ITALIEN:** I'm Barbara L'Italien and my campaign theme is that I'm a Mom on a mission. Why you might ask? I have a son with autism and when he was little, he struggled mightily and I had to help him navigate health care, education, and having friends. What started as his mission to get him on a good path, I turned to the legislature 16 years ago I first ran for the House. These are all wonderful people here. Everyone has great ideas, I am the only one who over the last fifteen years has served in the House, in the Senate. I'm endorsed on the single-payer issue. I've worked on civil rights, gay marriage. I got kicked out of my church for standing up to do the right thing. I stood tall and spoke truth to power on the Trump administration and the borer policies and I'll end with a story about a young man named Eddie in Lawrence who had been criminally involved, worked at Youth Build. I mentored him, we brought him in, he interned and worked in my office. He is now working at Family Services. Thank you.



**BOPHA MALONE:** My name is Bopha Malone and thank you so much to UTEC for what you do, and how you just did it. Allowing these young people to be leaders and leading. That's such a wonderful example and I truly appreciate you. Just like you, if it wasn't for organizations like UTEC and Girls Inc., I wouldn't be where I'm at today. I was able to achieve my American Dream because of great role models, great mentors, great organizations that helped and guided me to get me to where I am. That's why I'm running for Congress. I'm running to ensure that everyone has the freedom to achieve their American Dream just like I did, so I ask for your support and your vote on September 4th and when I get it, I promise to make you proud. Thank you very much for being here tonight and I truly appreciate you.



**JUANA MATIAS:** Good evening everyone, my name is Juana Matias and I'm currently a State Representative for the 16th Essex district, the City of Lawrence. I want to thank UTEC for convening us tonight. I've been an admirer of their work. I've seen UTEC workers come to the State House to advocate and to do an incredible job making sure that Massachusetts is leading and that our youth have the opportunities they need to succeed. My story is the story of the immigrant. I came here at the age of five in 1992 from the Dominican Republic and I saw both of my parents sacrifice everything in order for me to have better opportunities. I was able to attend UMass Boston and then law school and every opportunity I've had, I've dedicated my career to this district. First as a social worker for a nonprofit agency called Children Services of Roxbury here in Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill. Then as a legal advocate defending children under the age of 15 who were facing deportation doing predominately asylum work. Then I challenged an anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ incumbent who had been in office for 25 years and became the first Latina immigrant in the Massachusetts State House. If given your vote, I will vote tirelessly on behalf of the constituents of the Third District. Thank you very much.



**LORI TRAHAN:** Thank you so much for having us here. My name is Lori Trahan. I'm a Democrat. I'm running for Congress to be a voice for working class families like the one I grew up right here in Lowell. My Dad, in the back of the room, was a union ironworker, son of Portuguese immigrants. My Mom, raised in the Franco American orphanage and in foster care, and worked countless jobs while raising my three sisters and me. I went to Lowell public schools here while delivering the Lowell Sun. I worked at the Owl Diner while going to Lowell High School and it was a scholarship that put me on a pathway to college. I understand deeply what it means to be part of a working class family, one that lives pay check to paycheck, and I know what it takes: good jobs, good quality education, affordable healthcare, to close the gap between economic anxiety and economic opportunity. After college, Steve Gendron, standing the back of the room, I got to work here and be of service to the City of Lowell by working for the Spindle City Corps. I humbly ask your vote and I'll buy more cutting boards, they're my favorite Christmas gift, thank you.



**MICHAEL MULLEN:** My name is Mike Mullen and I'm running as an Independent. The reason I'm doing that is I think our political system today is broken. I think it's too divisive and too tied to special interests. All the issues we talked about today are important but I think they all get short shrift because we don't have the focus on those issues. As I was preparing for this forum, I looked at the values of UTEC and I think you guys articulate why I'm running even better than I did. You talk about looking at things with a clean slate, having madd love, assuming the good. That's what we need to do as elected officials. If they could apply those values, we'd get so much more done. Another thing I liked in your value statement was thinking big, but chipping away. I think that's really what we need to do. After Sandy Hook, President Obama said we could do better and I think we use that. I think we look for perfect solutions and we look to just solve it all, but instead we need to make that iterative progress. We need to make those changes that we can agree on, I think there's a lot we can have consensus on. Thank you.



# LIGHTNING ROUND: One-word-answer questions

		There is a lack of reliable funding for re-entry services both pre and post release in state and federally – particularly with young adults with high recidivism rates. If elected, would you support and fight for a new funding mechanism to support re-entry efforts at UTEC?	Effective anti-poverty work requires a multi-generational approach that we call “2Gen.” If elected would you be in support of championing new legislation focused on advancing a 2Gen strategy that includes the formation of a new national 2Gen Commission?	If your campaign had a mascot, what mascot would it be?
	<b>JEFFREY BALLINGER:</b>	YES	YES	A leghorn chicken
	<b>ALEXANDRA CHANDLER</b>	YES	YES	A turtle
	<b>BEEJ DAS</b>	YES	YES	A dark horse
	<b>RUFUS GIFFORD</b>	YES	YES	My dog, Argus
	<b>LEONARD GOLDER</b>	YES	YES	My dog
	<b>DANIEL KOH</b>	YES	YES	A T-rex
	<b>BARBARA L'ITALIEN</b>	YES	YES	Rosie The Riveter
	<b>BOPHA MALONE</b>	YES	YES	A lion
	<b>JUANA MATIAS</b>	YES	YES	The Scales of Justice
	<b>LORI TRAHAN</b>	YES	YES	Duke (UTEC Emcee)
	<b>MICHAEL MULLEN</b>	YES	YES	A badger