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GYASI BURKS-ABBOTT: Before we start I would like to quickly review some housekeeping details to ensure this virtual form is as accessible as possible. Please click the global icon at the bottom of your resume screen to enable interpretation. You may have to click dot dot dot more if you are logged on to a mobile device. Next, please select either English or Spanish, and lastly it is recommended that you mute the original audio.

An ASL interpreter should always be visible on your screen. For CART, please click the dot dot dot more button and click on show subtitle. We are pleased to speak with Candidate Geoff Diehl for the first of the two disability focused virtual gubernatorial forms. My name is Gyasi Burks-Abbott, and I'm an autism self-advocate and author. I'm a man with dark hair and glasses and my background displays all the logos of all the sponsoring agencies.

I currently serve on the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, where I chaired the possible -- policy subcommittee and I am on the faculty for the LEND

Program at Boston Children's Hospital. It is important to note that the 2022 Massachusetts gubernatorial election will take place on November 8 when we will elect the governor of Massachusetts. Republican former state representative Geoff Diehl and democratic state Attorney General Maura Healey are seeking to secede incumbent Republican governor Charlie Baker who is not seeking reelection after two terms.

This event has been organized by Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts, Boston Center for Independent Living, the Disability Law Center, Mass Advocates Standing Strong, Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, and the ark of Massachusetts. We would also like to thank the many cosponsors for their help in making this form possible, and for Mr. Diehl for taking time to meet with us today.

The general election is Tuesday, November 8, and on the slide their resources to learn more about election and voting. Is important to announce that since we received many questions in advance, most questions will be from there. however, you can submit questions the Q&A feature, which will be considered at the moderator's discretion. Additionally, you can always follow up with questions that may be addressed during this evening's form. Please contact the organizers of this form, specifically those listed on the slide. Additionally, the Secretary of State's website has an easy to follow election information page where you can find out how to register to vote and everything else you need to know about the election process.

This slide shows additional resources about voting access. I am pleased to introduce you to Dianna Hu. Dianna is now a software engineer at Google, chairperson of the Boston Center for Independent Living, and board member of the Riders' Transportation Access Group.

DIANNA HU: Thanks very much, Gyasi, for the introduction. Hello everyone I Dianna Hu chairperson for the Boston Center for Independent Living in your moderator this afternoon. I'm an Asian American woman sitting on top of my motorized wheelchair and wearing a Black short-sleeved shirt with a Black flower color. My background is the same as Gyasi's. It shows the logos of all the sponsoring organizations that have made this event possible.

Welcome everyone to today's addition of the Virtual Disability Forum Series Conversations with Candidates for Governor of Massachusetts. This is a great opportunity to have a dialogue with our gubernatorial candidates and get their thoughts and perspectives on some of the most critical issues that people with disabilities are facing in the present day.

Understanding our leaders is a key step devoting for our leaders to support them so they can support us in our needs as part of the disability community.

Today we are excited to have with us Geoff Diehl the Republican nominee for governor of Massachusetts. We will begin the event with Mr. Diehl's opening remarks and then we will move to a Q&A session and then we will end with Mr. Diehl's closing remarks.

Please note we are recording this event provokes were not able to attend or would like to rewatch or tune in later. A lot of thoughtful questions were submitted in advance with topics related to healthcare, education, employment, transportation, housing, accessibility and beyond. We will begin the Q&A session with some of these questions. If you think of a question that you would like to ask Mr. Diehl, feel free to use the Zoom Q&A feature at the bottom of the screen to submit your questions and we will try to get to them as time allows. Before we get to Q&A, a bit of background on the candidate today.

Mr. Diehl has a long history in Massachusetts government -- representing the seventh Plymouth district. He strives for more transparency and more accountability at the Statehouse for more jobs in local aid for cities and towns in protecting residents from tax hikes notably including attacks -- gas tax hike in 2014. Mr. Diehl also secured the Massachusetts Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in 2018 in this year of course he is the Republican nominee for the upcoming governor election. We are grateful to Mr. Diehl for taking the time and consideration to be here with us today. Mr. Diehl, the floor is yours for your opening remarks.

GEOFF DIEHL: Thank you, Dianna, for the introduction and setting the stage and Gyasi, thank you as well for be able to set this up and hosting me for the Boston Center for Independent Living. This is a fantastic form. I am a Caucasian male wearing a dark blue suit with a yellow tie. Hopefully that helps describe me somewhat. I am also a father of two daughters; one is 20 years old in college and the other is 16 years old in high school. My wife and I own a performing arts school in the South Shore. We live in a neighboring town of Whitman. I served in the legislature, as you mentioned, winning an election in 2010. I was 40 years old and had never run for office before and in fact had never been involved in politics before.

Was serving on the Whitman Finance Committee. I was the liaison to our regional high school system. One of the reasons I decided to run for office was try to advocate for increased support for education as well as try to make sure Beacon Hill understood some of the mandates that were not funded were not necessarily helping our towns economically. Those were some the initial reasons I ran. Once I was fortunate enough to serve in office. By the way, I can see we are joined by Barbara L'Italien who served with me in the legislature as well. During my time in the state legislature I was able to be on the -- I'm sorry. The Ways and Means Committee which was like my local towns Finance Committee only a lot more zeros at the end of the budget for each line item.

What I learned there is where the state spends the majority of its money and where we have great successes and obviously areas where we have room for improvement. My time in office for eight years was spent trying to make sure we had that transparency with what the state was providing and we also made sure -- My goal was to make sure we were achieving the needs of the people of Massachusetts in many ways. I have been very fortunate to attend a lot of events in the South Shore area where I live. The Brockton area Arc invited me to allow me to participate in many events to learn what

they are doing. The school in Randolph I have people I know whose children attend their and of course Independence Associates which is to be located in Brockton is now in East Bridgewater and his house in one of the towns I represented a state representative.

I've always done my best to familiarize myself with the services being provided with independent living and I will admit right off the bat I'm not an expert in the field and certainly hope the relationship that we have, if I am fortunate enough to be elected, is one that you will always feel you can come to be an advocate completely for what you think is the best interest of the people that you serve. I will certainly make sure I can do the best that we can as a state and myself to fulfill those needs. I did mention that my wife and I own a performing arts school in the town of Hanson. One of the things my wife prides herself on is making sure children of all backgrounds can participate in the dancing, acting and voice classes that are offered. That includes people with physical limitations. That includes people with autism. We absolutely feel until everyone deserves and we benefit from having their participation in a performing arts environment.

I can tell you I'm excited and I am appreciating being part of this forum.

DIANNA HU: Thank you so much, Mr. Diehl. And really strongly resonating with your empathy and with your support for independent living and full participation and inclusion in the community. Now, let's move on to the Q&A session with the first question submitted in advance of today's event. There is an often cited statistic that people with disabilities are about 20% of the national population. And when we are talking about disabilities we are including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, chronic health conditions, sensory disabilities like blindness and deafness with disabilities spanning age groups from children to adults to seniors. You touched on this in your opening remarks but I want to understand more about your personal connection or awareness or understanding of some of the issues that are faced by the disability community?

GEOFF DIEHL: I understand obviously that from an early age there is intervention that the state is able to provide an assistance with children who maybe have a special needs with health issues following birth. Obviously educational the individual support plans that schools provide for children obviously is something the local school districts try to provide an obviously the state tries to help augment as well. Obviously mobility is a huge issue. I live in a suburban town where there is very limited mobility options for people. In fact, we have very limited sidewalks in the town of Hansen where my wife's performing arts school is. It's something I think the state has continued to be aware of and look towards investments that just don't spring to mind immediately when you are thinking of just typical transportation needs. And by the way, I should cut the list short. It's not just education but making sure that transitional services by the time people turn 22 those are in place.

Again, workforce training for people who are able to find a career that fulfills them and what their abilities allow. That is something that I know we as a state and local agencies that are funded by the state and federal programs are able to provide. When you say it is 20% of the population, really it does not matter it is 20% because we are all unique individuals in her own right and ultimately I think it's incumbent on state, local and federal governments to provide that American dream and ability to enjoy your life to your fullest in every way possible. I think Massachusetts has been fortunate to be a state that has the resources to be able to provide a lot of those services and yet, at the same time, I think there are areas that are overlooked and perhaps I am unaware of that we have not been able to achieve yet. That is where I hope everyone on this conference or anybody for the future that wants to approach me let's me know where we are dropping the ball so to speak.

I do appreciate your comment that is that we should never overlook that person to help them live a fulfilling life as possible.

DIANNA HU: Thank you, Mr. Diehl. A great answer. I want to dive a bit into an education component. The question is, "How will you work to ensure that Massachusetts schools dropped the practice of segregated classrooms for students with disabilities and instead moved to a more inclusive education for all?" Especially in urban school districts but also beyond.

GEOFF DIEHL: I forgot to mention this before. With my sister-in-law and brother-in-law on my wife's side are special needs teachers. One is in Canton and the others in Quincy. Certainly whenever we talk as a family they both relay the importance of making sure we have integrated classrooms where the children are fully participating at whatever level of performance they have. It does not matter. It is important to make sure the social components are in place as well.

Is a challenge and I don't agree with the practice of segregation within the classroom and I think again everyone benefits just like my wife's performing arts school. Everyone benefits from the unique aspects of each person's participation regardless of achievement level.

DIANNA HU: Strong agreement. You also mentioned before about students who are sort of transitioning to adult services when they turn 22 years old. This is a really pivotal moment for many students with disabilities because they need to transition away from an educational system that is for the majority of their lives providing the services and supports that they have needed to live and thrive in the community. The question is, "How would you work towards ensuring a successful transition for all students with disabilities who are turning 22 and are in need of adult services?"

GEOFF DIEHL: That is where I think we as a state have a great network of people. The Arc of Massachusetts, independent Associates where I live always made sure they were known as a resource to go to of someone who questions about services that could be provided whether it's finding housing, transportation or looking for employment

opportunities regionally for people. The recreational activities that were available for people. There are shine officers that help out in senior centers. They connect people who are seniors with the services that are available to them. One of the things I found is we have a strong network. Again, I will continue to say this, if you find there are areas where there are gaps in those agencies that can help provide the connections to people in the services or resources they are looking for, please let me know. We can try to make sure we fill those gaps. We have been very lucky again to have a region of the state where I know there's a strong awareness of and financial support of agencies that are able to connect people to those turning 22 programs to help transition them away from the educational setting. Like you say where a lot of services were provided and now they get more piecemeal. It is not an all-in-one type service so becomes more challenging there.

DIANNA HU: Yeah, I think -- Yeah. I think when these programs are working well I think they are doing a great job but yeah, there have been some gaps noted particularly during the pandemic time when many people with disabilities have not been able to access certain programs that have been helpful for community integration. One example there is from the Department of development of services or DDS in their day programs. A lot of people with disabilities have been shut out from these DDS day programs because of limited staffing for the programs in transportation. With a few opportunities for community integration folks are not getting the access they need and can even end up in the emergency room because of lack of access and support. The question would be what would you do as governor to sort of address the staffing shortages that are leading to lack of access or gaps within the DDS day programs?

GEOFF DIEHL: A great follow-up question. I think a big problem the state has had for a while now and the COVID pandemic certainly caused major problems across the entire state was employment. We still have underemployment within the private sector. We have underemployment within state agencies. The MBTA is one example where the federal government has had to intervene because of safety issues because of reduced staffing. I think there was a problem with vaccine mandates where some people who did not want to get vaccinated either got fired or they took early retirement which has left us shorthanded and a lot of state agencies as well. And then on top of that immigrants coming into the state who are able to work on visas were not able to travel during the pandemic and come in. Areas like the Cape and islands that rely on a lot of transitional workforce throughout the summer months, for example, were also unable to get people to work in his different jobs. But really again, where it affects people with independent living and the support that services are provided, I think a similar situation we have seen affordability issues in Massachusetts dried 50,000 people out of our state. We just saw that last Friday there was a report that electricity rates are going to increase by 64%. It is harder and harder to be able to afford to live in Massachusetts. I want to figure out ways to help people afford to live here in that way we will have the residents and citizens available to be part of the workforce for the

future. It is not an overnight quick fix solution to try to get people back into the workforce but it's something we have to look at is a major priority right now.

Again, we are seeing a trend of businesses leaving the state because they don't have the ability to find the workers. Kids are not getting trained in the careers that allow them to go into certain fields. I think in the case of healthcare, for example, I would like to incentivize people. When I was in the state legislature, Western Massachusetts was having a shortage of people, doctors and dentists I believe, out in Western Massachusetts. They could not make enough to pay back the loans that they had gone to medical school for. The state was able to incentivize them to move out and relocate for a short period of time in western Massachusetts. If we are shorthanded in the area of healthcare and in this case with the day programs perhaps there's a way we can incentivize people to get into the workforce faster right out of high school or maybe community colleges and get them working right away to shore up those gaps.

DIANNA HU: Yeah, I think that is a great initiative. Because there is a crisis level sort of shortage of staff direct service workers, personal care attendants, clinical staff. I think it is really important to prioritize supporting wages, benefits and recruitment in the healthcare field. That is really great to hear. In your response you also mentioned making Massachusetts more portable to live in. And I think housing is a really large aspect of affordable living. It is pretty much universally known that there is a huge shortage of affordable housing in the state. This is really impacting people with disabilities. Many are living in unstable situations. In nursing homes in inaccessible apartments, on friends' couches. In shelters. With elderly parents. What kind of specific actions which are administration proposed to address that need for more affordable, more accessible and integrated housing for people with disabilities?

GEOFF DIEHL: I know we are being hosted by the Boston Center for Independent Living, BCIL, but I think we need to look beyond the capital city and think of areas of the state where we have more affordable construction opportunities to create larger spaces for the handicapped accessible buildings and requirements. Part of that involves infrastructure investments as well. Not just looking at making sure the MBTA is running safely and on time but also making sure east-west rail or South Coast rail are expanded so we can allow people... I know that Governor Baker, for example, has proposed to about 175 cities and towns requirements that they increase affordable housing units near transportation hubs. One of the criticisms I have that plan is it does not include the support beyond just the construction of the housing units. I think the state needs to also make sure -- And it sounds mundane -- Things like sidewalks and buses. Down in my suburban area we don't have the right. Brockton, the nearest city, has buses with handicapped accessibility but we do not have that in some of these suburban towns where it is more affordable to build and live in. I would like to really open up the expansion of housing opportunities in areas beyond Boston. People want to remain with family and stay in the Boston area, this continued expansion of office buildings taking over more and more of the land in the area of course drives up the overall

gentrification. With high-paying jobs those people can afford more expensive departments -- apartments.

In South Boston triple-decker were police officers used to live affordably now one floor goes for \$1 million. Who can move into that? Nobody. When the state can and provides the economically assisted apartments and buildings for people to get in I think we can do more. Again, I will rely on experts to tell me where those opportunities exist but I am all for doing that. We as a state we have \$6 billion in excess tax revenue this year. This is not the first year we have had excess tax revenue in our state. I think it is time we start looking towards making sure the core services are available to those who need it. I think you said perhaps the 20% is overlooked when it comes to mobility and when it comes to getting people to and from jobs. That fit their abilities we certainly can afford to do that. We just have to have the political will to do so.

DIANNA HU: Definitely. I feel like yes, working with BCIL sounds excellent. Also working with other sort of sponsoring organizations like the Disability Law Center and The Arc. These organizations are statewide and we can expand our reach that way. I also feel like transportation, it sounds like from your answer, is really a big part of affordability and expanding transportation can be good at a universal level. But in particular for people with disabilities there are a lot of transportation challenges whether it involves the human services transportation office, accessibility on the MBTA including the ride care transit service or adequate funding for regional transit authorities.

I grew up in the suburbs of Long Island and I recognize that the transportation there was pretty terrible for someone in a motorized wheelchair trying to get to a convenience store was more than inconvenient. So when I came to the Boston area it was pretty amazing to be able to push an elevator button and board a subway car all on my own.

GEOFF DIEHL: Dianna the other thing I want to mention too is my wife and I met in New York City and we lived there for five years without a car of our own. Public transportation there was fantastic. Buses and subways. What I've learned in Massachusetts is having things like the Ride. What that has done which I think is very smart and is partnering with Uber and Lyft and allow those vehicles which have more capacity to handle specifically putting a wheelchair and they have more time capacity to help people with those extra transportation nuances in a suburban area.

I think if the state is not able to expand directly immediately partnering with private groups that can provide some of the transportation solutions. I know I may sound like a broken record with transportation but you have to be able to get to and from your house, to get to your work and to your school. Not everything can be provided to the home right now. I think it is good for people to be able to get themselves out and about and see the rest of the city, town and state and wherever they can. I am a big advocate for trying to make sure people can get where they want to go and do it in a way that is available for any mode that is needed.

DIANNA HU: Absolutely! Mentioning partnering with Uber and Lyft and expanding that on the Ride is one way to increase accessibility. What are some other examples are what are some other things you might propose for improving transportation on the fixed route or otherwise for people with disabilities?

GEOFF DIEHL: You know, down on the South Shore there are some private services that have been able to augment public school bus limitations. And so again, there are some of the private public partnerships that I think and fill the gap where I live. But again when it comes to larger cities like Boston, I am not necessarily sure how we can achieve some of that. Perhaps some of the same types of solutions. I will have to defer on some experts that know Boston a little bit better than I do.

DIANNA HU: That is fair. I want to pivot to another question submitted in advance. This is state's personal care attendant program. With the PCA program. To provide services to 40,000 people with disabilities including both physical and intellectual and also many seniors. There are about 55,000 PCAs in this program predominantly low income women, immigrants and members of the BIPOC communities. There's an unfortunate historical precedent upon taking office many previous administrations, even going back to the 1990s, have targeted this program for cuts not realizing it is one of the most vital independent living programs in the state and also an important source of income for low-income people. And on a personal level the PCA program for MassHealth is one of the reasons I decided to call Massachusetts my home. The PCA gets me out of bed in the morning and assist me with all activities so I can live an independent life. The question is, can we count on your administration to support the PCA program and work closely with advocates and labor representatives to strengthen rather than reduce the program?

GEOFF DIEHL: Yes, I hope to be the administration that changes the trend. Serving on the Ways and Means committee I had a very fortunate opportunity for four years to learn about transitional services. I to learn about services for, like you mentioned, DDS. Things I was completely unaware of before coming a legislature.

It was a good opportunity to learn that the investments we make that attracted you specifically, Dianna, to Massachusetts and the key people here rather than leaving the valuable investment. We are as good as every person in our state. And I think every person in our state has some level of contribution that we should be proud of it. I want to make sure nobody wants to leave Massachusetts for any reason whatsoever. The people that are working in home healthcare the personal care assistance or attendance, we want to make sure the compensation they receive is fair and equitable. My wife was in a union and my mother was a union worker for 40 years. As I mentioned, my sister and brother-in-law are teachers in the MTA. I believe in making sure the union workforces bargains with is fair and the compensation they receive is equitable in relation to the services they are providing.

You will not be looking at me as someone who wants to cut these incredibly valuable services or the number of people providing those services.

DIANNA HU: Thank you, Mr. Diehl. That is really comforting and promising to hear that there are so many ways to support and strengthen the PCA program and that you would work toward that goal. I also want to come back to yeah, supporting our direct service workers because there is a shortage of staff that is leading to a crisis. I wonder if you could talk a little bit more about ways to support the funding -- Ways to support the wages and benefits for these workers and also for workers with disabilities how to support people with disabilities in the workforce in both the public and private sectors?

GEOFF DIEHL: Right. One of the statistics I saw with the Boston Center for Independent Living was I believe 70% of the staff is actually people who have disabilities of some form which is very impressive and again a model for maybe how we could have staffing increases in other parts of the state agencies. Again, when it comes to wages I certainly want to make sure we are paying fairly for the services out there.

When it comes to other bonuses, I am not necessarily sure. I know just recently I heard the governor has implemented a new out-of-state overseer of time off -- Paid time off work partners and their concerns by a lot of state agencies as to having a third-party private entity taking over the HR responsibilities of state workers. I think that is something I'm going to investigate. I think the contract just took place and I am not necessarily thrilled with that idea that somebody working in Massachusetts for a state agency or in support of the state agency would have their direct supervisor no longer able to give them that immediate approval for the time off that they would need right away if there was a family emergency. It just seems to be a bad decision and I would like to learn more before I move away from it. But I do feel that is something we should restore back to state agencies, more control over the workforce time off that is needed whether it's paid family medical leave or sick time.

Those are things that I can think of off the top of my head. Again, I'm not necessarily sure what other incentivization, educational cost incentives we can provide to get people into certain workforce fields that are understaffed which I think I mentioned earlier. But again if you have other ideas that you think would help make a happier and stronger workforce, I will always be all ears.

DIANNA HU: I think when it comes to initiatives to hire people with disabilities I wonder if it would make sense to sort of establish some quantitative or concrete goals for hiring people who identify with having a disability and sort of holding state agencies to maybe establish metrics surrounding those goals, if that would be a possibility with your leadership as governor?

GEOFF DIEHL: That makes sense. I just met with the state police union yesterday and they were talking about how there is sort of a, I can't think of the term, it is not deputy. I think there are about 50,000 people being brought in out of high school to start training to be potential state police officers. This is the first time they are doing it. They do not

have the ability to carry a gun or make arrests or anything like that. They are going to be brought in to help with support roles in the state police operations while they train and learn more about the job and then go on and take the exam and become fully brought in as a state police trooper down the road. My point is not about state police itself but the model of being able to bring in a percentage of people that are able to fulfill, again, support roles and then maybe training and learn in areas that if we find it is a great match there is an opening for.

We are in a unique situation when the pandemic has caused us to be understaffed and so many state agencies that this is the perfect time to rule out that opportunity and get more people with disabilities a trial run in certain careers.

DIANNA HU: That is great to hear. I want to move to another question which became extremely relevant also during the pandemic. And during the pandemic remote access to public meetings became a necessary response. It went beyond preserving public body's ability to operate. It really opened the door to civic engagement for members of the public who had been previously shut out including people with disabilities and taking away remote participation but really shut out people who have for the first time been able to engage with their government in a new way without hindrance. I'm just wondering with your leadership as governor would you support remote participation in public meetings to really support keeping the door open on democracy?

GEOFF DIEHL: Again, Dianna, a great question from you and from the people giving you those questions. These are thoughtful things. These are one of the things that are really exciting. One of the silver linings from the pandemic's people became comfortable with the technology that allows us to do remote meetings like this. My wife and I went schools in 2021 were going back to -- Kids were going back to schools but then only two days of week then they will be home for three days. My wife and I created a learning pod at our studio. We took the big dance rooms in the spacing needed, the 6 foot tables, kids were at the end of each. We help them get online and we help them access the programs for their classes. We saw that there were certain teachers that had a comfort level with the technology that was great. We saw teachers that did not necessarily know what they were doing the online remote learning. We saw kids that adapted to it very well. And we saw kids who wanted to watch a video on the computer instead of being in the virtual classroom.

The general point is this. I think people became aware that it is possible to use this technology to engage in a way that we had not done in such numbers before. I also know whenever we had hearings at the Statehouse, you know, the statehouse itself is a very old building kind of like working in a museum. Some of the access in the Gardner auditorium for the hearing rooms in the basement were difficult for people with disabilities to get in there and, you know, it was just very hard. Sometimes a limited number of people in the room made it hard for people to get in there for the hearings. I think what we can do is open up legislative hearings. Hopefully the legislature would be open to this idea. I know they broadcast the hearings in some cases but it would also

be good if they allow the interaction we are seeing today in the Q&A to take place as well. I think the technology is there. I think it's more a matter of the will. I'm someone that you mentioned at the outset who believes in transparency. The more people know the better government we are going to get.

DIANNA HU: Absolutely. This is a boon for transparency. Indefinitely beyond just listening in and being able to have a bi-directional sort of communication through remote means and virtual access. I think that is a strong plus in favor of sort of a hybrid meeting model. I think we have time for maybe 1-2 more questions. I want to go to a question on self-direction. This is a model of long-term service delivery that empowers people with disabilities to take control over the what, when and how they receive services in supports. Many folks in the disability community consider self-direction a matter of human rights and fundamental to independent living. How will you support self-direction for people with disabilities?

GEOFF DIEHL: I suppose that is a tough question for me to answer because again I'm not sure what form that takes. I will say, as you mentioned, if it is legal assistance that the state can provide to someone who feels they are not having the ability to self direct, then certainly that is something we want to make sure we connect the people to the legal services they should get. I don't know if it's an education component that needs to be put out there so that people in the community beyond families are aware people who want to self direct their lives should be allowed to. So again, I will apologize now and say I probably need to learn more about how I can support that. But I can't imagine there would be any way my administration would not want to make sure that is the direction people can certainly take.

DIANNA HU: Thank you, Mr. Diehl. I think we are coming closer to the end of the event. I know we received over a dozen questions. We will definitely share them after today's event with you and really want to respect the questions that folks have sent in.

I just want to give an opportunity to thank you, Mr. Diehl, for your really thoughtful responses in the Q&A session and taking a deep dive into how Massachusetts can better support and empower its residents with disabilities and how you would support the cause as our next governor. I would like to hand the virtual spotlight back to you once more for closing remarks and then we will finish off the event. The floor is yours, Mr. Diehl.

GEOFF DIEHL: Thanks again, Dianna. One of the things I did as a state legislator's go meet with the people that I was voting on bills that affected their livelihoods whether was cranberry growers or lobster men and I did ride along with police officers to see what was going on. I think what I did in this case is hopefully spend time with you and advocates who can show me specifically where the rubber hits the road as far as where the administration and the state can make the best impact with the resources you are asking for. And that way I can speak obviously with more authority by the time I am in office and have a chance to make an impact over the next four years. I am fortunate to

have a running mate named Leah Allen. She served with me in the House of Representatives and she went back to a career as a nurse. She has two children. Her husband is a mechanic in the Local 4 Elevators union and she is someone who is very passionate about trying to make sure the hard-working folks of Massachusetts get the services from the state that they expect and get with that transparency that we all believe gives us the best opportunity to succeed individually and as a state as a whole.

I hope that people when they are done with this session we are having today if they want to learn more we do have a website. It goes by www.diehlallen.com. We have it in Spanish as well as in English. People can learn more. There are videos there if you're able to get on the videos you can hear us talk about our policy positions and what we would like to do for the state. Again, I cannot thank you enough Dianna for the forum and everyone who has participated in the questions that were posed. Please know this is a continuing discussion. Whether or not I get into the office or not in November my goal is to continue to be an advocate for the programs and the services the state doesn't as well. I am an Eagle Scout and you have to leave the campground better than you found it. These are things that are drilled into your head. I am fortunate to live in a state that again really does provide some of the best services. There's always room for improvement. I'm here to make sure we take care of improvements whenever possible.

DIANNA HU: Thank you so much, Mr. Diehl. I really feel like the disability issues that we are talking about today they are sort of often treated as separate sorts of topics even though we really saw from our discussion that they are crossing all policy areas. I think it is so important to integrate disability issues into all sorts of policy discussions whether it is housing or transportation or economic opportunity or equity and beyond. I think this has been a really informative discussion and I really want to thank you for taking the time to virtually sit down with us today and share your thoughts and perspectives and really a vision for how Massachusetts would look for people with disabilities under your leadership as governor. I also want to take the time to thank the support of all the sponsoring organizations. I want to thank our interpreters, our Spanish interpreter, our ASL interpreters and the CART person. It's just really making this event possible and giving a lot of information for what the governor would do from November 8 and onward for everyone -- or everyone in the office. I hope this gives you more insight into Mr. Diehl's thinking into policies when it comes to supporting disability rights and services. This is really a part of a larger call to action to get ready to vote for your governor on November 8. Our organizations are nonpartisan but we urge that the voice of the disabled be heard in the policies of our great state and beyond. As the renowned disability activist Justin Dart once said, "Vote as if your life depends on it because it does." Thank you everyone for attending. This is the end of our event.

(End 1:55 PM)