

# Evangelidis, Kaplan square off for state rep. seat

By Caitlyn Kelleher  
JOURNAL STAFF REPORTER

How much state aid is enough? That is the question the two men running to represent Westminster and the rest of the 1st Worcester District are asking voters to decide.

Republican incumbent Lew Evangelidis argues he has worked hard for the district that includes Westminster, Holden, Hubbardston, Princeton, Rutland, Oakham and part of Sterling.

"We got a record percent increase in local aid," Evangelidis said of the last budget cycle.

The two-term state representative is being challenged by Nate Kaplan, a Democrat from Hubbardston in the Tuesday, Nov. 7 election.

Kaplan the chairman of his hometown's Democratic Town Committee, said Evangelidis has not brought enough money into the district over the last few years.

"Property taxes are out of control," Kaplan said. "We need to get more local and state aid into our district."

Kaplan said Evangelidis' claim to have brought in record amounts of aid isn't painting an accurate picture because it is only higher in relation to the cuts in previous years.

Kaplan also says that the fact that Evangelidis won't fight for earmark budget items means the district is getting less money than it should.

"He's been one of the most ineffective legislators in that part of his job," Kaplan said.

Both men see the position as a way to help residents.

"It's really a job that can help people," Evangelidis said. "It is the level you really deal with people and help them directly."

Kaplan worked for state Sen. Stephen Brewer.

"He's been a role model sense the beginning," he said. "He taught me that everybody gets a call back in 24 hours."

The 25-year-old says his age should not be a deterrent for voters because he is able to commit large amounts of time and energy into the job. Kaplan said he would be willing to put in 16 to 18 hour days if need be.

"It's the perfect position for a single

guy," he said. "I don't have any family commitments."

Kaplan worked for the Massachusetts trial courts as a probation officer before taking a level of absence to run for the representative's seat.

He argues that Evangelidis hasn't given the time commitment he should to the position. "I think it is essential to have a full-time state representative," he said.

Evangelidis argues against Kaplan's claim.

"I have a 99.9 percent voting record," he said. "I have regular office hours (in towns). I couldn't imagine giving any more time."

He said that his goal is to spend the time in the district and not in Boston at the State House.

Evangelidis is married with two children.

"When it comes to public education I get it because I see it everyday," he said.

One of the things the Evangelidis is proud of is the work he did to help get reimbursement from the state School Building Authority for the Overlook Middle School Building project.

Evangelidis said the goal now is to help Westminster — the second largest town in the district — grow in the way residents want it to.

"It has a nice history but it's growing," he said.

In the priorities for the town, he knows that funding regional transportation for the school district is key. Bus funding was cut for many years.

"I think we've made (other legislators) aware how unconscionable that decision was," he said.

He said he has also advocated to ensure that all the money from the lottery is returned to the towns as state aid. He said he's been a strong supporter of Melaine's Law — which reformed the drunk driving laws.

"I'm standing up for what's right," he said.

Evangelidis is a practicing lawyer but said that his workload has been reduced by three-quarters since being elected and that when he is working it is out of the firm's Worcester offices.

"I don't have to worry about making my



## Lew Evangelidis

Age: 45

Political Party: Republican

Hometown: Holden

Experience: State Representative 2002- Present; Assistant District Attorney; Assistant State Attorney; Holden Finance Committee

Education: Wachusett Regional High School; University of Massachusetts - Amherst; Temple Law School



## Nate Kaplan

Age: 25

Political Party: Democrat

Hometown: Hubbardston

Experience: Hubbardston Democratic Town Committee Chairman; Probation Officer for Massachusetts Trial Courts; Massachusetts Democratic State Convention elected delegate

Education: Quabbin Regional High School; University of Colorado- Boulder

living in that State House," he said.

Evangelidis said that one of the benefits of having a Republican in the seat is the large number of committees he gets to sit on. He is a member of the Ways and Means Committee and the Central Massachusetts Chairman of the Regional School Committee.

"I work well on both sides of the aisle," he said.

Kaplan said he won't get too wrapped up in the party politics.

"I'll never forget who got me into office," he said.

The men agree on the need to help the environment but they differ on their proposals.

Evangelidis said he would like to see sales tax credits go to people who buy energy efficient appliances, hybrid vehicles and other goods.

Kaplan said he would like to see increased forms of renewable energy be

pushed by the state and local governments.

"It's the state government that needs to take the lead," he said.

He said there 119 towns in the commonwealth that can support wind farms including half of the towns in the district.

Kaplan said he would also like to see an increased focus on physical education in the schools. The issue is important because of the increasing rates of obesity and heart disease, he said.

"We need to bring more money in (to school districts)," he said.

He said it is "worthless" to have a healthy mind if kids bodies are not healthy as well.

Kaplan said he also wants people to realize he is a supporter of the rights of gun owners.

"It would be an honor to have this position," Kaplan said. "We need to reconnect our district with Beacon Hill."

# Local owners concerned about impact of Question 1

By Caitlyn Kelleher  
JOURNAL STAFF REPORTER

Many local merchants oppose the proposal to change the law to allow wine sales in grocery stores, which is one of three ballot questions facing voters at the Nov. 7 election.

"The only reason we would carry it is because I would have to be competitive with the convenience store," said Bruce Vincent, the owner of Westminster's grocery store, referring to Cumberland Farms also on Main Street.

Vincent said between the Westminster Pharmacy and Wine & Roses, both on Main Street in town, he does not see the need to carry wines. He said that neither of those stores competes for any of his business but Cumberland's could.

"I wouldn't want to compete against them," Vincent said. "They are local people trying to make a living selling liquor. We kind of work together. (The proposed law) throws a whole loop in the scenario."

The law would allow local liquor licensing authorities to grant permits to food stores — those stores that carry meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, fresh fruits and produce as well as other specified item, according to information from the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

The licensing authorities in towns of up to 5,000 resi-

dents could issue up to five licenses for food stores to sell wine. In towns of more than 5,000 people one additional license could be issued for each additional 5,000 people "or fraction thereof," according to the state.

David Ahearn, the owner of Wine & Spirits in Ashburnham, said he is opposed to the proposal because he believes it is another way to drive out small business and create more chain stores.

"Ashburnham is probably in the most competitive market," he said.

The town has two stores with wine and malt licenses

purpose of the proposed change.

"It's once again making choices for big business," he said. "I don't know why wine is less than other liquors. It's really helping to get rid of this industry. How convenient is it for towns to lose business?"

Ashby has one store licensed to sell wine and malt beverages and two stores that are allowed to sell all kinds of liquor.

There are four all-alcohol package stores in Townsend and one wine and malt store in town.

Under the new law Ashby would stand to gain only five additional wine licenses, while Ashburnham, Townsend and Westminster would each gain six licenses.

The Board of Selectmen is the licensing authority in Ashburnham, Ashby and Townsend. Westminster has a liquor commission that monitors the licenses.

"We haven't ever discussed it (as a board)," said Townsend Town Administrator Gregory Barnes. "In our case we're only looking at one more store possibly getting it."

The town's grocery store is Hannaford Supermarket on Main Street. A call for comment from Hannaford's corporate office was not returned.

The state election is Tuesday, Nov. 7.

## POLLING LOCATIONS

Tuesday, Nov. 7 — 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**Ashburnham:** John R. Briggs Elementary School, Williams Road

**Ashby:** Ashby Elementary School, Main Street

**Townsend:** Memorial Hall, Main Street

**Westminster:** Westminster Elementary School, Academy Road

— the MarketPlace and Tweedos — and two stores with full liquor licenses — Mr. Mike's and Wine & Spirits.

Ahearn said if the competition was what he faced in Ashburnham — locally owned grocery stores — he wouldn't be opposed but he does not think that this is the