

## Paul Cusack for House

Posted Oct 7, 2018 at 3:00 AM

The race for the seat to represent Barnstable's 2nd District in the Massachusetts House pits an experienced politician against a relative political newcomer, but in this case what the novice may lack in terms of time in office, he more than makes up for in vision.

Will Crocker, R-Centerville, touts his experience as one of the reasons to send him back to Beacon Hill, but he has had two years as the representative of the district to make a name, and has done little to distinguish himself in terms of legislative accomplishments. Crocker says he has worked to improve his office's communication with local leaders and constituents. He has been active on the question of wastewater treatment, working with his Democratic colleagues to develop big-picture solutions, but on some of the other big issues facing this region – including drug abuse and affordable housing – he has offered little in the way of plans to constructively engage problems.

We also get the sense that Crocker would rather follow than lead his constituents, much like those spineless legislators in the Deep South whose constituents supported Jim Crow laws in the 1960s. Here on the Cape, rather than enabling a small, vocal group of constituents to block or delay the Vineyard Wind project from running its transmission line through Lewis Bay and into Yarmouth, he should be actively supporting the renewable energy project that will ultimately benefit all his constituents.

And sometimes, Crocker has come down on the wrong side in terms of his voting record. His vote against a proposed ban on conversion therapy in Massachusetts represented a particularly low point. The bill passed overwhelmingly in the House, and Crocker was one of only two Cape legislators to oppose it. Crocker tied his position against outlawing the controversial procedure to representing the opinions of his constituents, but taking such a stance and then abdicating ownership of his choice suggests a lack of leadership rather than a principled decision.

We are similarly troubled by his views on two upcoming ballot questions. His opposition to Question 2, which seeks to establish a commission that would push for a Constitutional amendment that would roll back the Citizens United Supreme Court decision, is unsettling, as is his support of an effort (Question 3) to roll back the 2016 state law banning discrimination based on gender identity.

In contrast, Democrat Paul Cusack may be relatively new to Cape Cod, but he is no newcomer when it comes to public service. He spent time as an aide to then-Vice President Al Gore during President Bill Clinton's second term. After the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, he enlisted in the military, spending more than four years with the Army Rangers and serving two tours of duty in Afghanistan.

Cusack's family has lived in Osterville since the 1980s, and he says he has spent the past several months attending well over 150 community meetings to get a sense of the issues facing the Cape. He says he believes local elected offices provide "a bulwark against the worst national impulses," and he sees a need for more civility, pluralism, and community service. He also understands the region's

desperate need for careers that offer viable options for young people, including the blue economy, health care, and artificial intelligence.

In a recent interview with the editorial board, Cusack described himself as a proponent of renewable energy – he sees the Cape becoming a net exporter of renewable energy. He also called for the Cape to become more of a place where communities build bridges and connections between generations. Saying he wants to embrace and represent the voiceless, he exudes a principled, progressive approach to local politics that could very well help energize the next generation of public servants to come forward.

“This community is bigger than our perception of the Cape,” he said, adding that he wants to “help draw out of the shadows those who could achieve a version of the American dream.”

That sounds like a vision worth celebrating. We therefore wholeheartedly support Paul Cusack in the race for a seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.