

# Strong Communities Plan

A Practical Plan for Schools, Infrastructure, Public Safety, and Local Government

## Core Commitment

Strong communities do not happen by accident.

They are built when children can learn in safe, healthy schools, families can rely on modern infrastructure, first responders have the facilities they need to do their jobs, and local governments have the resources to serve residents effectively.

Across the South Shore and throughout Massachusetts, communities are being asked to do more with less. School districts face rising special education and transportation costs. Roads, bridges, water systems, and public buildings are aging. Fire stations and public safety facilities often need major upgrades.

When costs rise faster than local revenues, communities are forced into difficult choices: delaying infrastructure projects, reducing services, seeking tax overrides, or putting off investments that residents depend on every day. Families should not have to choose between strong schools and affordable taxes, or between supporting first responders and maintaining public infrastructure.

The people of Massachusetts deserve communities that work.

Lori believes state government must be a stronger partner for cities and towns by helping communities control costs, modernize infrastructure, improve educational outcomes, and support public safety. As State Representative, Lori Childs will focus on practical solutions that strengthen schools, improve public facilities, support local governments, and protect the services that make communities strong—because strong communities are the foundation of opportunity, economic growth, and quality of life.

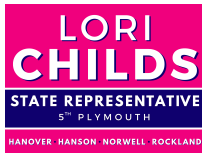
## Priority 1

Strong Schools for Every Community  
Educational Opportunity Without Unsustainable Costs

Every child deserves access to a high-quality education close to home.

At the same time, school districts are facing growing financial pressures—particularly in special education and transportation costs—that can overwhelm local budgets and reduce flexibility for other priorities. Lori believes Massachusetts must support students while giving communities practical tools to manage costs responsibly.

## What Lori Will Do



- Support regional special education collaboratives that allow districts to share programs, expertise, and services.
- Expand local special education capacity so more students can receive services closer to home.
- Reduce transportation burdens that force students to spend hours commuting to out-of-district placements.
- Advocate for state funding formulas that better reflect the real costs faced by local school districts.
- Support investments in career and technical education, workforce training, and apprenticeship pathways.
- Improve coordination between schools, municipalities, and state agencies to maximize available resources.

Students should spend more time learning and less time on long bus rides. Communities should not be forced to choose between educational quality and fiscal stability.

## Healthy Schools, Better Learning

### Clean Air Is Part of Educational Success

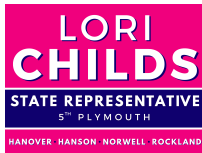
Students learn best when they are healthy, focused, and present in the classroom. Research consistently shows that poor indoor air quality can contribute to asthma flare-ups, headaches, fatigue, increased absenteeism, reduced concentration, and lower academic performance. Children are particularly vulnerable because their lungs and immune systems are still developing.

Yet many school buildings operate with aging ventilation systems, inconsistent maintenance schedules, and limited information about whether HVAC systems are functioning as intended. Lori believes indoor air quality should be treated as a school infrastructure issue—just like roofs, boilers, drinking water systems, or electrical systems.

### What Lori Will Do

Lori will advocate for Massachusetts legislation modeled on emerging best practices from states such as Rhode Island and Virginia that treat school air quality as an ongoing responsibility rather than a one-time upgrade. Her proposal would:

- Establish periodic indoor air quality assessments in public schools.
- Encourage routine inspection and maintenance of HVAC and ventilation systems.
- Improve transparency so school districts, educators, and families can better understand building conditions.
- Expand access to state grants and technical assistance for ventilation improvements.



- Integrate indoor air quality standards into future school facility investments.
- Support workforce development programs that train skilled HVAC, maintenance, and facilities professionals.

### **Why This Matters**

Healthy schools produce better outcomes. When students are healthier, attendance improves. When classrooms are better ventilated, students are better able to focus and learn. When facilities are maintained proactively, taxpayers avoid more expensive emergency repairs later.

This approach also supports skilled trades and creates stable demand for trained maintenance and facilities workers while protecting public investments. Healthy schools mean healthier students, stronger academic performance, and safer workplaces for educators.

## **Priority 2**

### **Infrastructure That Supports Daily Life Fix What We Already Have**

Infrastructure may not always make headlines, but it affects nearly every part of daily life. When roads deteriorate, water systems fail, culverts collapse, or public buildings age beyond their useful life, families, businesses, and local taxpayers bear the cost.

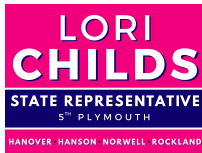
Lori believes government should focus on maintaining and modernizing the infrastructure communities already rely upon before problems become crises.

### **What Lori Will Do**

- Increase investment in roads, bridges, culverts, and local transportation networks.
- Support water and sewer upgrades that improve reliability and prepare communities for responsible growth.
- Expand access to state infrastructure grants for small and mid-sized municipalities.
- Improve coordination between housing, transportation, and infrastructure planning.
- Support broadband expansion and critical digital infrastructure investments.
- Encourage preventative maintenance and long-term capital planning that reduce costs over time.

The most affordable infrastructure project is often the one completed before a major failure occurs.

## **Priority 3**



## Safe Buildings, Safe Communities Supporting the People Who Protect Us

Public safety begins with supporting the people who serve. Firefighters, EMTs, police officers, dispatchers, and emergency personnel deserve safe workplaces, modern equipment, and facilities that reflect the importance of their work.

Many public safety facilities across Massachusetts are decades old and were never designed for today's operational demands, health standards, or workforce needs. Communities should not have to wait for a building failure before receiving help.

### **The Safe Buildings, Safe Communities Initiative**

Lori's signature public safety proposal focuses on helping communities modernize aging fire, police, and emergency facilities through a predictable and accountable statewide partnership.

#### **What Lori Will Do**

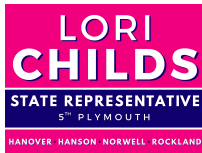
- Conduct a statewide assessment of fire station and public safety facility conditions.
- Identify health, safety, and operational risks affecting first responders.
- Establish a Municipal and Public Safety Building Authority modeled after the Massachusetts School Building Authority.
- Create a transparent, merit-based process for prioritizing facility investments.
- Support firefighter health and safety initiatives, including cancer-prevention measures and workplace safety improvements.
- Ensure smaller communities have access to planning and technical assistance for major facility projects.
- Promote evidence-based infrastructure investments rather than politically driven project selection.

Protecting the people who protect us is one of the most important investments government can make.

## **Priority 4**

### **Strong Local Government A Better Partner for Cities and Towns**

Local officials know their communities best. Yet too often, cities and towns spend enormous amounts of time competing for grants, navigating bureaucracy, and trying to access programs that already exist. State government should be a partner, not an obstacle.



Lori's experience on the Rockland Select Board and Finance Committee has shown her that communities succeed when local leaders have the tools, resources, and flexibility to solve problems.

### **What Lori Will Do**

- Expand access to state grants and technical assistance programs.
- Simplify application processes for local infrastructure and community development funding.
- Improve coordination between state agencies and municipal governments.
- Ensure smaller communities have fair access to state resources.
- Support regional partnerships where they improve services and reduce costs.
- Promote data-driven decision-making and transparent performance reporting.
- Advocate for state policies that recognize the unique challenges facing suburban, coastal, and smaller communities.

Strong local government begins with respect for local knowledge and a commitment to practical problem-solving.

## **Strong Communities Are the Foundation of Opportunity**

Strong communities are built on more than budgets and buildings. They are built on excellent schools, healthy learning environments, modern infrastructure, effective public services, and local governments that have the resources they need to succeed.

By investing wisely, planning responsibly, and focusing on measurable results, Massachusetts can strengthen communities while protecting taxpayers and improving quality of life—because every family deserves a community where they can learn, work, raise a family, and thrive.