Lieutenant Governor Thomas O'Neill speaks on education, research, high technology

By Barry S. Newman

Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., the 53-year-old Massachusetts Democratic lieutenant governor, said yesterday that state government is going to have to reflect the needs of those young people, who are working, and to go back to the local property tax, if necessary, to give the average working man and woman a break.

Q: Many things are going to be done over the next year or so, but in this state government, with this current Governor, there is no reflection about what the future is going to be like. What do you think can be done about this?

A: As a matter of fact, I'll -

Q: Have you considered that possibilities as to how to make up some of the funding cuts?

A: As a matter of fact, I'll - you know, obviously I've pondered it. I've come out opposed to it because I think it means to me that state government is going to have to look very closely in the future at the federal cuts, both in the schoolchildren as well as loan assistance, to make sure that they fill void that as best they possibly can, to keep not only more fuel, but public education aid at the level of the past. And, give our young people an opportunity to an af-

Q: The Speaker of the House, a Congressman from Massachusetts, said that MIT and Harvard are a great building block for this state. They're great drawing cards to young people from all over the world to come and to learn, and it means a great deal to the future of our economy. So, I think the greatest opportunity we have is to make sure that we keep you solvent, and we do that by making sure that we create as much scholarship and loan assistance as we possibly can and to try and keep you in business, in much solvency as we possibly can.

Q: What about the cities in Massachusetts? Boston, especially, has had financial trouble, but other, medium-sized cities in the state face financial difficulties as a result of Proposition 2 1/2 and in a result of federal cuts in aid. What can the state government do in the next few years to ease the financial crunch on these cities?

A: To guarantee and make permanent local aid, I think all can agree on that. That, ten years ago, I've been with [Rep.] Barney Frank in a tax restructuring plan which begins to analyze exactly where the problems are within our tax formation. The property tax is this state is the highest in America, and in many cases it's 200 or 300 percent higher on a $10,000 house, than it is anywhere else. The in-

Q: What about at the higher levels: department heads, judges?

A: Are you linking that to patronage? My feeling is this, in order to attract the finest people, you have to be competitive in the way you appoint people. I've watched one state government bring in people who were very good, who they were basic appendages of him in attitude and ap-

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