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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

## Q&A: With sticker campaign, BU senior aims to bridge town-gown divide

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(Courtesy: StickerSullivan.com, KevinHonan.org)

Sarah Sullivan will challenge incumbent Kevin G. Honan for the Allston-Brighton state representative seat in Tuesday's state primary election.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

**The incumbent state representative for Allston-Brighton will face opposition in Tuesday's state primary election, but the young challenger's name won't appear on the ballot.**



**Sarah Sullivan**, a 21-year-old Boston University

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senior studying sociology, is running a write-in, or sticker, campaign for the 17th Suffolk District's seat held by [Kevin G. Honan](#), 52, of Brighton. She is a Democrat.

Sullivan, a Florida native who lives in Allston, frequently visited her extended family in the Bay State while growing up. Three years ago, she moved to Boston, where she had dreamed of attending college and where she now hopes her political career will begin.

She said her parents, Kay and John are long-time community activists, her 27-year-old sister Katharine is an aspiring theater producer in New York City and her 10-year-old brother, Sergey, was adopted from Russia in 2006.

**Q.** Why are you running?

**A.** To help strengthen the relationship between university students and our neighborhoods and state.

During my first three years at Boston University, I have been a leader on campus. I helped to form BU's all volunteer-run Women's Resource Center and have been very engaged student. As a leader on campus, I have gained a strong sense of what it is like to be a student at Boston University as well as a student in Boston, more generally.

While working on campus, I simultaneously served as a constituent services intern with the Office of the Massachusetts Senate President for two academic years. From this, I gained an understanding of the kinds of conversations occurring in our state legislature as well as the challenges facing the Commonwealth.

With this position, being both active on campus and at the state level, I began to realize what I feel is a great disconnect between university students and our state. I realized that I am in a unique position to bring a student perspective to the Massachusetts Legislature.

**Q.** When did you become interested in running?

**A.** During the fall of my junior year, I began brainstorming ways I could help to bridge this divide between students and our state and neighborhoods. During the spring of my junior year, I realized that having a leader that represents the large portion of Boston and Massachusetts that is students may be the first step toward a stronger state. So, I decided to run.

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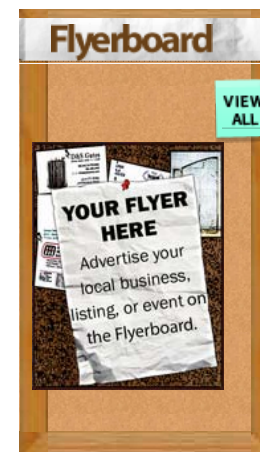


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**Q.** Why run a sticker campaign?

**A.** When I fell just a handful of signatures shy of the ballot nomination, I decided this issue was too important to the community and me to wait.

**Q.** What's the biggest challenge to getting votes?

**A.** Being a college student has been the biggest challenge so far. This is, in part, because in encouraging area university students to take a greater stake in our local government, I have encountered many factors that make it difficult for students to participate.

For example, the majority of students moved back to campus after August 25, the last day to register to vote in the upcoming elections. Also, because the representative districts are so close in this area of Boston, many college students living on-campus will be in a different voting district every academic year, making yearly voter re-registration necessary.

**Q.** If elected, what would be the first issue(s) you would tackle?

**A.** At the state level, I would first address the issue of student retention. Year after year, many of the nation's smartest young people flock to Massachusetts for university. Many of these students are the best and the brightest from other states. I believe more can be done to encourage students to stay in Massachusetts after graduation and to create businesses and jobs here in the Commonwealth. I feel the issue of student retention is linked to our state's financial well being and progress.

At the community level, I would first address the tension between long-time and student residents. While I believe diversity is one of the greatest aspects of our neighborhood, I realize that the differing lifestyles of these two groups are often the cause of great tension. I feel more can be done to help alleviate the influence of late-night student culture on long-term residents. .

**Q.** Why should people vote for you over your opponent Kevin Honan?

**A.** Representative Kevin Honan has, undoubtedly, been a great leader of this neighborhood for many years. However, I believe that ameliorating the tension between long-time residents and students is one of the greatest challenges facing Allston-Brighton and that bridging this divide is essential to improving our neighborhood.

As a university student, I intimately understand current university students' needs and lifestyles. I believe I can use this perspective to imagine an Allston-Brighton where residents of all backgrounds can work together to tackle our toughest problems and to build a stronger community together.

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**Q.** What do you think your odds are?

**A.** A primary goal in this campaign has been to increase conversation around the relationship between students and our state and neighborhoods. I believe this campaign has helped to ignite dialogue surrounding this issue, so I feel successful already.

**Q.** What's your favorite thing to do in Allston-Brighton?

**A.** Frequenting local cafes and restaurants is one of my favorite activities in Allston-Brighton. Three years at Boston University has required a lot of studying. Studying at local cafes has given me the chance to appreciate the great diversity of people that live in our neighborhood, the diversity that makes this community so special.

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