

Diehl and Allen concede MA governor's race more than 2 hours after it was called and 10 minutes from the end of their election night event

By Steph Trendell

Geoff Diehl and Leah Allen's election night party started off mild, as people began to file in a little after 7 p.m. last Tuesday, but tensions rose quickly as attendees noticed an announcement displayed on the big TV screens that would set the tone for the rest of the night: the Associated Press had called the race for Maura Healey.

The news came just minutes after the polls had closed in Massachusetts and was met with booing from Diehl supporters. Rick Green, a Republican donor and Diehl volunteer and supporter, wasted no time getting up to the podium to tame the crowd and instill hope in his fellow Republicans.

"What you see on your TVs is nothing more than a projection by the mainstream media and what they believe will happen," Green said. "This may go down as a worse call than Arizona in 2020."

Supporters of Diehl did not acknowledge the AP's projection and continued to be optimistic about his win and the prospect of a different type of leadership in the deep blue state.

Healey, a Democrat, and the former attorney general for Massachusetts, was unpopular among the attendees of the Diehl event, despite having won the race in a landslide.

"I need Geoff's help and small businesses need Geoff's help. I feel that if Maura gets elected, there's an opportunity that my business will close," said Marybeth Shanahan, a business owner from Dunstable, Massachusetts.

She said she was excited for the "red wave" that her and many other Diehl supporters were anticipating.

Shanahan said a lot of her ideals align with those of Diehl and Allen. "The mandates, the critical race theory, what they're teaching in schools, it's things that I don't believe in."

"People should be able to make their own choice when it comes to healthcare," said Shanahan, but proceeded to say this belief doesn't extend to abortion rights.

"Don't have sex, don't get pregnant. Why are you killing babies?"

Other supporters viewed a Diehl-Allen administration as a necessary balance of power in the state. "We have such a left-leaning legislature, we need the balance of a Republican governor," said Suzanne Jafferian, a supporter from Plympton, Massachusetts.

Allen arrived at the event around 8:45 p.m., but Diehl's whereabouts were still unknown to most.

Republican candidate for attorney general, Jay McMahon, attended the event in support of Diehl and to promote his own campaign. He said he believes himself to be a better fit than Democratic candidate, Andrea Campbell, because of his 35 years of experience in the field.

"I'm in the courts every single day. I've been before every court in Massachusetts, both state and federal," he said.

McMahon also referenced his history working in management, alongside his litigation experience, that would make him a qualified candidate for attorney general.

"I've been in the top level of management of three major corporations on Cape Cod. I was the payroll manager for the Cape Cod hospital for over 2,000 employees," he said. "The Attorney General's office is a huge law firm and I have had experience in human resources and labor relations."

McMahon is a long-time friend and political ally of Diehl's. "We have had discussions about how each one of us can make Massachusetts a better place, a good place where civil rights are protected, where public safety is premier, where the taxpayer is actually getting a voice in the government," he said.

He spoke to the crowd later in the night telling people not to give up hope. "Western Massachusetts hasn't spoken yet," he said.

Just 10 minutes before the event was slated to end, Diehl entered the Wharf Room accompanied by Allen.

Supporters were elated with Diehl's eventual arrival, but this excitement quickly turned to disappointment as he and Allen conceded the race to Healey and her running mate, Kim Driscoll.

"I wish the best to Maura Healey and Kim Driscoll," he said.

Diehl explicitly stated that he would accept the results of the election, despite the trend of Trump-backed candidates refusing to concede elections, as Trump himself did in 2020.

This election-denying sentiment was reflected throughout his speech, as supporters shouted out, "Don't concede!" and "It's fake news!" and "Count every vote."

"It will be counted," he said. "But with the gap that we have, it will be impossible to close."

Diehl addressed some of the issues he would like to see the Healey administration tackle, specifically taxes, a key partisan controversy.

"I hope that she will understand there's a breaking point with taxation, and we're there now," he said.

Diehl closed out the night with a statement that rings true across party lines. "We must remind our government officials that they are there to serve the people and not the other way around."