

# The Enterprise

## Weld tells The Enterprise he'd take a centrist Democrat over Trump

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February 25, 2020

Former Massachusetts governor Bill Weld is campaigning in Massachusetts to beat President Donald Trump during the Republican presidential primary held in his home state on March 3. Weld said he's looking for support from independents in "crossover" states like Massachusetts and Vermont, which allow voters who are not enrolled with a party to vote in that party's presidential primary.

Some say that it would be impossible for former Massachusetts governor Bill Weld to beat President Donald Trump in the Republican presidential primary.

But while he acknowledges the very low odds of him winning the nomination, with Trump still popular among the Republican base, Weld said it would not be the first time that he ran as a long shot candidate. Weld, visiting The Enterprise office in Taunton on Monday afternoon with his wife Leslie Marshall, as he campaigned throughout Massachusetts ahead of the March 3 primary, said when he ran about 30 years ago to become governor of Massachusetts, he was also facing an uphill battle.

"I've done it before when I ran for governor," said Weld, 74, who led the state from 1991 through 1997, previously serving as U.S. attorney for Massachusetts. "I started at sub-asterisk levels. Everyone told me not to run. I don't base what I do on what other people tell me to do."

Weld, who in 2016 ran as a candidate for vice president on the Libertarian Party ticket topped by former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson, has been traveling around Massachusetts for the past week ahead of the primaries, taking part in a presidential town hall held on Monday evening at UMass Boston, making stops on Cape Cod, and coming to The Enterprise office for an interview about his primary campaign against Trump. The Enterprise asked Weld whether he's running because he has a realistic shot of beating Trump, and then the eventual Democratic nominee, or to raise issues and spark a debate.

"I'm running because I think I can do a better job than the fellow who's in there now," Weld said. "I see a lot of things that need doing in Washington that aren't being done. For example, we have to get ready for the impact of AI (artificial intelligence), which is going to cause us to lose 15 to 20 percent of all jobs in about eight or 10 years."

Weld is looking to disaffected Republicans and independent voters to inject life into his campaign during the Super Tuesday primaries held in his home state of Massachusetts and other states like Vermont, which allow non-party members to vote on the GOP primary ballot. This comes after the former Massachusetts governor received 9 percent of the vote in New

Hampshire, and 2 percent of the support of Republican Iowa caucus goers, which has earned him one delegate thus far, something the other non-incumbent Republican presidential candidates haven't been able to do, including Joe Walsh and Roque De La Fuente. Trump now has 86 of 1,276 delegates needed to win the nomination.

Weld wasn't willing to offer a prediction on the percentage of the vote he would capture back here in Massachusetts.

"It's very hard to predict," Weld said. "We were surprised to win a delegate in Iowa since we only spent a couple days campaigning in the state. We would hope to do better than the first two states."

Weld, who now lives in Canton within the Blue Hills Reservation, said he has fond memories serving Brockton as the state's governor, mentioning that he tapped Councilor-at-large/former Brockton mayor Winthrop Farwell as director of public safety for his administration, and counts Brockton's former state senator Michael Creedon as a longtime pal.

"I think Brockton has a lot of civic pride and sense of self and identity," Weld said. "They are always thinking about the next generation coming along. ... I've taken an interest in the Brockton school system over the years."

Asked about the field of candidates in the Democratic primary for president currently led by U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, the libertarian-minded Republican said "they might be" leaning too far to the left, and that the debates haven't advanced their cause. But Weld said he'd take "almost any one of them" over Trump.

"I think we have to keep our eye on the ball here," Weld said. "Certainly, I'd rather have a centrist Democrat than President Trump."

A libertarian-leaning Republican, Weld has views that don't always align with the politics of typically conservative members of the GOP. For instance, Weld spoke about his support for action to combat climate change, including a proposed carbon tax imposed on companies burning fossil fuels, at a rate of \$40 to \$50 per ton of carbon dioxide they release into the atmosphere. At the same time, Weld takes conservative positions, decrying how Trump has failed to control the national debt, running a roughly trillion dollar deficit each year.

Weld said he doesn't blame many Republicans, including Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker, for not endorsing him, fearing backlash from Trump and his supporters.

"I think Charlie feels he has a fiduciary responsibility to citizens of Massachusetts not to put a target on Massachusetts' back," Weld said. "That's not an unreasonable position. The president has shown he's nothing if not vindictive."

Weld scoffed at criticism from Trump backers like columnist Howie Carr, who recently urged primary voters to "give the back of your hand to Bill Weld, another turncoat RINO governor," with the acronym standing for Republican in name only.

"I say that the president is the RINO Republican," Weld said. "He's not an economic conservative. Even Howie Carr could not deny that I was a fiscal conservative as governor. I was ranked the most fiscally conservative governor in the country by The Wall Street Journal and

Cato Institute. People just look right past that. It used to be part of the definition of being a Republican to be a conservative economically and a good steward of public money.”