

# The Vision, the Path – A Case Study for the Commonwealth

By State Senator Dan Wolf

Our Commonwealth stands at a crossroads, and our leadership must offer a clear direction forward, a compelling vision complete with a plan to get there.

Our challenge is to overcome cynicism and define goals that inspire us, and unite us. That includes plans to build an economy and jobs with real security, satisfaction and opportunity. But it means even more than that. It embraces a broad new understanding of the legacy we want to pass on -- compelling goals and a big-picture vision we fashion together. Only then can we ask for all of us to contribute, even sacrifice, to realize a better future, because we all understand and appreciate that together we share in our successes, and build our true common wealth.

Government's role? Serve as a strong partner to a vital private sector. Embrace an historic precedent to rebuild our middle class. Invest in healthy communities, real progress and tangible reform.

This vision applies to every issue before us -- jobs, education, transportation, health care, alternative energy, environmental protection, labor's participation, financial services, election reform, tax reform. Each can be seen through the same lens, and for each of these issues specific steps can transform goals into reality.

Many of these initiatives are rooted in the profoundly positive choices we made in the aftermath of World War Two, when we built the strongest economy and proudest middle class the world has known.

But over the past 30 years, we stopped investing in each other, and we stopped investing in our future. We allowed our prosperity to concentrate into fewer and fewer hands. Our economy has become top-heavy, and unfortunately Massachusetts is far from an exception: We have one of the largest income disparities, top to bottom, of all states in the Union.

This widening gulf between the fortunate few, and the rest of our state and nation, belies the American Dream. It makes social mobility more and more difficult. It makes entrepreneurship less and less possible. And even in the midst of a so-called recovery, it is only getting worse: Full 95 percent of the wealth that has accrued since the "recovery" began has concentrated in the hands of the wealthiest 1 percent of our country.

Addressing this inequality is the decisive action we must take, imbued with Martin Luther King's powerful phrase, "the fierce urgency of now."

We know we have the economic engine, creative and intellectual capital, environment, historic models, energy and inspiration to realize our dream. We have the capacity to

create healthier communities in every sense of the term. But to act on this commitment mandates that we order our priorities, and galvanize around a clear mission.

For every challenge, our questions are always the same:

What can we do to build more opportunity and more equity, better prospects and better justice? How do we move closer and closer to the ideals that shaped our state, and then defined our nation? How do we use the economy as our tool to deliver on our dreams?

We do this first by collaborating in public and private, concentrating not on fiscal cliffs and shutdowns of our own making but on the horizon, and progress we all can embrace.

We do this understanding that a healthy economy is built from the middle out, not from the top down.

We do this recognizing the profound difference between corporations that extract wealth out of our communities versus businesses that remain rooted and responsible to our communities.

We do this knowing that excellent public education, the foundation of our democracy, must be accessible and affordable for all.

We do this realizing that health care is another right that must be accessible, affordable, and no longer coupled with employment.

We do this recognizing the crucial role labor must play in decision making about corporate governance and social priorities as well as wages and working conditions.

We do this by investing and re-investing in our infrastructure, modernizing public transportation, improving the highways – and digital highways – essential to our economic growth, and transforming our energy grid.

We do this by ending a false division between our environment and our economy, understanding that the health of the former is essential to the health of the latter.

We do this embracing government's role both as a necessary, vital partner for those who move our economy forward, and as a necessary, vital helping hand for those who need our support.

We do this by spending today's dollars on tomorrow rather than spending tomorrow's dollars on today.

We do this by replacing worn-out political labels that divide us -- right vs left, conservative vs liberal -- with a vision built on pragmatism and compassion, inclusion and fairness, focused on the Commonwealth we want to leave to future generations.

And so what follows is a look at my perspectives on each of these issues, emerging from a unique combination of remarkable business success and hands-on experience -- fused with a passionate commitment to make government work for all.

## **Putting People to Work**

As a mechanic and pilot, with one airplane and six employees, flying one route from Cape Cod to Logan and back again, I started Cape Air almost 25 years ago.

Today, as one of the largest independent regional airlines in the country, still headquartered in Massachusetts, Cape Air employs more than 1000 people, flies more than 80 aircraft, serves communities across New England as well as the Caribbean, upstate New York, the mid-West, and as far away as Guam.

Cape Air's annual revenues now exceed \$100 million; since 1996, employees have shared ownership and shared in the success they have helped build.

No one has a better bootstrapping record building a company from scratch, creating good jobs, making payroll, weathering tough times while continuing to grow, forging strong partnerships in the public and private sectors, all while maintaining a company that celebrates collaboration in the workplace and commitment to communities served.

As former chairman of the board of directors of one of the larger chambers of commerce in Massachusetts, I've worked with small business owners and entrepreneurs of every stripe. More than 12 years of service on regional bank boards has given me a clear understanding of the essential relationship between financial institutions and economic growth. As a Senator who co-chairs the Committee on Labor and Workforce Development, I have promoted workforce training for skilled jobs, supporting efforts to link all of our resources, including vocational schools and community colleges, to expand job programs.

Our entrepreneurial, private sector is the engine, the locomotive that powers our economy. Free enterprise drives a train that excels in delivering innovation, efficiency, and profit. Our system remains the envy of the world.

Government's role is to lay the tracks, both literally by creating the infrastructure that allows business to prosper, and figuratively by defining the direction in which our economy should move.

That means policies to encourage businesses that invest and re-invest in our communities rather than corporations that extract and export wealth.

That means focusing on economic growth that will provide jobs and a real future in education, infrastructure, transportation, renewable energy and green renovations, health care, high-tech and bio-tech.

That means making good on the promise that every one of our citizens should be able to reach the first rung of the economic ladder, in hopes that all can climb as high as possible.

It also means understanding why the much-used term “leveling the playingfield” is an important concept. The right role for regulation and tax policy is to ensure that locally owned and engaged businesses are not put at a disadvantage by the clout and influence of those large corporations responsible to shareholders at the expense of our communities, that focus on next quarter’s profits rather than our long-term future.

A healthy economy must emerge from a healthy middle class, a broad and strong community that has the income to buy the goods and services it creates and the capacity to invest in a secure future. Large-scale corporations have a necessary and important role to play in our success, but a balance must be struck between prosperity, shareholder profit, and quality of life. Decades ago, Henry Ford understood this well: Those who were building his company’s cars must be paid well enough to afford those cars, he argued, otherwise both his company and our economic system would falter.

So every public policy can and should be judged with a central question in mind: Will it help us develop our economy from the middle out?

## **Education**

The greatest gift and advantage I’ve received from supportive parents was my education. Raised in Philadelphia, I attended Germantown Friends School, steeped in Quaker ethics and the spirit of inquiry. My mother was and is a professor of American History at the University of Pennsylvania, my father a successful entrepreneur; spirited dinner table conversation was the norm.

After four undergraduate years at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, I enrolled in the Quaker City School of Aeronautics, a vocational school where I earned my certification to work as an airplane mechanic -- an unusual, perhaps unique path for a Wesleyan graduate, driven by my aviation passion. I was one of very few students at the school who was not a veteran, not supported by the GI Bill. In the years to come, as GI benefits were cut, this and many vocational schools were forced to close their doors; today, there is a serious shortage of qualified airplane mechanics to fill good-paying jobs – yet another example of how government programs helped grow our economy, and why should continue.

Our Commonwealth has made remarkable progress in education, consistently scoring among the highest in the nation on standardized tests. We need to build on that success, first by emphasizing and supporting universal early childhood education; study after study has shown that programs like Head Start at pre-school levels offer children beautiful benefits going forward.

We need to train young people for today’s tests, and tomorrow’s jobs, but also celebrate the full range of learning and effort. The creative side of the brain is as important as the

logical side, and often just as key to success. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math create the acronym STEM, but the better goal for our Commonwealth is to include the Arts as a full partner in public education; let's use the acronym STEAM.

We also need to understand that education is the key to economic and social mobility. The national consequences of not fully investing in public education have now become clear: by all economic measures, class mobility in our nation (an academic term for the American Dream) no longer is a reality; of all developed countries, our class structure has among the highest barriers, offering fewer opportunities to climb the ladder.

Public education is at the heart of what it means to have this mobility and a strong democracy; without it, there is no informed citizenry to make our crucial decisions. If public education is priced out of the reach of many, it no longer truly is public. And so there is another educational goal as a bookend to early childhood education:

Roll back the cost of public higher education to levels comparable to 25 years ago. This is a crucial investment in our future, and demands that we commit more public resources to the effort.

## **Health Care**

From the very beginning of Cape Air, access to health care has been a benefit offered to all employees. That's because it is the right thing to do, because health care insurance is essential, because the system we work within connects health care to employment, and because Cape Air has always wanted to attract the best people to build the best company.

Health care coverage, always challenging, has become untenable. Employers know all too well that insurance costs stifle growth and are unpredictable. Employees know all too well that at the most stressful times in their lives, when sickness strikes, they are often forced to confront a demoralizing morass of rules, regulations, and paperwork to get the coverage they deserve. Financially as well as emotional, the toll is much too high; roughly 20 percent of Americans seeking financial counseling in recent years cite medical debt as their reason for a bankruptcy filing.

Since the Massachusetts version of the Affordable Care Act passed in 2006, our state has seen dramatic improvements. Health care premiums have stopped skyrocketing. More than 95 percent of our state's citizens now have insurance. When I was asked to testify in Washington before a Congressional committee on the potential impact of "Obamacare" for businesses around the nation, I was able to offer hands-on proof that the Massachusetts version did not inhibit businesses, increase unemployment, or drive prices higher. On the contrary.

With state and federal reforms now in place, the next big steps are to drive prices down and simplify the process while maintaining high-quality care. Despite all our progress, there's still too strong a sense that we're forcing people into a broken system instead of really

taking on the special interests that are driving the agenda, and fixing the problems at their core.

We all understand the strengths and advantages of a private sector that delivers expert care. But I also support legislation that would establish a commission to study the merits of creating a single-payer health care administration system in our state, and believe that this idea has strong merit.

Even bigger picture, here is the essential point:

We need to decouple health care from employment.

Free businesses from the expense and administration of health care, the biggest single obstacle to job growth and profitability. Allow employees to move freely from opportunity to opportunity without fear of losing benefits or getting mired in complex bureaucracy. Remove this shackle and Massachusetts will attract companies from around the world who will see great opportunity in our workforce, our enlightened social policies, and our supportive business climate.

Perhaps we can lead the nation in another way: Let's consider whether Massachusetts should contract with an existing federal agency like Medicare to administer a statewide health insurance plan, avoiding state bureaucracy, establishing yet another precedent and reform on the road toward single payer health insurance for all.

## **Energy**

Two large arrays of solar panels sit atop Cape Air buildings beside the Barnstable Municipal Airport in Hyannis, pioneering projects in decentralized, renewable energy.

Cape Air's headquarters now generates as much electricity as it uses on an annual basis, made possible not just by solar panels but by an aggressive effort to renovate, insulate, and "green" the buildings. Incentives also are offered by the company to use less electricity at home; every employee has been given three energy-saving light bulbs, and the remarkable truth is that if each of them replaces an old-fashioned light bulb four hours a day, the savings equal the electricity created by the solar panels.

The company also has invested in engine modifications for its fleet of 80-plus planes, saving hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel while optimizing safe operations. These and other innovations have earned Cape Air an EPA award for environmental initiatives.

In the Senate, I strongly supported successful efforts to raise the net metering cap, a guaranteed increase in the amount of electricity generated from homes and businesses that utilities must accept and credit. This helps ensure that new solar and wind projects will have necessary financial incentives.

I also have expressed strong concern about the operation and future of the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth. While the risk of accident is low, the impact of an event would be catastrophic. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should not have re-licensed the 40-year-old plant for another 20 years until ongoing concerns about spent fuel rod storage, evacuation planning for the Cape and Islands, and aging infrastructure are addressed. Utility officials indicate that electricity generated by Pilgrim is not necessary to supply the region's needs; we should see nuclear power as a bridge technology with a finite lifespan, and begin planning a transition for approximately 600 workers at the plant to new jobs as we move to shut down the facility.

Big picture, energy production, distribution and consumption need to be driven by public interest rather than investor prerogatives and short-term profit. Distributed solar power is an example of a community-rooted model of energy production that also drives job creation and small business growth. Major offshore wind development (much farther offshore than the Cape Wind project) is now in the planning stages – state and federal estimates say that a single potential wind farm area roughly 20 miles off the coast could produce enough electricity to power 1.7 million Massachusetts homes, with minimal visual impact and little if any harm to commercial fishing. The process to decide who develops this resource needs to give priority to companies locally owned and community focused.

Given that our utilities are mainly investor-owned, the appropriate regulatory role is to insist that public interest remains a primary objective, both in terms of fair rates and corporate responsiveness. From boardrooms to executive offices to storm response, investor-owned utilities need to be held accountable. When storms strike, and hundreds of thousands of customers consistently lose power, we face vivid proof that proactive work like burying power lines to protect against storm damage has not been the top priority. I've suggested, not really joking, that CEOs of our public utilities should accept salaries identical to the salary of the President of the United States, then take the difference between that, and what they make now, and hire additional frontline crews and workers to serve our communities.

During my first campaign, we established a goal for the Cape and Islands to be electricity-neutral in 20 years – the region should generate as much electricity as it consumes, using solar, wind, smart renovation and conservation. We can build on the excellent work done by the Patrick administration and fulfill a similar goal for the Commonwealth.

## **Transportation**

Over the course of 25 years, I've been immersed in the transportation sector. Unlike scores of airlines large and small, Cape Air has survived multiple recessions, navigating successfully through deregulation, then overcoming one of the most daunting business challenges imaginable; the terrorist attack of 9-11, and the changes it forced on the public and industry.

We can't talk about a healthy economy without a healthy transportation system. The T, the first subway system in the United States, still a lifeline for so many working people in and around our metropolitan hub, must be supported, and improved. The Blue Line should be extended north, the Green Line west, and commuter rail south.

Investments here create good jobs right away, good jobs longer term, environmental benefits, and revitalize our communities.

But we need to think even more creatively about transportation. Linking air, rail, road and water is not only feasible, it is essential. Putting creative partnerships together to accomplish this is a priority. On Cape Cod, we were able to bring the Cape Cod National Seashore into collaboration with the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority to fund new green busses that provide workers and tourists with convenient, inexpensive public transportation. We've revived Boston-to-Cape Cod rail service. And let's not overlook low-tech alternatives; let's extend bike paths wherever appropriate, and encourage bicycle commuters whenever possible.

Too many times, when people return from Japan, China, or Europe, they carry home stories of enviable public transportation. Our goal should be to turn that conversation around: Twenty years from now, visitors from overseas should be celebrating our success in public transportation, marveling at our creative progress.

## **Labor's Role**

People might think of me as a successful CEO, but fewer know that after college, I was a community organizer along Blue Hill Avenue in Boston for The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. I also became a union organizer, trying to organize both manufacturing and fast-food restaurants in Greater Boston. Those experiences reinforced my strong belief in the role of organized labor to champion and represent working people.

Today, Cape Air is in large part owned by employees through its Employee Stock Ownership Plan (known as an ESOP) created in 1996. In addition, pilots at Cape Air are represented by the Teamsters Union.

As co-Chair of the Labor and Workforce Development Committee, I am a leading advocate for issues such as guaranteed earned sick leave and raising the minimum wage.

In terms of real buying power, minimum wage in our country actually has decreased by 25 percent in recent decades; given the growth and consolidation of profits and wealth, this is unconscionable. Study after study has shown that raising that minimum to at least \$10 an hour would help the economy, creating more purchasing power while removing the need for government to subsidize many working people trapped by wages that keep them below the poverty line.

Big picture, the key conversation is how to expand labor's role. As a student of labor history as well as both an organizer and a CEO, I know that there is a direct correlation between the decline of the middle class and the decline of strong union representation. And so government's role is not just to help organized labor; it's to help labor organize.

Wages and working conditions will always remain core issues, but labor's focus must broaden. Labor should be at the table when public policy is defined, and labor should be included in corporate governance as well. Inclusive process, collective bargaining extended, leads not just to better communication, but better results. This is an essential component of what it means to build our economy from the middle out.

## **Environment**

It's been my honor to have served for 5 years on the board of directors of the premier environmental non-profit in his region, the Association to Preserve Cape Cod. I also was appointed to the stewardship council of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation by former Governor Mitt Romney, serving for 7 years and seeing first-hand the impact of serious cuts in our conservation and recreation efforts.

Every region of our state faces environmental challenges. Storm impacts, invasive species, climate change manifesting in erosion and forest degradation, development pressure on land and water -- all are linked, and demand a clear understanding of the importance of our environment, and its protection.

In the Senate I am now advancing discussions about long-overdue comprehensive zoning reform for the state. Increasing business and residential density in community centers and near public transportation, while offsetting density with protected open space in less developed areas, is the kind of smart growth, win-win zoning that must be implemented.

Representing the Cape and Islands is a constant reminder that a healthy environment and a healthy economy are not only linked, they are synonymous: A steward of the environment is a steward of the economy.

On Cape Cod, the crucial environmental issue is how to reverse pollution caused by wastewater, mainly from private septic tanks, seeping into the peninsula's bays, ponds and aquifer.

This challenge resonates across the Commonwealth: How to solve a crisis before it damages our environment beyond repair or severely impacts property values, without imposing heavy costs on homeowners and small businesses already struggling to make ends meet. Strong support from all levels of government -- town to county to state to federal -- is essential. Let's apply this model state-wide.

Massachusetts also can be at the forefront of a policy that has gained support from economists across the political spectrum: Create a "carbon tax," linking revenue to activities

accelerating climate change, using policy to reduce our footprint, expecting those who create pollution to pay for more of its impacts.

## **Financial Services**

Building an airline demands understanding the crucial role of financial institutions in our economy, and the complicated relationships between capital, borrowing, and business growth. One key to Cape Air's success has been a very conservative borrowing position; the company carries very little debt. Rather than borrowing heavily to finance purchases, we have reinvested profits, managing the balance sheet to remain strong while continuing to expand.

But my involvement in this sector extends far beyond Cape Air.

I presently serve on the board of trustees of one of the largest mutual savings banks in Southeastern Massachusetts, a community-based, independent bank with a mortgage portfolio of more than a billion dollars.

I formerly served on the board of directors of a locally owned commercial bank, and was the lone vote against a merger that was part of a large consolidation, arguing that the bank had the stability and responsibility to remain in local hands.

I also served on the New England Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston for five years.

If we have learned anything having lived through an economic crash and deep recession, it is that a healthy – and ethical – financial services sector is essential. This devastating experience is also proof positive that government must play a strong regulatory role: financial institutions that remain invested and connected to the communities they serve must be supported.

Through this crisis, mutual banks and credit unions have had far fewer foreclosures than larger lenders, supporting neighborhoods and businesses with sound loans that encourage growth and stability. Government must play every role possible to support those community expressions, for example by making sure that deposit insurance regulations don't favor the largest institutions, and by creating ways for government to backstop smaller local banks to ensure fair competition.

## **The Creative Economy**

Part of our state's great strength is the role of arts and culture in creating jobs, powering tourism, strengthening communities, and enhancing our quality of life.

Government must support grassroots cultural institutions. As co-chair of the Massachusetts Cultural Caucus, I worked closely with the Massachusetts Cultural Council to keep its funding level as high as possible.

Having hired thousands of people over the decades, I recognize that arts education, and a celebration of the creative mind, often is as important an attribute as technical skills, and often a better indicator of success in the workplace. Creative problem solving, appreciating different perspectives, may be more important to student growth than any core curriculum training. So the last thing we want to do, for the sake of our children and our economic future, is cut education that nurtures this process.

Our artists and our cultural institutions, from museums to theaters, music venues to cultural centers, also offer a great model of decentralized, entrepreneurial, locally controlled economic initiative. Their successes are our successes. Their jobs are our jobs. Their revenue stays in our communities, and our investment in them becomes an investment in us all.

## **Grow Local**

The farm economy of Massachusetts, linked to a remarkable growth in farmers markets across the state, offers important opportunities to improve our health in both personal and economic terms.

Fresh food needs to be available and affordable, especially in urban communities where we are seeing an epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and other illnesses caused in large part by fast-food diets. Nowhere is the impact of corporate control on our economy more profound. Supporting and expanding agriculture creates local jobs, generates local revenue, improves health, and saves on health care. Educating consumers about good nutrition, and how personal health directly relates to the health of our communities, is a core responsibility of government.

Some of the farmers markets that have sprung up around the state have joined a creative program, funded privately, to double the purchasing power of people using EBT cards if they buy fresh local produce. This program has a second benefit of supporting local farmers with more customers. It should be funded in the state budget.

In addition, some Massachusetts hospitals and clinics now offer “veggie vouchers” as “prescriptions” to patients whose diets have led to issues like obesity and diabetes. Initial studies have shown dramatic success with this strategy. This should be encouraged.

Third, school breakfast and lunch programs are a perfect opportunity to support local growers, encourage new eating habits, and enrich education with a deeper appreciation of how the food we eat is produced, and why healthier alternatives are better. The state should remove all unreasonable barriers to school systems purchasing fresh local food, and fully fund nutrition programs.

## **Mending the Safety Net**

Cape Air has been recognized as one of the most philanthropic businesses in Southeastern Massachusetts, and my family is proud to have offered personal support to many community efforts over the years. But relying on private individuals and corporations to replace public support is a strategy that cannot be our answer. As the Rev. Canon Edward Rodman, one of Boston's eminent religious leaders, said, "Charity is beautiful, but it's capricious, selective, and out of our surplus, not our substance."

During tough economic times, state leaders have made difficult budgetary choices with many troubling impacts. Health and human service organizations have been pitted against each other, forced to compete for a smaller slice of the funding pie. The same is true for housing; having worked for decades to support affordable housing on the Cape and Islands, where high prices and low average incomes make this one of the most challenging areas in the state, I know that real solutions emerge from public commitment, not private largesse.

The core issue is how we define our substance. Budget to budget, we can succeed in protecting some important initiatives, such as daycare facilities for people who might otherwise be institutionalized, or facilities at Taunton State Mental Hospital. But chronic underfunding means that other worthy efforts must then face cuts or elimination. And the most vulnerable among us often bear the brunt of our shortfall.

And so we have to be willing to address the basic question of government: How do we raise revenue, from whom, and how much?

## **Vision and Budget, Budget and Vision**

Our tax code, our revenue, defines our budget. And without a budget -- a tested budget, a sufficient budget -- vision becomes nothing more than mirage. Every other issue on the table sooner or later connects back to our capacity to fund. And so we must understand that as our challenges and opportunities have changed over time, the structure of our economy has evolved as well.

Today, wealth has concentrated in fewer and fewer hands; middle class workers and families have less buying power, less security, less opportunity.

But our tax policies do not reflect the changes of the past 30 years. We need to structure how we generate revenue to acknowledge this shift. By shying away from this conversation, we continue to balance our state budget only by making very difficult and hurtful decisions. We add yet more burden on our cities and towns, where the fiscal crisis hits hardest but the only available tool to raise venue is property taxes.

Austerity is a necessary goal. But austerity does not offer us inspiration, or vision. Ferreting out abuse among those on welfare is important, but it does not create new jobs for the unemployed. Stopping scofflaws and misuse in public transportation is essential, but it does not create a better transit system. Eliminating waste in government is crucial, but it does not create better social policies.

And so we need to be clear about the historic and crucial role government plays. Investing in education, transportation and infrastructure, job creation, human services and health care to protect those in need, is how our nation became great. We need to articulate that promise again, and make that vision tangible.

Once we do that, we can ask for support funding our government properly. Those who have benefited most should be willing and prepared to pay; those who have been stymied and hurt by this deep recession cannot shoulder more burden.

With a clear understanding of how government can move us forward, and how our tax code can change to reflect today's economic realities, we can make the convincing argument that today's state budget needs to grow.

While a graduated state income tax could be one strategy, constitutional barriers to such reform exist. Changing tax code to shift the burden toward wealthier citizens is still possible, however, via strategies such as the Invest in Our Communities Act, legislation I co-sponsored. The act would raise deductions for working families while raising the tax rate, not increasing taxes for most working people while bringing more revenue from the highest income brackets.

We also need to take a hard look at capital gains taxes, long- and short-term, with appropriate deductions at the lower end of income, to fashion a more equitable relationship between taxes on earned and unearned income.

But in the name of true reform, and to build new coalitions to accomplish that reform, I am interested in exploring more options, and moving the conversation out of the box. For example:

Consider a graduated corporate tax in Massachusetts, relieving burden and creating one more incentive to encourage small businesses to reinvest in jobs and growth, while closing loopholes to ensure that income and assets of all kinds are taxed fairly.

### **Connecting the dots**

A case study like this is a great way to clarify thinking, focus vision, express values and priorities. This is essential to provide both framework and inspiration. The next steps demand the leadership, management, acumen and experience to deliver on the promise.

In this context, government becomes a three-step process:

Articulate the vision. Translate it into specific goals. Then build coalitions on common ground.

The vision is our understanding that our economy is the tool we can use to build a future we proudly pass to the next generation.

The goal is to invest in our middle class, our working communities, so they become the driving engine of this economy.

The coalitions that accomplish this goal must emerge from collaboration at every stage, including everyone at the decision-making tables, then asking one and all to contribute – sometimes even sacrifice – for our Commonwealth.

In or out of government, every great step forward has required that people first believe in the vision, then work together to realize it.