

Former state Sen. Cilley enters race for governor

◆ **Preserving tradition:** Jackie Cilley targeted Republicans in NH Legislature during her campaign announcement.

By **BETH LaMONTAGNE HALL**
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MANCHESTER — Former Democratic state Sen. Jackie Cilley has officially entered the race for governor, pledging to ensure quality education for all students, protect the environment, fight right-to-work legislation and keep same-sex marriage on the books in New Hampshire.

But before Cilley even arrived at an event announcing her candidacy on Tuesday morning, she was facing criticism from Republican operative Patrick Hynes, who

questioned her position on a statewide income tax.

Hynes sent out an email early Tuesday morning calling the state senator "Slippery Cilley." He accused her of refusing to directly answer questions about her stance on an income tax, "saying only that she will respect the wishes of her state senate district."

In a 2010 clip attached to Hynes' NH Journal article published Tuesday, Cilley argued that her critics label her as a tax-and-spend liberal for not signing tax pledges, but that her record fails to reflect that charge.

The Cilley campaign would not comment on the Hynes release, but in her announcement on Tuesday, Cilley discussed her dislike for tax pledges.

"I won't play pledge politics with the future of our state," said Cilley. "Pledge politics is

not leadership. In fact, if one takes enough pledges they never (have) to think about anything again. Our citizens deserve to be heard regardless of the issue. My candidacy and my administration, if elected, will be based on an unwavering belief in the intelligence of our people to have any conversation they choose without my telling them in advance I will not listen to them."

Cilley made her announcement before an estimated 200 people at the YWCA in Manchester Tuesday morning. She spoke about her working class childhood in Berlin, how she was the first person in her family to go to college and how her education eventually took her to a teaching post at the University of New Hampshire Whittemore School of Business.

"It was a sound, high quality education that lifted me

out of poverty and offered me new opportunities," said Cilley. "Yet, today politicians in Concord are doing everything in their power to dilute our public education and destroy the very reason we are attractive to new businesses. From attempts to eliminate kindergarten to allowing students to drop out at 16 years to reducing funding that provides alternative educational paths to graduation and on to slashing 50 percent of the funding for our university system, all these actions will result in New Hampshire's students being unable to compete for the jobs of the future."

Republicans in the state Legislature were the main targets of Cilley's campaign announcement, as she accused the "Free State, Tea Party, John Birch politicians in Concord" of "attacking the very foundation of our traditions in the

Granite State."

This includes elimination of the state's minimum wage, stricter laws on abortion, changes in environmental protections and attempts to repeal the state's same-sex marriage law.

While she argued for putting political differences aside to reach shared goals, she listed five areas where she will not compromise: education, workers' right to collectively bargain, treating public employees with respect, abortion rights and same-sex marriage.

As well as launching her campaign, Cilley's website, jackiecilley.com, went live on Tuesday. She has thus far taken a grassroots approach to her campaign, holding three house parties and speaking with county Democratic organizations.

Cilley is running against former state Sen. Maggie



Former state Sen. Jackie Cilley, 2012 candidate for governor.

Hassan, D-Exeter, for the party nomination. Republicans Ovide Lamontagne and former Executive Director of Cornerstone Action, Kevin Smith have also officially joined the race.