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Needham psychologist Sara Orozco to challenge Scott Brown for Senate seat

By Heather McCarron

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NEEDHAM - A competition for the Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex state Senate seat began to take shape yesterday as Needham Democrat Sara Orozco, announced her intention to seek the position currently held by Wrentham Republican Sen. Scott Brown.

Orozco, a psychologist in private practice in Needham, pulled nomination papers for the post earlier this month and yesterday said she plans to make a formal announcement this spring, once she has collected nomination signatures and put together campaign materials.

First elected four years ago, Brown earlier this month announced he would run again.

"Those are the only two (to have pulled papers) so far," said Brian McNiff, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Secretary of State's Elections Division.

Orozco said this is her first excursion into the election process, "but it's not my first time advocating for issues."

Orozco, who has dedicated more than two decades to health care and human services, said one of her major concerns is ensuring quality health care for all families - a commitment strengthened by being a parent and a breast cancer survivor.

"I'm in health care and I just think we're paying a lot of money for health care, and it seems every year we're just getting less and less in return," she said.

Education is another big issue for Orozco, who has 8-year-old twins enrolled in the public schools in Needham.

"I really want to make sure that we really focus on education throughout the whole district and that (students) have available to them great opportunities," she said.

In a press statement released yesterday, Orozco also noted that strengthening the economy is another big challenge the state faces.

"I will use my experience as a health care provider, a business owner, and a parent to identify common-sense solutions for the challenges we face," she stated.

In addition to her private practice as a psychologist, Orozco is the founder and CEO of Orozco & Associates, a Needham-based consulting firm made up of independent corporate psychologists and business consultants who work within companies to transform workplace relationships and to provide leadership training. She is a corporate speaker and

a member of the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce.

Orozco said as part of developing her campaign platform more fully she is in the process of "really going around and talking to people in district and really listening closely" to what they're concerned about.

"This will be a grassroots campaign focused on the needs that (voters) and their families are facing, and what we can do together to improve the quality of life in our communities," Orozco stated.

So far, Orozco said, the effort of collecting nominations "is progressing really strongly."

"It feels like a very supportive district. And I've just gotten tremendous, positive feedback," she said.

A first generation Cuban-American born in Miami, Fla., Orozco said at the heart of her bid for office is a desire to give back.

"My parents came in 1961 from Cuba. I was born in Miami soon after they came," she said. "It's one of the reasons I'm really interested in really giving back to the communities, because I feel like I had so many opportunities."

Orozco, who has a doctorate degree, has lived in Massachusetts for about 13 years, she said, and has been a resident of Needham for about six years.

The Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex district includes Franklin's precincts 2 to 4; Millis, Needham, Norfolk, Plainville, Wellesley's precincts B, F and G; Wrentham, Attleboro's wards 1 and 2, ward 3, and precinct A; North Attleborough, Natick's precincts 6, 7, 9 and 10; and Sherborn and Wayland.

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