

Orozco tries for first term in Senate

By Heather McCarron/Staff writer

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Needham Democrat Sara Orozco, a political newcomer, knows she is going up against a GOP powerhouse in state Sen. Scott Brown, R-Wrentham, in her bid to represent the Norfolk, Bristol and Middlesex district on Beacon Hill, but said she has a clear mission that appeals to the mass of voters.

"I feel realistic going into it (the Nov. 4 election)," Orozco said. "I feel like I'm staying focused on my message. I am really focusing on helping middle class families who are dealing with the high cost of health care, education and housing."

Orozco, 45, a first generation Cuban American hailing from Florida, hopes to unseat two-term incumbent Brown to represent a district that includes Attleboro, Franklin, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Plainville, Sherborn, Wayland, Wellesley, Wrentham.

As part of her campaign, she has used the "virtual doorknock" to send an introductory video clip via email to thousands of voters.

"We've done everything we can do to reach voters in the district," said Orozco, the mother of 9-year-old twin boys.

She likened her campaign to a marathon and said she is approaching an "uphill ending," "but we've got all these volunteers with these little cups of water."

"I think it's going well. I think our operation has really grown," said Orozco.

Orozco is a licensed psychologist and certified business coach who has a private practice in Needham. She is also the CEO and founder of Orozco and Associates, a leadership development and training firm. She is a member of the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, the Boston Women's Networking Group, the Massachusetts Psychological Association and the American Psychological Association.

Orozco said, if elected, "my absolute number one priority is going to be to help increase revenues in our district."

She is placing an emphasis on the recently signed life sciences bill, "which, I feel is an absolutely wonderful opportunity for our district." She believes the bill, a \$1 billion initiative to subsidize development of life science companies, lays the groundwork for important economic change.

"The life sciences act is a partnership between the government, private industry and the colleges," she said. "I have full belief there is no reason why these industries cannot come to our communities."

The \$1 billion would be invested over a 10-year period, she explained, and noted Brown voted against the life sciences bill.

Unlike Brown, Orozco said she does not support helping the economy by encouraging gambling — Brown has said he supports allowing slot machines at the state's racetracks, to keep those dollars from leaving the state to be spent at casinos in Rhode Island or Connecticut.

"I just don't see how those (slot machines) would increase the money going into our communities," Orozco said.

Orozco did recognize that economic recovery through the life science bill is not a quick fix, and said "it's going to take time and partnerships."

In the meantime, she said, the state needs to focus on reducing costs. She has a particular interest in seeing the cost of healthcare reduced, and said initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles can help.

Considering how she differs from her opponent, Orozco said she believes she not only places more importance on encouraging the growth of life sciences industry, "I think we differ on just the way we vote on social issues, like pro life, and equality in marriage."

"I consider myself moderate. I wouldn't ever consider myself in extreme of one end or the other," she said.

Overall, she said she thinks it is difficult "to pin down my opponent on where he stands on the issues."

"I think people want to know, 'are you for it or are you not?'" she said. "Once I do make up my mind, you may or may not agree with me, but you'll always know where I stand."

To learn more about Orozco and her position on various issues, visit her Web site at saraorozco.com.

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