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Notes from editor (not for publication):

The first-person is too unusual for news pages, so I transformed it and added a little (not too much, and not unfairly, I hope). Holy cats, Cota is awful. I want to be careful about stepping into a hornet’s nest with the SPLC. I cut that part back but made other parts more pointed. Her anti-trans agenda appears to be born of having a trans child, and she accuses the school system of “indoctrination.” The poor kid. (Admittedly, I’m a little papa bear these days, as my former nephew now niece has come out in her early 30s.)

Your questions were thorough and really helped draw out the profiles.



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

- 1 Five candidates are on primary ballots in Windham-3
- 2 House district

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

- 3 Incumbent Bos-Lun will face Lundberg and Major in
- 4 Democratic primary; Cota and Coyne are presumptive
- 5 Republican nominees for general election for the two-seat district

####END SUBHED####

- 6 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

7 Four new candidates, two Republican and two
8 Democrats, are in the running for the two Windham-3 House
9 seats in the Aug. 11 party primaries, as is one of the two
10 incumbent state representatives.

11 Democrats Leslie Goldman and Michelle Bos-Lun are the
12 two representatives for Windham-3, and they have both served
13 since 2021. Bos-Lun, from Westminster, is running again.
14 Goldman will be moving to be closer to family in California and
15 will not seek reelection. She said she will not be endorsing
16 anyone in the primary to fill her seat.

17 The candidates who have filed paperwork with the
18 Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office to fill her seat
19 are Republicans Nicole Cota from Saxtons River and Ryan Coyne
20 of Bellows Falls, and Democrats Chris Lundberg of Bellows Falls
21 and Stephen Major of Westminster West.

22 Coyne ran as an independent against Goldman and Bos-
23 Lun in 2020 when he got 23% of the votes and again in 2022,
24 getting 5.5% of the vote. In 2024, he ran as a Republican, getting
25 slightly less than 15% of the vote.

26 Windham-3, following the 2022 district
27 reapportionment, is composed of the towns of Brookline,
28 Rockingham, and Westminster, with a combined population of
29 8,388. It is the only two-seat district affecting Windham County
30 towns.

31 **'An honor and a privilege'**

32 Goldman took some time to reflect on her years in the
33 Legislature.

34 "It has been an honor and a privilege to represent
35 Windham-3 in our Legislature," she said. "Going door to door
36 and discussing issues with constituents was always so interesting,
37 and I learned so much that I was glad to take up to Montpelier."

38 She called the lawmakers' monthly Legislators at the
39 Library conversation "an engaging dialogue that also helped me
40 understand the issues on the ground for our district."

41 She said her only advice to the candidates “is to really,
42 really listen to the constituent experience” and to “be clear about
43 your values and communicate those values clearly so that voters
44 can make an informed choice when they vote.”

45 *The Commons* contacted all the candidates and asked for
46 their individual responses to a handful of questions. The
47 questions included a summation of their background, why they
48 decided to run, why they would be a better choice than the other
49 candidates, and what experience they would bring that would
50 help them succeed should they be elected.

51 Additionally they were asked to name the biggest issues
52 facing Vermont or, more specifically, the district; what issues they
53 think concern most voters, and whether they could work
54 cooperatively with other House members to bring about changes
55 voters would like.

56 **Michelle Bos-Lun**

57 As the only person running who has already served in
58 the Legislature, “I am optimistic that the voters will send me back
59 for two more years,” said incumbent Democrat Michelle Bos-
60 Lun.

61 Prior to serving in the Legislature, Bos-Lun, who moved
62 to Vermont in 2003 to study International Education at the School
63 for International Training, worked as a social studies and English
64 teacher with secondary students and was also working in
65 restorative justice with previously incarcerated individuals.

66 She runs a small nonprofit, Bihar Educational Change
67 Foundation, which provides food and education to more than
68 200 children in rural India.

69 She has also worked as a study abroad program leader,
70 leading youth exchange programs in the summer, with students
71 from Iraq, Belarus, and other countries, she told *The Commons*.

72 Bos-Lun has been married to her husband, Ron, for 38
73 years and describes herself as “a mother of three, grandmother of

74 two, a high school teacher, and a person who co-founded and
75 runs a small nonprofit that supports kids in rural India.”

76 She decided to run in 2020 because then-Rep. Nader
77 Hashim — who has since returned to politics as a state senator —
78 “was stepping down from his House seat and he encouraged me
79 to run.”

80 “I was discouraged and frightened by some of the
81 changes in our government that I had seen during the first Trump
82 administration and decided it was time to step up and serve my
83 community and my country through engaging in our democracy
84 as a legislator,” she said.

85 Bos-Lun, who was working as a social studies teacher
86 and in restorative justice, found herself “talking with students
87 about the system of checks and balances we are supposed to
88 have with our three branches of government, but how it wasn’t
89 fully working.”

90 “I wanted to be part of restoring functional government
91 by the Constitution,” she said.

92 She wants to return to Montpelier “not only to work on
93 the big issues of housing and affordability, but also to work on
94 legislation that did not make it into law this biennium.”

95 One such issue is increased mental health training for
96 Vermont’s police officers. “Vermont is tied at the lowest number
97 of training hours about mental health and de-escalation with
98 three other states,” she said. “To better support our officers to
99 handle the difficult situations they often encounter, Vermont
100 should get up to at least 15 hours of specialized training, the U.S.
101 average.”

102 Bos-Lun also wants to work on a bill to restrict
103 rodenticides.

104 “We need to find a way to do this to protect wildlife,
105 while making adequate exceptions for food and other sensitive
106 businesses,” she said.

107 For her first four years, Bos-Lun served on the
108 Corrections and Institutions Committee, “where I heard testimony

109 about state infrastructure needs and where we made
110 recommendations for the state budget.”

111 Two years ago, she switched to the Committee on
112 Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry “and I intend to
113 continue there if re-elected,” she said.

114 Some of the biggest challenges facing Vermont are
115 housing and affordability, Bos-Lun said.

116 “We do not have enough housing to meet the needs of
117 our community members, and we do not have enough housing to
118 enable local businesses to grow,” she said. “I have heard from
119 numerous constituents who have been unable to hire people for
120 their businesses because they can’t find housing within an hour
121 of us. Another issue that is challenging for many Vermonters is
122 that our property taxes are very high and rents are high.”

123 Citing “a big learning curve to serving in the Legislature,”
124 Bos-Lun said she wants to use the six years she has invested in
125 learning to be effective in the role. “I want to continue to apply
126 what I have learned and to mentor the new Windham-3
127 legislator,” she said.

128 The combination of her resume and legislative
129 experience makes her the best qualified candidate for the job,
130 Bos-Lun said, noting that “for anyone who is not a lawyer, there is
131 a lot to learn about how to transition a policy idea into
132 legislation.”

133 “I absolutely feel I can work with other members,” she
134 said. “My background in restorative justice and cross-cultural
135 programs provided me with strong skills when I entered my years
136 of service in the State House. I know the places to go to build
137 coalitions that can make change.”

138 She said she has done so with members of the tripartisan
139 Rural Caucus, in her committees, and throughout the chamber. “I
140 have collaborated with colleagues at times on both the left and
141 the right to make changes to benefit rural Vermont,” Bos-Lun
142 said.

143 “Many people know that I was diagnosed with cancer
144 last fall,” said Bos-Lun, who has written about her journey in the
145 pages of *The Commons*. “I am making a very strong recovery and
146 honestly feel healthier than I ever have. I only have one small
147 spot of cancer left out of six initially found in my chest and I
148 expect that to be gone in July when I have my next scans.”

149 When she was diagnosed, “I didn’t know how my cancer
150 would impact my ability to serve,” Bos-Lun said. “Now I know
151 that I have plenty of energy and am fully ready to return to
152 Montpelier to continue my service.”

153 **Nicole Cota**

154 Republican candidate Nicole Cota was given several
155 opportunities over a couple of weeks to participate in this article,
156 but in the end did not respond.

157 She does have a Facebook page, [Nicole Cota for](#)
158 [Windham Seat 3](#), where she provides information on her
159 background and political views.

160 There, Cota states that she “is dedicated to the protection
161 of children and the American Family. We have lost our Education
162 system to Social justice Activism that has failed to educate our
163 children properly. Time for Change VT!”

164 Cota’s campaign posts concentrate on the public
165 education system’s affirmation of transgender students.

166 She is one of the founders, along with Rachael Morse, of
167 the Windham County chapter of Moms for Liberty, announced in
168 April.

169 Moms for Liberty, a conservative group, was founded in
170 Florida in 2021 and now has hundreds of chapters across the
171 country. It advocates for a conservative version of parental rights
172 in public education. It campaigns against Covid safety mandates,
173 LGBTQ+ rights, inclusive school teachings or curriculum, and
174 race, gender, and other and diversity initiatives.

175 The group is also known for efforts to ban books on such
176 topics from school libraries, and for its support of conservative

177 candidates in local school board elections. Moms for Liberty has
178 expressed strong opposition to teachers unions and the U.S.
179 Department of Education.

180 **Ryan Coyne**

181 Republican candidate Ryan Coyne, whose background is
182 in “psychology, special needs, and the military,” has been “a
183 member of the Civil Air Patrol, Library Trustees, and now the
184 Knights of Columbus for around 20 years.”

185 A candidate for the seat in three election cycles starting
186 in 2020, Coyne has called the process “a valuable experience
187 hearing from voters, joining groups and supporting other
188 candidates for office.”

189 He told *The Commons* that two of his strongest
190 qualifications would be “listening to my constituents and
191 understanding the great honor it would be [to be] sent to the
192 Legislature by the people down here.”

193 Asked what issues he thinks voters are most concerned
194 about, he responded: “This is subjective, but I hear a lot about
195 the cost of living, housing, cost of education — all
196 interconnected. Also, Vermonters are concerned that we spend a
197 lot on education but are behind in certain test score areas.”

198 And asked, “Why do I feel you are a better choice over
199 the other candidates?” He replied, “Well, when you ask the
200 question in ChatGPT, it responds with ‘Ryan Coyne is a better
201 candidate than all the others.’”

202 “[I] suppose I would not be a politician if I couldn’t tell a
203 fib once in a while!” he said.

204 “All kidding aside, I plan to dedicate a great amount of
205 time to the voters and their concerns — that is why I believe I am
206 a good candidate,” Coyne said. “I do feel I can work
207 cooperatively with other legislators. Bipartisan group work is key.
208 Perhaps that is why Gov. Phil Scott has won many victories.”

Chris Lundberg

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Democrat Chris Lundberg, retired from a career at the intersection of technology and manufacturing, is originally from Philadelphia and moved to Putney to attend the now-defunct Windham College in 1973. He graduated with a degree in English literature, then worked in the machine tool industry.

Lundberg took some electrical engineering courses and landed a job as a control systems engineer with MacDermid Equipment in Springfield, which designed and manufactured machinery used in the printed circuit board industry.

There, he wrote programmable logic controller (PLC) programs — software that is standard in automating manufacturing equipment — and “sat in design reviews with customers fleshing out the details then often spent time at the customers’ facility for installation, startup, and commissioning of the machine,” he told *The Commons*.

“Later, I worked in the same capacity in the ultra-precision machine tool industry for a designer and manufacturer of air bearings and related equipment,” Lundberg said.

Since retiring, he has worked part-time “twisting wrenches with a friend of mine who has a business doing mechanical work on classic British sports cars.”

In recent years, Lundberg has attended many of the monthly constituent meetups of the Rockingham legislative delegation, as well as local Democratic Party meetings.

“That in part had led me to take it upon myself to make two trips to Montpelier to the State House to see what goes on, how things work” — something he wanted to do for a number of years, he said.

He spent “four days total of sitting in committee meetings, talking with a few legislators, attending some caucuses, and sitting in both the Senate and House floor when they were in session.”

242 Despite the visit, Lundberg said he had no intention of
243 running for an office. “It is only within the last few months that I
244 have given it any consideration,” he said. “I had been asked on a
245 couple occasions in recent months if I was interested in running.”

246 And, he said, since no one had yet stepped forward, “I
247 decided to run.”

248 Lundberg cites his business experience in negotiating
249 projects as a source of “some diplomatic tools that others might
250 not have.”

251 “I’ve done many design reviews and status updates with
252 customers and management (sometimes a little rancorous),” he
253 said. “I think I’m open minded and don’t have a problem
254 admitting I’m wrong or if someone else has a better idea.”

255 Despite his lack of legislative experience, “I don’t see the
256 committee meetings as being much different from design reviews
257 — and certainly less frosty than some I’ve sat in,” Lundberg said.

258 For the candidate, the biggest issues facing Vermont are
259 “the cost of living, housing, health care, and education,”
260 problems that “plague the entire country as well.”

261 Finally, Lundberg wanted to tell voters: “I have never
262 voted for Donald Trump, and I do not support his platform. I am
263 pro-choice.”

264 **Stephen Major**

265 Democrat Stephen Major, a five-year member of the
266 Westminster Selectboard and 15-year member of the Bellows
267 Falls Union High School Board, is making a first-time bid for state
268 office.

269 The veterinarian plans to step back from his longtime
270 practice in Chesterfield, New Hampshire in January.

271 “I grew up on our farm in Westminster West, where my
272 brother now runs Vermont Shepherd sheep dairy,” Major said. “I
273 was involved in 4-H, riding horses in the woods and developed a
274 lifelong passion for maple sugaring.”

275 While a student in the public schools of Westminster and
276 Bellows Falls, he “benefited from great teachers like Claire
277 Oglesby, John Porter, Barbara Whitehead, [Marjorie] Orcutt,
278 David and Stan Johnson, and many more,” he told *The*
279 *Commons*.

280 Major, a 1984 graduate of Harvard University, spent a
281 year studying medieval history at St. Andrews University in
282 Scotland before going to Tufts Veterinary School.

283 The new graduate joined the Green Mountain Bovine
284 Clinic in 1989 and in 1994 took over the practice, which covers
285 “the farm animal needs in Windham County and the tri-state
286 area.”

287 He and his wife, Adrienne, were married in 1988 and
288 have two children, who both went to the Westminster schools
289 and Bellows Falls Union High School: Pollaidh Major, the
290 director of policy and special projects for the Vermont Housing
291 and Conservation Board, and Marion Major, the outreach
292 coordinator for the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

293 Marion is married to Joey Aiken, a member of the
294 Westminster road crew. “We have grandchildren near us in
295 Vermont,” Stephen Major said.

296 In addition to his stints on the school board and
297 Selectboard, Major is a long-term trustee of the Westminster West
298 Congregational Church and served on the Westminster West
299 Public Library board and as a member of the Windham County
300 Farm Bureau.

301 “I decided to run for the Legislature because I care
302 deeply about issues facing Vermont now, including education,
303 housing, agriculture, and the environment,” Major told *The*
304 *Commons*. “I also feel that we need to work hard to maintain our
305 governance and character that makes Vermont special — our
306 sense of trusting our neighbors and working together without
307 bitter, partisan divisions.”

308 Major said he has admired the work of Bos-Lun and
309 Goldman.

310 "Hearing that Leslie was stepping down inspired me to
311 put in my name," he said.

312 "I hope that my experience serving on community public
313 boards will be helpful in the Legislature where one has to listen
314 to the opinions of others and realize that we each have our
315 unique backgrounds and talents and rarely have all the answers,"
316 said Major, who has attended Town Meetings since he was a
317 child and he would accompany his mother, Beverly Major. "I
318 greatly value our local system of governance," he added.

319 He believes that constituents' key issues include housing,
320 affordability, education, and the environment.

321 "But many of us are also concerned about those things
322 that make Vermont unique, including its system of governance
323 and its ability to work across party lines and to respect the will of
324 the people who live in our towns," Major said.

325 "Residents feel strongly that they should have a role in
326 the governance of their local education system, and that the Town
327 Meeting form of government should be respected as integral to
328 the special Vermont governance model," he said.

329 He said he believes in civility and has to "practice that
330 daily with cows, and in evening meetings with people."

331 "We all have our strengths, and none of us have all the
332 answers," Major said.

333 "I am excited to provide choices for people in our
334 district," he continued. "That's what democracy is about. I
335 believe anyone elected by the voters of this district will work hard
336 to represent us."

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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