

—Slug:.....COMM-0874.opin.letter.a20_field
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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special
—Dateline.....Putney
—Article Number:.....43940

Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Janoo: Transformative economist can tackle state's
2 systemic issues

####END HED####

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4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 I was a pediatrician who worked at the Brattleboro
6 Memorial Hospital Birthing Center for a little over 10 years. It
7 was a special place compared to other maternity wards I had
8 worked at.
9 Breastfeeding was supported, childbirth classes were
10 well-attended, nurses were devoted to patients having the best
11 experience possible, and well-trained, experienced, and

12 compassionate OB and pediatric doctors and midwives worked
13 together well. I was forlorn when I heard it was on the chopping
14 block.

15 Why does this happen? Why would a unit that listens to
16 what families want, that has excellent outcomes, and that is
17 loved, be closed? Jobs will be lost, and pregnant women will
18 have to travel over an hour — dangerously far. Medicaid money
19 will go out of state, and young people will be hesitant to move
20 here.

21 The Birthing Center crisis is the face of our state's
22 systemic issues.

23 Our healthcare system rewards profitable services —
24 quick, billable procedures and imaging — rather than labor and
25 delivery, prenatal and postpartum care, mental health care, and
26 primary care, which are essential life-supporting services.

27 OB services, while so fundamental to communities, do
28 not generate money for hospitals because they require so much
29 staffing, because those workers must be on call 24/7 regardless of
30 the number of births a hospital has, and because Medicaid
31 reimburses less than 30 cents on the dollar.

32 The only hope for our rural OB units is for the Vermont
33 Medicaid program to increase reimbursement rates and for the
34 state to cover everyone with insurance. Governor No has refused
35 to do that, even though not increasing reimbursements will cost
36 babies' and mothers' lives.

37 This year, we have the exciting opportunity to replace
38 Governor No with Amanda Janoo. She is an economist with the
39 expertise and experience to lead an economy that works for
40 everyone. She has plans to change the systems that govern how
41 we collect our money and where we spend it.

42 Amanda has an understanding of what Vermont is
43 capable of accomplishing without federal support, something that
44 has been a challenge for a part-time citizen Legislature with no
45 paid staff to study the situation.

46 She has looked at the books and is calling for universal
47 publicly-funded primary care, without the involvement of
48 insurance companies. To fund this care, she supports a 3%
49 surcharge tax on people with yearly incomes of more than
50 \$500,000. And she is looking into the possibility of regional state
51 collaborations to expand universal healthcare coverage beyond
52 primary care.

53 Amanda knows that putting out her ideas on economic
54 issues is what will get people engaged and excited. She's a
55 transformative economist who believes in and has experience
56 with bottom-up economic development.

57 People are fed up with politicians who have no specific
58 economic plans or who rehash old ideas that waste money,
59 which has been going on for too long in Vermont. Hers is a
60 winnable platform.

61 What an opportunity we have! Having Amanda Janoo in
62 the governor's office would make a huge difference in our state in
63 terms of healthcare, housing, education, and more.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

65

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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67

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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####END LOGLINE####