

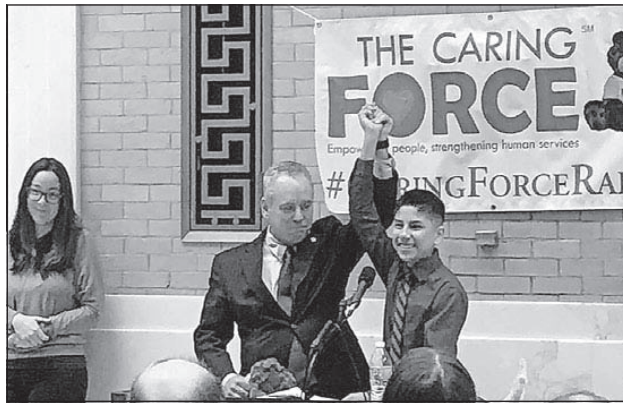
# Franklin rep takes student to statehouse

**Eighth-grader inquired about financial aid bill**

**By Scott Calzolaio**  
Daily News Staff

FRANKLIN – State Rep. Jeff Roy, D-Franklin, received a letter from a student at Clinton Middle School concerned about a bill, so instead of writing back, Roy invited him to the statehouse for a rally on the issue.

As part of a class assignment, eighth-grader Brian Solis wrote Roy regarding a pending law that would grant more financial aid to graduates who are working in human service job such as rehab centers and nursing homes. A few weeks later, he found himself standing in



**State Rep. Jeff Roy, D-Franklin, and Clinton Middle School student Brian Solis at the statehouse.** [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

front of more than 300 representatives, senators, and other stakeholders to make a speech.

“So, I had this bill pending and then, out of the blue, I get this note from an eighth-grader who identified this as

an issue and was looking to study it,” Roy said. “I think everyone was genuinely moved by this young man who clearly articulated the reasons for this bill, and was willing to go out and engage in advocacy on their behalf.”

Roy said people generally expect human service workers to be well educated and compensated for their work, but looking at the rising need for these services paired with a declining work force, he said, the number of people in the field will not meet that growing requirement in ten years. The bill, he said, would provide more incentive, something that Solis understands.

Commenting on how Massachusetts has a student loan average higher than the national standard, and how these workers make society run smoothly, it was clear that Solis did his homework.

Though it was his first time speaking in front of people, and it was nerve wracking, Solis said he is interested in

politics and public policy and has his sights on a seat in the future.

“I’m really thinking about getting more involved in politics,” he said.

Generally shy and quiet, Solis’ sister and guardian Katherine said the experience has already been life-changing for her and the family. Knowing that individuals do have a voice is a comforting and empowering realization.

“I feel that this was the best opportunity I’ve ever had,” he said. “I’m glad to be part of this, and to help them meet their goals.”

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