

‘There’s more survival thinking than investment thinking’



LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

Debbie Cox says she is determined to help others learn from her financial mistakes.

Bostonians of color discuss regrets and reservations about finances

By Katie Johnston
GLOBE STAFF

Debbie Cox still gets a pit in her stomach when she thinks about it.

More than 20 years ago, she sold an empty lot she had inherited from her mother to a developer for \$20,000. Today, a two-family home is on the market for nearly \$1 million on that land in Codman Square.

“I didn’t think big enough,” she said. “Boy, what we could have done as a family with it.”

Cox shared her experience with a group of people in Roxbury this summer as part of a series of conversations about wealth at a time when poor and middle-class Bostonians are struggling as wages stagnate and the cost of living soars. Over the course of 26 small-group discussions in Dorchester, Mattapan, Roxbury, the South End, South Boston, Downtown Crossing, East Boston, and Cambridge, 153 community members

WEALTH, Page B8



JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

Wilbur Brown, director of Transitional Remedies Solutions in Roxbury, said being poor can be traumatic.

Poll finds broad criticism of RFK Jr.

But one third of respondents approve of his actions in D.C.

By Kay Lazar
GLOBE STAFF

More than 60 percent of Massachusetts residents disapprove of the job Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is doing, a new Boston Globe/Suffolk University poll has found. And despite confusion linked to Kennedy’s many statements about the safety of childhood vaccines, an even wider margin said the benefits of such vaccines, such as the ones that protect against polio and measles, still outweigh any risks of getting the shots, the poll found.

Yet the survey of 500 registered voters revealed some uncertainty. Fully one-third of respondents said when it came to the COVID-19 vaccine, the benefits do not outweigh the risks. Nearly 6 percent said they were undecided about the COVID-19 shots.

The findings follow months of actions by Kennedy to upend long-accepted science that vaccines are safe, and to shake up the widely followed childhood vaccine schedule.

Earlier this month, his Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outraged legions of health leaders by updating its website to say its long-held position that vaccines are not linked to autism was “not evidence-based.” The update states “studies have not ruled out the possibility that infant vaccines cause autism” — a claim debunked by science.

Rachel Muncy, a 34-year-old Taunton mother of four — including a 12-year-old daughter with autism — said political rhetoric on vaccines is not helpful to parents. But she said she approves of Kennedy’s push to keep questioning whether vaccines are linked to autism.

“I appreciate they are doing research in the first place about autism instead of it being status quo,” she said.

Muncy said her children have all received the vaccines recommended by their pediatrician, but she passed on flu and COVID-19 for them because she doesn’t feel they are helpful.

“I think the discussions should be with the doctors,” she said. “I don’t think politics should get into it.”

Massachusetts’ public health commissioner, Dr. Robbie Goldstein, who is a physician, earlier this month issued a blistering

VACCINES, Page B8

INSIDE

‘Conjuring’ house update

YouTuber Elton Casteo purchases the mortgage for the Rhode Island property. B2

Halloween aftermath

Maine school principal’s controversial costume questioned at district meeting. B2

Somerville break-ins

Police warn residents after string of crimes at houses in the city. B4

GLOBE SANTA Only 25 Days till Christmas!

GLOBESANTA.ORG

THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF GLOBE SANTA

For 70 years, this friend to boys and girls has delivered joy each holiday season

WRITTEN BY LINDA MATCHAN | ILLUSTRATED BY ALLY RZESA

Hi boys and girls, and your grownups! I’m Globe Santa! Long, long ago, there were seven newspapers in Boston, including the Boston Post. It had a Santa Claus club, where I lived. I helped poor kids get toys at holiday time. People called me Post Santa back then.



But the Boston Post shut down in 1956. I was so upset! Who would help all those poor boys and girls? So many of them didn’t have enough food to eat, or lived in shacks. Some youngsters got their only toys from trash bins. But then the Boston Globe, and Mayor John B. Hynes, gave me a new home and a new name: Globe Santa!



Soon, letters poured in — thousands of them — from parents and grandparents and kids asking for toys to bring some holiday magic. The letters were so sad they almost broke my heart.



So I got to work and lots of nice people pitched in! Famous cartoonists like Al Capp drew pictures of me to spread my mission. Boys and girls sent in nickels and dimes. Mrs. Beatrice Hayes knit 60 pair of mittens to give out one year. Mittens the cat gave \$50!

I’ve been Globe Santa now for 70 years. I’ve brought toys to thousands and thousands of boys and girls — some with polio and tuberculosis, some who were orphans or living in cars, some fleeing with their families from countries fighting wars. Thanks to so many kind readers I have the best job there is.

I get to deliver joy to children.



It’s really easy to give to the Globe Santa campaign. You can make a credit card donation online: www.globesanta.org

By phone: 617-929-2007.

Or send a check or money order made payable to Globe Santa (that’s me!) to:

The Boston Globe Foundation, c/o Globe Santa Fund, PO Box 491, Medford, MA 02155-0005.



Thank you. I’m so grateful to you, and so are the boys and girls. Happy holidays everyone!

Mass. flag panel says it needs another extension

By Matt Stout
GLOBE STAFF

Just ahead of a December deadline, members of a state panel tasked with identifying replacements for Massachusetts’ state seal and flag say they’ll seek another extension, warning there remains a fundamental “public misun-

derstanding” about why the flag’s controversial imagery needs to go.

The Massachusetts Seal, Flag, and Motto Advisory Commission is itself the second iteration of a group the Legislature created in 2021 amid a groundswell to replace a seal and flag long criticized as offensive to Native Americans.

The process, however, has been bogged for nearly a half-decade by disagreements and delays. The current commission, created last year with a \$100,000 budget and given an initial July 2025 deadline, later received a roughly five-month extension from the

PANEL, Page B4



The three highest-scoring options for the new Massachusetts state seal.