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**Leigh Davis Enters Race for 3rd Berkshire District
Massachusetts House of Representatives Seat**

Great Barrington, Mass.– February 16, 2024 – Leigh Davis, vice chair of the Great Barrington Select Board, announced on Friday her candidacy for the 3rd Berkshire District Massachusetts House of Representatives seat after State Rep. William "Smitty" Pignatelli announced that he would not run for another two-year term.

“I believe that people from all walks of life who call the Berkshires home share a deep sense of pride and appreciation for where we live. I owe a debt of gratitude to Representative Smitty Pignatelli, whose stewardship of the Berkshires has inspired me to take my role as a public servant to the State level. With the support of our community, I hope to carry on Smitty’s hands-on approach to serving his constituents and be able to fight in Boston for working families, small businesses and farms, housing, and to protect the environment.” Davis said.

Upon relocating from Ireland to Great Barrington with her three children in 2009, Davis enrolled them in the Berkshire Hills School District and began volunteering for the community. Her volunteer work includes serving organizations such as HospiceCare in the Berkshires, Volunteers in Medicine, The People’s Pantry, and the Blackshires Community Empowerment Foundation. Additionally, Davis received appointments to the Saint James Place Board of Directors, 1Berkshire Board of Directors, Local Option for Housing Affordability Steering Committee, Berkshire Leadership Impact Council, and the Berkshire Blueprint Advisory Council. Davis was nominated for a 2024 Women in Leadership Award in January due to her contributions to the Berkshire business community.

Davis’s professional experience, within the Berkshires and beyond, is as extensive as her volunteer work. A studio film editor and member of The Motion Picture Editors Guild union in Los Angeles, Davis later moved into teaching, accepting a position in Ireland where she advanced to tenured lecturer at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology. She was an active member of the Teachers Union of Ireland.

Shifting her career away from film and teaching after arriving in the Berkshires, Davis soon became a fixture in the Berkshire nonprofit and business sectors, working for the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, New England Newspapers (which includes The Berkshire Eagle), and Eagle Mill Redevelopment. During her years in Lee as Director of Development of Eagle Mill, Davis took a leading role in the \$80 million revitalization of the historic property. In this position, Leigh helped to secure millions of dollars in federal and state funding for the mixed-use project from agencies such as MassDevelopment, MassWorks, the National Park Service, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Currently in her fourth year at Construct, the largest affordable housing nonprofit in the Southern Berkshires, Davis serves as communications and community engagement director. In 2022, Davis was instrumental in acquiring The Windflower Inn as a more flexible workforce housing option, leveraging her skills and experience to support workforce development and inspiring others, such as the Community Development Cooperation of the Southern Berkshires, to follow her lead in repurposing inns for workforce housing.

Davis's career in local politics began on the Great Barrington Finance Committee in 2015, followed by election to the Great Barrington Select Board in 2019. Currently serving her second term on the board, Davis is vice chair and chair of the Great Barrington Select Board and Planning Board Housing Subcommittee. Davis also sits on the W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee, Great Barrington Community Preservation Committee, and Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force.

Davis's accomplishments on the local level include writing a successful bylaw regulating short-term rentals to free up long-term housing and bring costs down for full-time residents, championing a home rule petition to ensure residents retained local control over a proposal to re-establish horse racing in Great Barrington, and successful lobbying the state Department of Transportation to install a new safety system near the accident-prone entrance to Monument Mountain Regional High School.

In a testament to Davis's tenacity and drive to see her initiatives through, Davis has traveled to the State House to testify in person multiple times, providing oral testimony before the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Licensure, the Joint Committee on Revenue, and the Joint Committee on Housing.

"It's critical that state legislators in Boston, tasked with crafting legislation which can impact Berkshire communities, hear directly from the local leaders who represent these communities. This is what democracy in action looks like. You need to show up. I show up. I'm passionate about advocating for the Berkshires and unafraid to take a stand on issues that matter to residents back home," Davis stated.

Davis's passion for community and her drive to make a difference was ingrained in her from a young age by her parents, who were public servants in their own right. Her mother, Mary Kay, served as the dedicated assistant to Sargent Shriver, the visionary leader of iconic initiatives like the Peace Corps, Job Corps, Head Start, and the Special Olympics, alongside his wife, Eunice Kennedy, sister to John F. Kennedy. Meanwhile, Davis's father, Lloyd, left an indelible mark on history as the widely credited architect of the Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday. Their commitment to service and social justice inspired Davis to follow in their footsteps, dedicating herself to improving the lives of others and building stronger, more inclusive communities.

"The Berkshires is more than a place to have a second home. We are a community deeply invested in living in a beautiful rural area. I want to help our community thrive. If elected, I want to support our small businesses, farmers, entrepreneurs, renters, landlords, and developers. I want to remove the barriers that make developing and sustaining a business and farm so onerous, and make it easier for them to do what they do best - sustain our communities, drive our economies, hire our workforce," Davis said.

Davis has a Bachelor of Science degree from Ithaca College and a Master of Arts from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

For information on Leigh Davis's campaign platform, go to LeighDavis.org.