

Fung highlights record, personal story in campaign

By Jennifer McDermott
The Associated Press

CRANSTON, R.I. — Allan Fung says he is running for governor because he is angry.

The state is stuck in the economic doldrums while other states are rebounding from the recession. He is tired of the state's high taxes, high unemployment, and low marks on surveys that measure "business friendliness," he said.

Fung, 44, first got involved in local politics in Cranston in 2002 because he was angry then, too, he said. Cranston had the nation's lowest bond rating because of poor financial decisions. Fung, who was elected to the City Council and is now serving his third term as mayor of the state's third-largest city, said he fostered a business friendly environment that has helped create jobs.

"This should be happening in cities and towns across the state," he said. "I want that responsibility and the challenges that go along with changing our state's economy."

The Republican mayor often talks on the campaign trail about his accomplishments in Cranston. But Fung wants voters to know his personal story, too, since his upbringing influences his policy decisions, he said.

Fung's parents immigrated to Rhode Island from Hong Kong in 1969, and they opened a Chinese restaurant in Cranston. Fung bussed tables and washed dishes, and he and his two younger sisters saw his parents struggling to pay the restaurant's expenses.

"Those experiences I keep in the back of my mind because many small-business owners, many restaurant owners, are going through that same thing today," he said.



ANGER AS INSPIRATION. Cranston mayor Allan Fung speaks in Cranston, Rhode Island, where he announced he would run for Rhode Island governor as a Republican in the 2014 election, in this November 4, 2013 file photo. Fung said he wants to simplify the tax system, remove barriers to businesses looking to expand, improve education, and focus on jobs. (AP Photo/Michelle R. Smith)

Fung graduated from Providence's elite magnet school, Classical High School, where he became close friends with fellow gubernatorial hopeful Providence mayor Angel Taveras.

In high school, Fung said, he fell in love with law as a member of the mock trial team because he saw it as a way to help people. He went on to graduate from Rhode Island College and later earned his law degree from Suffolk University.

Fung was working as a lawyer at MetLife in 2001 when he said he realized he should take an active role in solving Cranston's issues instead of simply complaining about them. He was elected to the City Council in 2002.

Fung lost his bid for mayor in 2006, then won in 2008.

Fung touts two shopping centers where several new stores and restaurants have opened as symbols of change in Cranston. Joe Koechel, the general manager of one center, said Fung understands how to

work with the private sector on projects that have a long-term economic impact.

But Fung has faced criticism for how he has handled other aspects of the job. After police officers issued parking tickets in several areas of Cranston, Democratic members of the council alleged it was payback for their votes against a proposed police contract.

Cranston council president John E. Lanni Jr., a Democrat, said Fung should have reacted more quickly to the parking ticket scandal so the problems wouldn't have escalated. But he did credit Fung for freezing property taxes for three years and saving millions by reforming public pensions.

"He has done a good job overall," he said. "There are more pluses than minuses."

Fung, the state's first Asian-American mayor, now hopes to become its first Asian-American governor.

The Rhode Island Republican Party endorsed Fung over his opponent,

businessman and Moderate Party founder Ken Block. The two will face each other in the September 9 primary.

The party's executive director, Robert Paquin III, said Fung has the skills for the job because he knows how to cut spending, negotiate with unions, and promote business. Having him at the helm, showing that modern Republicans stand for transparent governance and fiscal conservatism, could help rebrand the party, Paquin said.

Early in the campaign, Fung disclosed he was responsible for a crash that killed a man in 1989. Then an 18-year-old college student, he said in January, he lost consciousness behind the wheel and hit a man changing a tire on Interstate 95. A grand jury declined to indict him.

His opponents haven't made it an issue. And Fung said voters haven't asked him about it.

But what they do ask about, Fung said, is his plan for turning the state around. Fung has proposed \$200 million in tax reductions. If elected, he said, he would give grants to startup companies, overhaul the governance of the state's education system, and streamline the regulatory process for business licenses and other applications.

"This state offered so much for my family, particularly my parents," he said. "I want to make sure the next generation still has that opportunity to stay here or to come here, and that Rhode Island can be that place of opportunity."

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The Asian Reporter is published on the first & third Monday each month.
News page advertising deadlines for our next issue are:
September 1 to 14 edition:
Space reservations due: Wednesday, August 27 at 1:00pm
Artwork due: Thursday, August 28 at 1:00pm

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		9	8	2	3			
8	3			6				
		6			9	5		
		3	6	4				
4	1						5	7
			5	2	9			
		1	4			2		
			7				4	9
			9	8	6	7		

Difficulty level: Easy #98238

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last week's puzzle
Puzzle #79291 (Hard)
All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

7	4	1	8	2	6	3	5	9
8	2	6	5	9	3	7	1	4
5	9	3	1	7	4	8	6	2
6	3	2	7	1	8	4	9	5
4	1	7	3	5	9	6	2	8
9	5	8	4	6	2	1	7	3
3	6	5	2	8	7	9	4	1
1	8	9	6	4	5	2	3	7
2	7	4	9	3	1	5	8	6

Giant panda Xiao Liwu celebrates second birthday
Continued from page one

different scents, especially his favorites — ginseng root, wintergreen, and cinnamon. He is very laid back, relaxed, and loves to eat bamboo, consuming 15 to 20 pounds of it a day.

Mr. Wu weighed about 88 pounds by his birthday. When he's fully grown, he could weigh as much as 250 pounds.

The San Diego Zoo is home to three giant pandas: Xiao Liwu, his mother Bai Yun, and his father Gao Gao. The giant pandas are on loan to the San Diego Zoo from the People's Republic of China for conservation studies of the endangered species.

To learn more about Mr. Wu or to watch the panda cam, visit <http://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/cams/panda-cam>.

TALKING STORY IN ASIAN AMERICA

■ Polo

Polo's "Talking Story" column will return soon.