



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2024 Governor's Council
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Stacey Borden

Office Sought: Governor's Council, District 4

Party: Democrat

Website: <https://www.stacey4governorscouncil.com/>

Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

Questions about Your Candidacy & Platform

1. Why are you running for Governor's Council? What has drawn you to this office in particular?

I'm drawn to the Governor's Council because I bring a unique perspective shaped by my lived experiences as a formerly incarcerated black woman. Having navigated courtroom climates, fought for clemency, and supported those affected by wrongful convictions and racial discrimination, I understand the urgent need for reform within our justice system. As someone who has opened a reentry residence to assist women reintegrating into society, I'm committed to advocating for policies that address systemic injustices and amplify the voices of marginalized communities.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

My firsthand experiences navigating the criminal justice system, advocacy work, and commitment to social justice prepare me to serve effectively on the Governor's Council.

3. What factors do/will you consider when determining whether an individual should be confirmed as a judge, a member of the Parole Board, or a member of any of the other boards and positions considered by the Council? How much weight/importance do you give to each of the factors you consider? Do you have any litmus tests?

I consider factors such as judicial temperament, commitment to fairness, diversity, legal expertise, and community engagement. Each factor holds significant importance. No litmus tests.

4. What issues do you intend to prioritize during questioning in confirmation hearings?

During confirmation hearings, I intend to prioritize questions regarding the candidate's commitment to impartiality, understanding of systemic biases, approach to addressing racial and socioeconomic disparities in the justice system, dedication to upholding constitutional rights, and willingness to engage with diverse perspectives and communities. Additionally, I will inquire about their plans for promoting transparency, accountability, and accessibility within their respective roles.

5. What role can the Governor's Council play in helping to end mass incarceration in Massachusetts?

The Governor's Council can advocate for judicial candidates committed to fair sentencing, alternatives to incarceration, and addressing root causes of mass incarceration.

- 6. Governor Maura Healey released a [new set of guidelines](#) for the use of the Governor’s clemency power late last year. What are your thoughts on the new guidelines, and how do you approach the work of pardons and commutations?**

I support Governor Healey's new clemency guidelines, emphasizing fairness and justice. I approach pardons and commutations with a focus on rehabilitation and equity.

- 7. As a (current or future) member of the Governor’s Council, what do you perceive your role to be in considering a judicial nominee’s potential to reduce or eliminate rights of civil litigants?**

My role is to thoroughly evaluate judicial nominees' records, temperament, and commitment to upholding civil rights and liberties for all litigants.

- 8. The Massachusetts constitution clearly establishes a “right to a clean environment.” What does that right mean to you?**

The right to a clean environment means ensuring equitable access to a healthy and sustainable environment for all Massachusetts residents.

- 9. To what extent do you intend to participate in the *recruitment of demographically and professionally diverse candidates to apply for positions on the various boards under the Governor’s Council’s purview?***

I am fully committed to actively engaging in the recruitment of diverse candidates, both demographically and professionally, for positions within the Governor's Council's purview.

- 10. Many people are unaware of the existence of the Governor’s Council. How will you seek to increase transparency and civic engagement if elected?**

If elected, I'll use various platforms to raise awareness about the Governor's Council's role, host community forums, engage with local media, and leverage social media to promote transparency and encourage civic engagement.

- 11. (If a challenger or a candidate for an open seat) How would you describe yourself as similar to or different from the current officeholder?**

As an African American formerly incarcerated woman, I bring unique lived experiences and perspectives to the role, prioritizing issues of racial justice and criminal justice reform.

B. Yes/No Questions

1. **Reproductive Justice - I.** Young people under sixteen seeking an abortion must obtain parental consent or judicial authorization. While most young people involve

their parents, many cannot, causing delays to timely medical care and counseling. Scared teens may also turn to dangerous measures: going out of state or risking their lives and health with illegal or self-induced abortion. Would you support repealing this restriction on young people's access to abortion? (Y/N) **YES.**

2. **Reproductive Justice -- II.** With the overturning of Roe v. Wade, states are more important than ever as bulwarks of reproductive rights. Would you commit to voting against any judicial nominees with anti-abortion records? (Y/N) **YES.**
3. **Police Accountability.** The 2020 police accountability legislation passed by the Massachusetts Legislature contained a number of steps forward, but important measures were left out. Would you support legislation to do the following?
 - a. Eliminating qualified immunity for state and local police and correctional officers so that individuals whose constitutional rights are violated can have their fair day in court? (Y/N) **YES.**
 - b. Enacting the recommendations from the special legislative commission on facial recognition, to implement privacy, civil rights, and due process protections to govern police use of the technology? (Y/N) **YES.**

Yes, I would support legislation to address any gaps in police accountability and strengthen measures to ensure transparency, accountability, and justice within law enforcement agencies.

4. **Sentencing Reform.** The 2018 criminal justice reform bill was an important first step in reducing mass incarceration. However, in our "liberal" state, incarceration rates remain much higher than they are in other countries, and sentencing laws can be even more punitive than those in states viewed as conservative. Do you support the following reforms?
 - a. Eliminating mandatory minimums for all drug offenses? (Y/N) **YES.**
 - b. Raising the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21, in line with research that shows that young offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to reoffend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood? (Y/N) **YES.**
 - c. Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth [close in age](#)? (Y/N) **YES.**
 - d. Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application? (Y/N) **YES.**
5. **Clean Slate.** The Massachusetts court system maintains a database of name-based court arraignment records, referred to as Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI). Many people are trapped in poverty and shut out of jobs and housing because of the difficult process to expunge their records, even for cases that did not end in a conviction or occurred when they were teenagers. Would you support...
 - a. Requiring the Commissioner of Probation to automatically seal criminal and juvenile records after the applicable waiting periods without requiring individuals to file a petition to do so? (Y/N) **YES.**

- b. Requiring the immediate sealing of a criminal offense if the charge did not end in a conviction? (Y/N) **YES.**

I wholeheartedly support initiatives like Clean Slate that aim to address the inequities and barriers faced by individuals with criminal records. The (CORI) system perpetuates systemic injustices by disproportionately affecting marginalized communities

6. **Solitary Confinement.** Although the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform Act contained provisions to reduce the excessive and harmful use of solitary confinement, the Department of Corrections has established policies and practices to [evade implementation of the spirit of these reforms](#), by essentially turning Souza-Baranowski into de facto solitary confinement by limiting out of cell time to three hours per day, which exceeds the definition established in the 2018 Act by one hour. Would you support legislation to address this discrepancy by establishing universal conditions of confinement standards applicable to all people in Massachusetts state prisons, county jails and houses of correction, regardless of housing or security status? (Y/N) **YES.** *I support addressing this inhumane condition*
7. **Prison Moratorium.** Would you support a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails in the Commonwealth? (Y/N) **YES.** *Say no to new prisons!*
8. **Prison Accountability.** Governor's Councilors have the statutory right to make unannounced visits to correctional facilities run by the state. Would you commit to exercising this right in order to improve accountability for the Department of Corrections? (Y/N) **YES.**