



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2024 Governor's Council
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Tamisha L. Civil

Office Sought: Governor's Council District 2

Party: Democrat

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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 running to be an outspoken voice for everyone in this district, especially those who feel unheard by our criminal justice system. My career began as a response to my cousin's false imprisonment, which motivated me to fix the deep inequalities in our justice system.

2. **What prepares you to serve in this capacity?**

I graduated from Northeastern University with a master's degree in criminal justice and leadership, then got involved working in and around the court system. As an associate probation officer, I have gained valuable experience serving alongside judges, defense attorneys, clerks, assistant DA's, and police officers. I now work to reduce recidivism, help victims navigate our court system, and address the root causes of crime in her community.

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?**

The factor I would look at would be their experience and how long they've been practicing as an attorney. I consider various factors when determining whether an individual should be confirmed as a judge, such as their legal background, experience, temperament, ethics, judicial philosophy, past rulings, adherence to the law, impartiality, and respect for the rule of law.

For the parole board I would consider their expertise in criminal justice, knowledge of parole processes and laws, ability to make fair and impartial decisions, understanding of rehabilitation principles, commitment to public safety, ethical standards, communication skills, and ability to balance the interests of victims, offenders, and society.

I do not have any litmus test, however the factors that I consider are important to me because these positions hold a tremendous amount of power when it comes to people's lives in the legal system.

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

Restorative Justice, Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Pardons

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

The role that the Governor's Council can play is by prioritizing appointing judges and officials who support criminal justice reform, promote alternatives to incarceration, advocate for fair sentencing practices, and address systemic issues contributing to racial injustices.

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?

My thoughts on the guidelines are when approaching the work of pardons and commutations, it is important to consider factors such as rehabilitation for the individual and the potential for positive impact upon release. It's also important to ensure fairness, equity, and a commitment to justice while balancing the interests of the individual seeking clemency and the public. We need to be transparent all across the board to make sure that it is fair and just for everyone.

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?

As a future member of the Governor Council, I think the role involves carefully reviewing the nominee's judicial philosophy, past rulings, and legal background to assess their commitment to upholding civil rights and ensuring fair access to justice. It is essential to consider how the nominee's decisions affect the rights of civil litigants especially black, brown and hispanics people who are mostly impacted in the criminal justice system than their white counterparts. We need to make sure that judicial nominees demonstrate a strong dedication to protecting and preserving the rights of civil litigants within the judicial system.

8. The Massachusetts constitution clearly establishes a "right to a clean environment." What does that right mean to you?

As a board member for Canton Sustainable Equitable future and Stoughton Energy & Sustainable Committee it is important to me that I continue to advocate for a healthy and sustainable environment free from pollution for the District. Individuals have the right to protect and preserve the environment for current and future generations through policies, regulations and actions that promote safe environmental living.

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 intend to actively participate in the recruitment process of demographically and professionally diverse candidates for positions on various boards within the Council's purview. I intend to promote diversity and inclusivity in the candidate pool, I hope I can ensure that the boards represent the broad range of perspectives and experiences present in the community. As a woman of color, encouraging diverse candidates to apply can lead to more effective decision-making, increased public trust, and a stronger commitment to serving the needs of all constituents in the state.

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?

I will seek transparency by attending town meetings in each community to give them the latest updates from the governor's council and the amount of people that were appointed and their background. Social media is a great platform that I would use to share information with my constituents about the guidelines set by the Massachusetts Governor.

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 a candidate for this open seat and the only woman of color running in my district, there is no other candidate in the race for Governor's Council with my personal and professional experience with the justice system. I have spent over a decade directly working with victims impacted by crimes and formerly incarcerated people to make a successful return to the community and advocating within her own for restorative justice-oriented reforms. The only difference is that I am not an attorney, which you don't need to become a Governor Council member.

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? **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? **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? **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? **YES**

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? **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? **YES**

 - c. Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth [close in age](#)? **YES**

 - d. Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application? **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? **YES**
 - b. Requiring the immediate sealing of a criminal offense if the charge did not end in a conviction? **YES**
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? **YES**
7. **Prison Moratorium.** Would you support a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails in the Commonwealth? **YES**
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? **YES**