



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2024 Legislative
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Leigh Davis

Office Sought: State Representative, 3rd Berkshire

Party: Democratic

Website: <https://www.leighdavis.org/>

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Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

OVERVIEW

We view our questionnaire as an educational resource, for both candidates and voters, on progressive approaches to the issues. It provides candidates the opportunity to address a number of important issues beyond the surface talking points and provides progressive voters an extremely valuable resource when making a decision.

Our Questionnaire starts with an “About You” section and ends with an opportunity for you to include additional remarks beyond what we asked.

The bulk of our questionnaire is focused on the issues outlined in our [Progressive Platform](#), which also inform our [Legislative Agenda](#). We are interested in your overall philosophy as well as your views on specific policy and legislation.

Each section features charts or graphs (with links to sources) that illustrate one or more facets of the issue under discussion.

*Each section contains open-ended questions and YES/NO questions. **If the question is a YES/NO question, please answer either YES or NO.** If you leave a question blank, your answer will be recorded as a NO. Feel free to expand your answers, but **please keep answers < 150 words** and use your own words (we want human-generated answers, not AI-generated).*

Issue Subsections:

- A. Revenue and Taxation
- B. Jobs and the Economy
- C. Education
- D. Health Care
- E. Housing
- F. Police Accountability and Decarceration
- G. A Welcoming Society
- H. Good Government and Strong Democracy
- I. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

I. About You & Your Governing Approach

1. Why are you running for office? And what would be your top 3 priorities if elected?

I am an advocate for housing that is affordable and the protection of the environment. I am a fighter for working families, veterans, small businesses & farms, and historically vulnerable and underserved communities. A staunch supporter of unions and workers, I served as a proud member of the Motion Picture Editors Guild (MPEG), IATSE Local 700, and The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI). I'm running for State Representative to bring together our 18 unique communities and deliver real results for regular people.

My top three priorities include:

Housing: I am deeply passionate about expanding affordable housing options for my constituents in the Berkshires and for Massachusetts residents as a whole. I currently work for Construct, the largest affordable housing nonprofit in the Southern Berkshires, and as State Representative, I will work to create and preserve affordable and workforce housing, prioritize equitable and sustainable communities, and remove barriers to development.

Education: As a former teacher, I have an immense appreciation for the importance of building a quality public education system, and I have a strong understanding of the issues facing our education system and how we can overcome them. As State Representative, I will work to ensure that Massachusetts's public schools have resources and policies that meet the needs of our students and teachers.

Economic Development: As State Representative, I will work to expand opportunities and improve our economy by fighting to secure funding for west-east rail, rural broadband internet, and workforce development initiatives, among other projects and programs that will help us build a stronger, fairer economy.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

My career in local politics began on the Great Barrington Finance Committee in 2015, followed by election to the Great Barrington Select Board in 2019. I am currently serving my second term as vice chair of the Select Board. Additionally I am the chair of the housing subcommittee, I am on the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force and Community Preservation Committee, and I serve as the Select Board liaison to the W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee.

My 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, spearheading 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 entrance to the local high school.

3. What do you view as the biggest obstacles to passing progressive policy at the state level, and how do you plan to overcome these obstacles?

I would say that the single biggest obstacle to passing progressive policy at the state level is a shortage of genuinely progressive legislators. In order to pass progressive legislation, there needs to be a majority of legislators willing to support it. As state representative I will support and vote for progressive legislation.

4. What is one policy pioneered by another state (or at the municipal level) that you would like to see Massachusetts adopt?

Currently, 22 states and the District of Columbia allow for same-day voting registration. I strongly support same-day voting registration and will work to bring it to Massachusetts. This will make voting more accessible, especially for historically disenfranchised groups, and will ultimately enhance our democracy.

5. Provide an example of a time that you built a broad coalition to achieve a desired outcome.

I gathered together a coalition of Great Barrington residents to fight AirBnB, who mounted a targeted campaign against my short-term rental bylaw proposal. Despite the mega-corporation's marketing campaign targeted at me and the residents I fought for, my bylaw was overwhelmingly passed at town meeting.

More info:

https://www.wamc.org/news/2022-06-07/great-barrington-voters-back-selectboard-crafted-short-term-rental-bylaw-at-town-meeting?_amp=true

<https://www.chronogram.com/hv-towns/great-barrington-mind-ing-the-gap-17086738>

6. (For incumbents only) Each year, Progressive Massachusetts compiles a scorecard of key roll call votes, available at <https://scorecard.progressivemass.com>. Please use this space to explain any discrepancies between your votes and the progressive position.

7. (For challengers or candidates in open races only) How do you see yourself as similar to or different from the current holder of the office you are running for?

Rep. Pignatelli has been a role model to me, and I've learned a great deal from him. He takes a really hands-on approach to the issues facing our community, such as his efforts to hold GE accountable throughout the Housatonic River remediation project. As a legislator, I also strive to take an active, hands-on approach to addressing the issues facing my community.

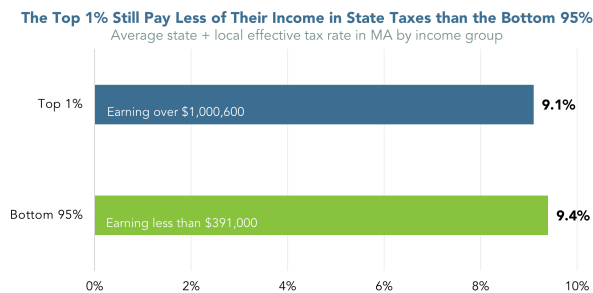
II. The Issues

A. Revenue and Taxation

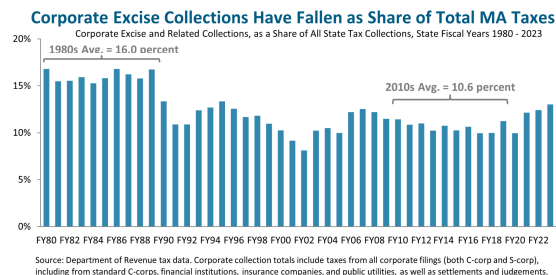
Although Massachusetts has developed the moniker of “Taxachusetts,” our history shows the opposite. Between 1977 and 2016, Massachusetts [reduced state taxes](#) by more than all but two other states. Because of income tax cuts enacted between 1998 and 2002, Massachusetts lost over \$4 billion in tax revenue *each year*—\$4 billion not invested in our roads, bridges, schools, parks, and services. Such cuts to the state income tax, combined with [low corporate income taxes compared to other states](#), have meant increasing reliance on regressive taxes and fees and curtailing our ability to invest in vital infrastructure. It also restricts legislators’ ability—and willingness—to pass new and visionary legislation, as there is a continual shortage of funds for existing priorities.

Although we saw a welcome shift when MA voters passed the Fair Share Amendment and added more progressivity to our tax code, the Legislature in 2023 voted to give tax cuts to multi-million-dollar estates, large corporations, and day traders, blunting the full impact of the win. We cannot tax-cut our way into competitiveness; MA strengthens our competitiveness when we invest in our people and infrastructure.

Even with the recently passed Fair Share Amendment, the top 1% still pay a lower effective tax rate than the bottom 95%.



Even as corporations are securing an increasing share of total income, their share of taxes has been falling.



1. What principles do you bring to considerations of state revenue and tax policy? How should we raise more revenue to adequately fund our communities for the future?

I support moving towards a more progressive, redistributive tax system that eases the burden on working families and ensures that the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on revenue and taxation (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

I am a member of the Local Option for Housing Affordability (LOHA) coalition, which is a group that organizes in support of real estate transfer fees. I have testified twice at the State House before the Joint Committee on Revenue and the Joint Committee on Housing to call for a real estate transfer fee on luxury home sales with a percentage going to fund town affordable housing trust funds to help working families and low income residents secure housing.

3. Corporate Tax Breaks. Corporate tax breaks cost Massachusetts [more than \\$1 billion in foregone revenue](#) each year. Companies can secure access to such tax breaks due to political connections whether or not the promised benefits ever materialize. Which of the following accountability steps would you support?

a. Repealing any tax break that does not provide the intended benefits in a cost-effective manner?

YES.

b. Establishing sunset dates for all tax breaks so that they must come up for periodic review?

YES.

c. Ending the current sales tax exemptions for aircraft and aircraft parts, which costs the Commonwealth approximately [\\$30 million](#) each year?

YES.

4. Corporate Disclosure. Would you support legislation to make publicly accessible the reports that are already filed annually by publicly traded corporations, detailing their sales, profits, taxable income, and taxes paid?

YES.

5. Progressive Revenue. In order to accomplish many of the items in a progressive agenda, we will need more revenue. Do you support the following measures to make a more progressive tax code?

a. Raising the corporate minimum tax for larger companies? (The corporate minimum tax is currently only \$456.)

YES.

- b. Increasing the tax on the portion of corporations' US profits that are shifted to offshore tax havens, in order to restore Massachusetts's conformity with federal tax-avoidance rules?**

YES.

- c. Raising the corporate tax rate from 8% to 9.5% (where it stood in 2009)?**

YES.

- d. Creating a graduated surtax on corporations who are paying their CEOs more than 50 times the amount of the median employee compensation?**

YES.

- e. Levying a modest tax on university endowments greater than \$1 billion?**

YES.

6. **PILOT Reform.** Massachusetts is home to some of the world's most prestigious cultural, educational, and medical institutions, but many of them are exempt from property taxes. Do you support enabling cities and towns to require large tax-exempt not-for-profit institutions (i.e., with property valued at or above \$15 million) to make payments in lieu of taxes to the municipality equal to 25 percent of the amount that would be paid if they were not exempt?

YES.

B. Jobs and the Economy

Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which strain wages. A strong economy depends on strong wages, as workers spend and help local economies thrive. Although Massachusetts now has a \$15 minimum wage, a living wage for a single adult without children is now [\\$27.89 per hour](#).

In recent decades, unions have been under attack nationally. However, unions played—and continue to play—a pivotal role in creating a strong middle class. With weaker unions (or no unions at all) come weaker social and economic rights and an imbalanced economy. Strengthening the rights and power of labor is essential to an economy that works for all.

Productivity has grown significantly since the 1970s, but it is not being reflected in higher wages.



<https://archive.massbudget.org/reports/swma/>

The minimum wage in Massachusetts is well below a living wage. ([Source](#))

	1 Adult			2 adults (both working)		
	0 children	1 child	2 children	0 children	1 child	2 children
Living Wage	\$27.89	\$52.46	\$67.41	\$18.33	\$28.38	\$36.20
Poverty Wage	\$7.24	\$9.83	\$12.41	\$4.91	\$6.21	\$7.50
Minimum Wage	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00

1. Share your principles and proposals regarding creating good-paying jobs for all and reducing inequality in the Commonwealth.

As a former member of the Motion Picture Editors Guild (MPEG), IATSE Local 700, and The Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI), I am a proud supporter of the labor movement and will work ensure that all workers have the right to form a union and collectively bargain for fair pay, benefits, and working conditions.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on creating good-paying jobs for all and reducing inequality (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

While I was a member of IATSE 700, I was involved in discussions when the motion picture editors guild was preparing to take action in response to studios shrinking, squeezing, and speeding up our on-screen credits. Workers that make films possible deserve to have our work properly credited, and I am proud to have played a role in ensuring that that is the case.

3. Livable Wages. Although Massachusetts now has a \$15 minimum wage, that is still not a living wage in much of Massachusetts, and \$15 has lost a lot of value due to high inflation. Do you support the following steps...?

a. Raising the minimum wage to \$20 per hour?

YES.

b. Eliminating subminimum wages?

YES.

c. Ensuring that the minimum wage law applies to municipal workers?

YES.

d. Indexing the minimum wage to inflation?

YES.

4. Wage Theft. Do you support holding businesses responsible for the wage violations of their subcontractors when the work they do is substantially connected to the company's operations?

YES.

5. Mandatory Arbitration. Would you support legislation to prohibit the use of mandatory arbitration provisions in employment contracts, i.e., requirements that an employee forfeit the right to sue the employer for discrimination, nonpayment of wages, or other illegal conduct?

YES.

6. **Paid Leave for Municipal Workers.** In 2018, MA passed the strongest paid family and medical leave law in the country. However, the law did not include municipal workers. Would you support extending the law to make sure that municipal workers have access to these vital benefits?

YES.

7. **Right to Strike.** Would you support legislation to legalize the right to strike for public employees (with the exception of public safety personnel) after six months of failed negotiations with their employer?

YES.

8. **Gig Economy.** More than 200,000 workers in Massachusetts now work in the “gig economy,” with the rise of app-based platforms. However, their employers often seek to evade labor law in order to avoid treating them as employees and provide decent pay and benefits.

- a. **Will you oppose all legislation that weakens MA labor law protecting employees from being misclassified as “independent contractors”?**

YES.

- b. **Would you support legislation to ensure drivers and delivery workers receive the same protections, wages, rights, and benefits that all Massachusetts workers are entitled to under law?**

YES.

9. **State House as a Workplace.** Although the Legislature voted in 2017 to increase legislators’ pay, the Legislature has not taken necessary steps to ensure staff are being properly compensated. Staff are often overworked and underpaid, leading to burnout and making it difficult for the State House to retain diverse talent.

- a. **Would you support legislation to extend collective bargaining rights to State House staff?**

YES.

- b. **Do you support the creation of an independent commission to investigate and report on complaints of workplace and sexual harassment in the Massachusetts Legislature?**

YES.

10. **Public Bank.** Would you support the creation of a Massachusetts public bank chartered to provide cost-effective financing for small businesses and municipalities, land trusts and cooperatives, and projects for climate change adaptation and remediation?

YES.

C. Education

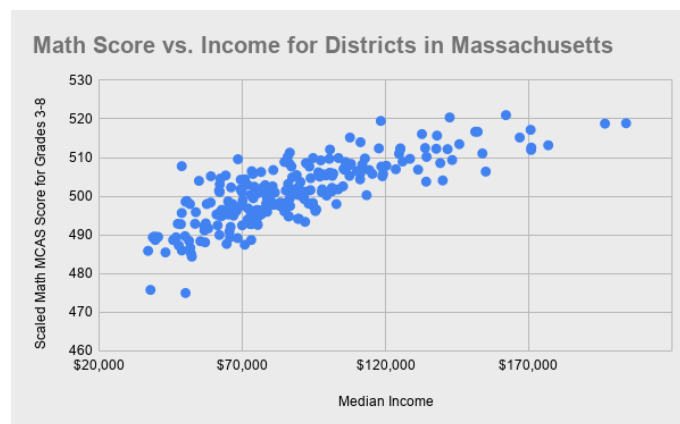
Massachusetts parents and caregivers face the [highest child care and early education costs of any state in the US](#). The average annual cost of infant care in Massachusetts is more than half of what a full-time minimum wage worker earns in a year. These costs are prohibitively expensive for low- and middle-income families, who are forced to choose between making ends meet and saving for the future on one hand, or affording child care on the other.

Public education plays a fundamental role in democracy, cultivating informed, well-rounded community members and providing the knowledge and skills needed for economic mobility and opportunity. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country, with significant opportunity and resource divides based on income and race. In 2019, Massachusetts passed the Student Opportunity Act to update the formula for state aid to public school districts and correct these inequities, but schools have faced added strains due to pandemic.

Public education has also been under attack by powerful corporate interests seeking to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups invest millions of dollars to promote the expansion of privately run charter schools, which siphon money from our public K-12 districts while largely excluding students with the greatest needs. Costly, mandated standardized test results are used to label schools as “failing” and justify these privatization schemes. State receiverships in struggling school districts take power away from communities and often facilitate privatization schemes that could never achieve democratic support.

At the same time, our understanding of education has also broadened. No longer do we only talk about K-12 education; rather, most of the [fastest-growing occupations](#) require education beyond a high school diploma. Massachusetts has been disinvesting from public higher education for the past two decades, leading to higher tuition costs and putting students at risk of long-term debt (if they are even still able to attend). Our public colleges and opportunities are an economic engine for local economies as well as a pathway to economic opportunity, and when that opportunity is cut off for students, we all lose out.

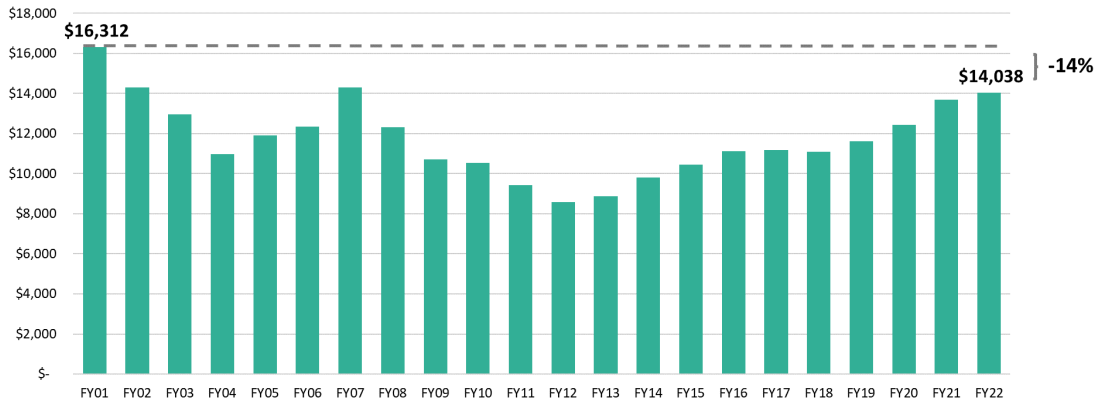
Standardized test scores have a very strong correlation with the income of the school district. ([Source](#))



Massachusetts has been disinvesting from higher education and shifting the cost burden onto students. (Source)

Higher Education Funding Per Student Cut by 14 Percent Since FY 2001

Massachusetts higher education spending, per resident student, FY 2001-FY2022 adjusted for inflation (2024\$)



1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding public education.

As a former teacher, I have an immense appreciation for the importance of building a quality public education system, and I have a strong understanding of the issues facing our education system and how we can overcome them. As state representative, I will support increasing investment in our public schools to ensure that our students and teachers have the resources they need to succeed. I will support reducing high-stakes standardized testing, so that more time in the classroom can be spent on learning rather than testing. And I will support teachers unions' rights to collectively bargain for fair pay, benefits, and working conditions.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on public education.

Twice, I have led efforts to fund the renovation of our local 56-year-old public high school, Monument Mountain Regional High School.

3. Affordable Child Care. Would you support legislation to make child care free for low-income families and ensure that no family has to pay more than 7% of their income on child care? (Y/N)

YES.

4. Universal Pre-K. Would you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system? (Y/N)

YES.

5. **High-Stakes Testing.** Massachusetts is now one of just 8 states for which an assessment like the MCAS is a condition for graduation. Would you support ending the MCAS graduation requirement and replacing it with one based on completion of coursework showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge required by the state standards? (Y/N)

YES.

6. **Charter Schools.** Charter schools siphon millions of dollars for public education away from public schools and create a two-track system of public schools described by the national NAACP as "separate and unequal." In 2016, MA voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public school districts. Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? (Y/N)

YES.

7. **Receivership.** The Lawrence Public Schools, Holyoke Public Schools, and Southbridge Public Schools are currently under state receivership, with a state-appointed receiver assuming the powers of a superintendent or democratically elected school committee. The state takeover has not produced sustainable gains and has at times been characterized by [chronic mismanagement](#). Would you support ending the practice of state receivership and returning power to democratically elected school committees? (Y/N)

YES.

8. **Comprehensive Sex Education.** Do you support requiring public schools to provide age-appropriate, medically accurate information that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities and includes topics such as consent and the effective use of contraception? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **Inclusive Curricula.** Our educational curricula must speak to students' lived experiences and recognize and celebrate the diversity of our Commonwealth.
- a. **Racially Inclusive Curricula.** Would you support legislation to ensure that instruction in K-12 education shall include the teaching of accurate histories, writings, and contributions of racial and ethnic groups that have been historically underrepresented or marginalized? (Y/N)

YES.

- b. **LGBTQ-Inclusive Curricula.** Would you support legislation to ensure that Massachusetts public schools include sufficient instruction on the histories, roles, and contributions of LGBTQ individuals in the history of this country and the Commonwealth? (Y/N)

YES.

10. **Debt-Free Higher Ed.** Would you support legislation to guarantee Massachusetts residents can graduate Massachusetts' public colleges and trade schools completely free of student loan debt? (Y/N)

YES.

11. **Public Higher Ed Funding.** Although per-student funding for public higher education has recovered from a nadir in FY 2012, it still remains below what it was at the turn of the century. Would you support legislation to establish a fair and adequate minimum funding level for public higher education at no less than the fiscal 2001 per-student funding level, adjusted for inflation? (Y/N)

YES.

12. **Supporting Public Higher Ed Faculty.** Would you support ensuring that adjunct faculty and part-time staff are eligible for state health care and retirement benefits? (Y/N)

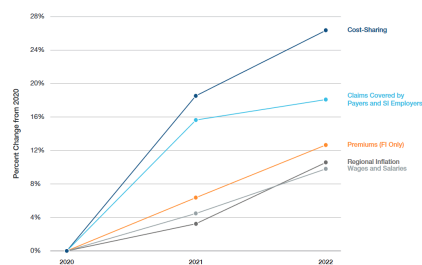
YES.

D. Health Care

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health insurance coverage, with [97% of the state](#) having health insurance. But until that is 100%, we haven't reached truly universal coverage or tackled critical barriers to accessing care. Disparities in insurance coverage and health care access continue to exist along income, racial, and education lines. Premiums continue to rise, and high deductibles mean that many do not get the health care they need—or suffer from long-lasting debt if they do. We still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, but without necessarily achieving better health outcomes.

Cost-sharing has risen faster than claims paid by employers, and premiums are rising faster than inflation.

Private Commercial Insurance Affordability in Context, 2020-2022

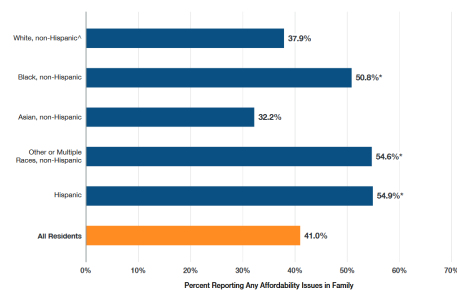


Member cost-sharing and premiums increased at a faster rate than regional inflation and wages and salaries from 2020 to 2022, driven in part by fluctuations in utilization during this time period.

Source: From reported data to CIVIL, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.
Notes: Based on Massachusetts contract membership, which may include non-Massachusetts residents. Claims amounts were adjusted for pharmacy-related reported by payers. Reported cost-sharing amounts, and claims amount to have not been adjusted for health care costs, which may vary by plan. Claims members in compliance from 2020 to 2022, and 2023, were also added as 2022 data in 2023 (due to 2022 data). Rates not below the benchmark threshold for reporting and did not submit data for 2022. Data for labor is included in C70000 and C70001. See website for more.

Almost half of Massachusetts residents are facing affordability issues with accessing health care.

Any Affordability Issues Among Residents and their Families, Overall and by Race/Ethnicity, 2021



Over half of Black and Hispanic residents reported experiencing health care affordability issues in the past 12 months.

Source: 2021 Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey.
Notes: "Any affordability issue" is defined as reporting any of the following issues: onetime paying family medical bills in past 12 months; family medical debt at the time of survey; spending a high amount of family income in past 12 months on out-of-pocket health care expenses; and/or other family health care needs due to the cost of care in past 12 months.
* Reference group.
* Difference from estimate for reference group is statistically significant at the 5% level.

1. Please share your values, principles, and proposals regarding health care access and equity.

I strongly believe that healthcare is a human right, and that our healthcare system should prioritize the public health of our community over the profits of health insurance corporations. As such, I am a strong supporter of single-payer healthcare.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on health care (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

3. **Single Payer.** Would you support legislation to enact a single payer health care system in Massachusetts, which would guarantee health insurance as a right? (Y/N)

YES.

4. **Medical Debt.** States like [Connecticut](#) and [Arizona](#) have taken action, in partnership with RIP Medical Debt, to eliminate medical debt for hundreds of thousands of working-class residents. Would you advocate for similar action in Massachusetts? (Y/N)

YES.

5. **Reproductive Justice—I.** Would you support requiring health insurance plans to cover all pregnancy care (including prenatal care, childbirth, and postpartum care), without any kind of cost-sharing, building on the recent mandate to require coverage for abortion and abortion-related care? (Y/N)

YES.

6. **Reproductive Justice—II.** 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.

7. **Anti-Abortion Centers.** In Massachusetts, anti-abortion centers (also known as crisis pregnancy centers), which have a politically-motivated agenda to dissuade and delay patients from accessing abortion care, outnumber abortion clinics by more than 2 to 1. These centers scare and shame pregnant people considering abortion care and often oppose birth control and emergency contraception. Would you commit to opposing any Massachusetts government support and funding for such centers? (Y/N)

YES.

8. **Overdose Prevention Centers.** An essential part of addressing the opioid crisis, overdose prevention centers allow medical professionals to respond to overdoses and engage participants in medical and behavioral health services. Would you support the

legalization of overdose prevention centers? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **Community Immunity Act.** Would you support strengthening the Commonwealth's immunization policies by standardizing the immunization requirements for all schools, daycare centers, and other covered programs and centralizing within the Department of Public Health (DPH) the processes for obtaining an exemption from those requirements? (Y/N)

YES.

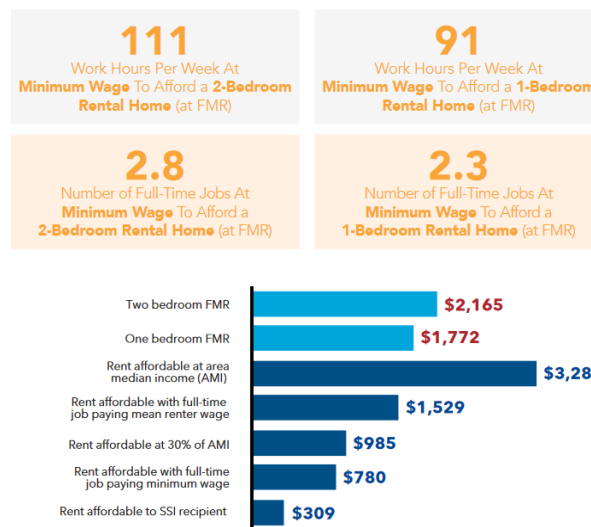
E. Housing

Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. The [US News & World Report's annual state rankings](#) put Massachusetts at #40 in housing affordability (and #47 in cost of living). To rent the average 2-bedroom apartment in Massachusetts requires an income equal to [\\$41.64 per hour](#), more than twice the minimum wage. A minimum-wage worker in Massachusetts would need to [work 91 hours each week](#) to afford a modest 1-bedroom rental home at fair market rent.

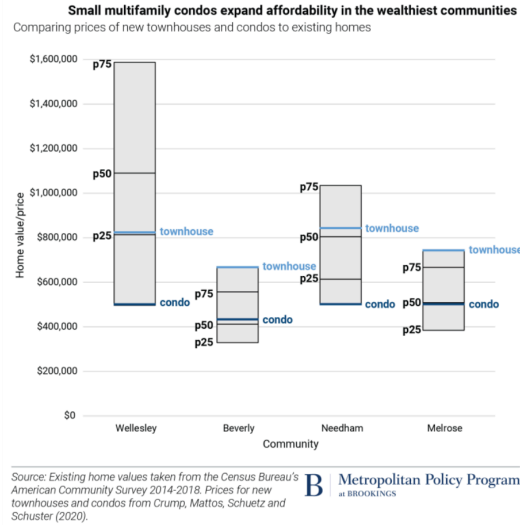
Home ownership has become increasingly out of reach, as the state's median home price is [approximately \\$600,000](#). In more than 20 communities, the median home price recently [passed \\$1 million](#). Meanwhile, we have some of the [most restrictive zoning laws](#) in the country, making it difficult to build more housing to meet the needs of a growing population.

The high cost of housing has led to displacement, and in a growing number of municipalities, the local workforce can no longer afford to live there.

With rental increases far outpacing wage increases, many are left with housing instability.



The overreliance of single-family housing in suburban development, as opposed to denser or multi-family housing, makes communities unaffordable.



1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding affordable housing and housing affordability in the Commonwealth.

I strongly believe that housing is a human right. As state representative, I will work to expand housing options and to ensure that every resident of Massachusetts has a safe place to live.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on housing (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

I currently work for Construct, the largest affordable housing non-profit in the Southern Berkshires. In 2022, I played an instrumental role in acquiring The Windflower Inn as a more flexible workforce housing option.

Additionally, as a member of the Great Barrington Select Board, I wrote a successful bylaw regulating short-term rentals to free up long-term housing and bring costs down for full-time residents.

"Davis, who also serves as vice chair of the town Selectboard, felt compelled to take a proactive stance on addressing the town's housing crisis. "By getting ahead of the short-term rental trend that has swept across other communities, I hoped to stem the tide of displacement of residents by STRs and help local businesses struggling to find staff," she says. As a means of keeping neighborhoods intact, a new bylaw, which went into effect on January 1, prevents the purchase of residential homes solely for short-term rentals—while still enabling residents to earn extra money from their properties."

3. Right to Shelter. Massachusetts is the only state with a right to shelter—that is, all families experiencing homelessness are guaranteed shelter. Would you oppose any effort to roll back the right to shelter? (Y/N)

YES.

4. **Welcoming New Neighbors.** Would you support efforts to locate both long-term housing and short-term shelter in your district? (Y/N)

YES.

5. **Affordable Housing Funding—I.** Would you support enabling all cities and towns the flexibility to design and pass real estate transfer fees that will be effective in their municipalities to raise money for affordable housing production? (Y/N)

YES.

6. **Affordable Housing Funding—II.** Would you support doubling the current Deeds Excise Tax (from \$4.56 per \$1,000 to \$9.12 per \$1,000), upon the sale of real property in Massachusetts, to create a new funding stream to be split evenly between affordable housing and climate resiliency? (Y/N)

YES.

7. **Rent Control.** Would you support lifting the statewide ban on rent control and enabling cities and towns to craft and pass laws to stabilize rents in ways best attuned to the local housing situation? (Y/N)

YES.

8. **Tenant Opportunity to Purchase.** Would you support providing tenants of small, medium, and large multifamily properties with right of first refusal when the owner plans to put a building on the market, provided that they can make a bona fide offer to match the asking price in a reasonable period of time? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **Eviction Sealing.** Every case in eviction court creates a record that stays with a renter forever, making it difficult to obtain future housing. Would you support legislation to automatically seal records for dismissals, cases in which tenants win, and no-fault evictions and to create a process for sealing all other records after a set amount of time with minimal administrative burden? (Y/N)

YES.

10. **Right to Counsel.** Would you support legislation to provide legal representation for low-income tenants in eviction proceedings? (Y/N)

YES.

11. **HDIP Reform.** The Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) is a multimillion-dollar annual state tax credit program subsidizing market-rate housing in Gateway Cities. The administration could award more than \$100 million in HDIP developer tax credits over the next two years. Would you support reforming this program to support both market-rate and affordable housing development? (Y/N)

YES.

12. Social Housing. Social housing is state financed, mixed-income housing, owned by a local or regional housing authority. Typical projects may set aside 1/3rd of the new units for low-income residents, 1/3rd for middle-income residents, and 1/3rd for higher-income residents. Would you support the establishment of a mixed-income social housing production program? (Y/N)

YES.

13. Zoning Reform. Would you support zoning reforms to increase housing production and create more affordable and environmentally sustainable communities such as...

a. Requiring multi-family zoning and removing costly parking mandates around public transportation and city/town centers statewide? (Y/N)

YES.

b. Legalizing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as of right statewide? (Y/N)

YES.

c. Creating a streamlined process for turning vacant land and commercial properties into multi-family housing? (Y/N)

YES.

d. Prioritizing the disposition of state-owned land for affordable housing? (Y/N)

YES.

e. Enabling communities to adopt inclusionary zoning ordinances (i.e., requirements that a certain percentage of new units in a development be affordable) by simple majority vote? (Y/N)

YES.

14. MBTA Communities Law Enforcement. Towns like Milton, Holden, and Wretham (and possibly others to come) have sought to maintain that compliance with the MBTA Communities Law is "optional." Would you support measures to strengthen the law with stricter consequences for municipalities that refuse to comply, including voiding non-compliant zoning? (Y/N)

YES.

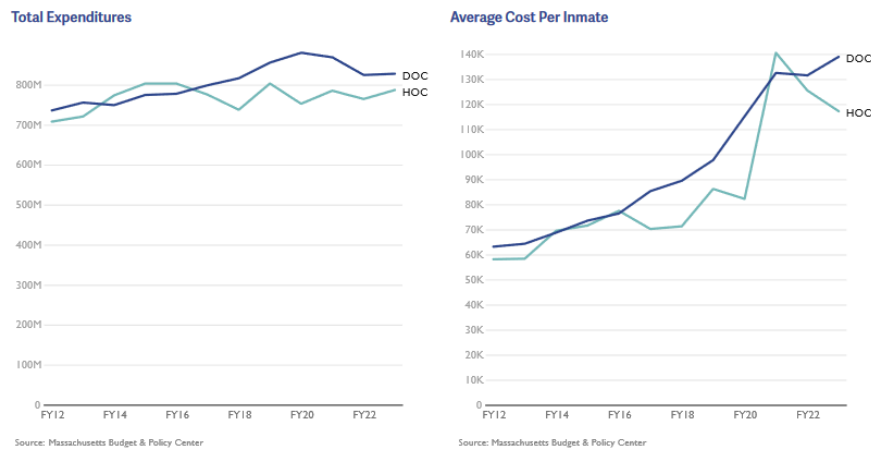
F. Police Accountability and Decarceration

Mass incarceration in Massachusetts has proven socially and economically destructive, breaking apart communities across the state. Even though Massachusetts has one of the lowest incarceration rates of the United States, we have some of the [starkest racial disparities in incarceration](#), a result of overpolicing and systemic biases.

Although incarceration rates in Massachusetts have gone down over the past few years as a result of policies from the 2018 criminal justice reform omnibus bills, spending on the Department of Correction has [risen](#). The average cost per year to house an individual in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections is [more than](#) \$100,000, money that could be better reinvested into the communities that have suffered from decades of misguided and racially discriminatory “tough on crime” policies. To achieve “justice for all,” we need a judicial system that does not disproportionately target communities of color and the poor and that does not criminalize public health issues such as addiction.

The correctional population in Massachusetts has declined, yet the state continues to increase the Department of Corrections budget.

Figure 14: Total expenditures for correctional institutions and average cost per inmate, inflation-adjusted to 2023 dollars



Although MA’s incarceration rate is lower than the national rate, racial disparities are even more stark. ([Source](#))

Statistics (2022)	MA	US Total
Imprisonment rate (per 100K residents)	94	355
Black : White Disparity	7 : 1	4.8 : 1
Latinx : White Disparity	4 : 1	1.3 : 1

1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding police accountability and decarceration.

As a biracial Black woman, I am acutely aware of the racial disparities in our criminal justice system. As State Representative, I will work to eliminate racial discrimination in our criminal justice system, improve police accountability, and to reduce mass incarceration.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on police accountability and criminal legal reform (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

In 2020, I gave a speech at a Black Lives Matter protest in Great Barrington:
[YouTube.com/watch?v=lKpsxyd4fT4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lKpsxyd4fT4)

3. Police Accountability. The 2020 police accountability law 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.

4. Alternative Crisis Response. Do you support creating a grant program through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to increase funding for non-law-enforcement, unarmed community-based response personnel to respond to emergency calls? (Y/N)

YES.

5. 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.

6. **Prison Accountability.** Massachusetts legislators 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.

7. **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.

8. **Prison Moratorium.** Would you support a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails in the Commonwealth? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **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.

10. **Protecting Our Immigrant Neighbors.** The entanglement of state and local law enforcement with ICE's federal immigration enforcement makes everyone less safe. To end such entanglement, would you support the following measures...?

a. **Preventing police and court officials from inquiring about immigration status? (Y/N)**

YES.

b. **Requiring written, informed consent before any ICE interrogation? (Y/N)**

YES.

c. **Prohibiting all Massachusetts entities from donating state employee time to ICE via 287(g) agreements, i.e., agreements in which state and local law enforcement are deputized to act as ICE agents? (Y/N)**

YES.

d. **Protecting access to justice by prohibiting police and court officials from initiating contact with ICE about a person's pending release from police or court custody, except at the end of a sentence of incarceration? (Y/N)**

YES.

G. A Welcoming Society

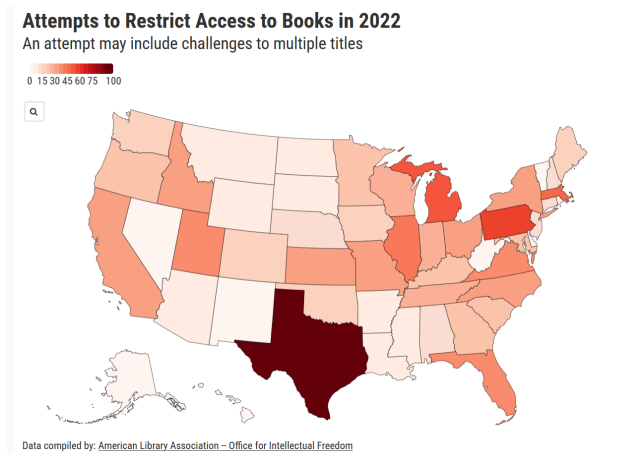
Our commonwealth is at its strongest when we recognize and celebrate the diversity of our population.

Massachusetts has often been a leader on LGBTQ rights, being the first state to legalize same-sex marriage and having passed a strong trans anti-discrimination law (with additional protections for health care passed more recently). However, archaic laws and regulations remain, and efforts to ban LGBTQ-friendly books are not just a "red state" problem but unfortunately far too common here at home.

Immigrants make up [18%](#) of Massachusetts's population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. We too often see both Democrats and Republicans fear-monger about immigration and the border, championing policies that criminalize rather than welcome.

Although Massachusetts likes to view itself as a leader in social progress, racial discrimination has been prevalent in our history and in our present, and a legacy of oppression and expropriation of indigenous communities remains unaddressed in policy and iconography.

In 2022, there were 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA, with 57 titles challenged. ([Source](#))



1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to building a welcoming society.

I am a strong supporter of the LGBT community; as State Representative, I will work to ensure that LGBT rights are protected and enhanced, and that all people in Massachusetts are free to live without facing discrimination or bigotry of any kind.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to make MA a more welcoming place for all.

3. **Right to Learn.** Right-wing efforts to ban books from school or public libraries disproportionately target books about LGBTQ people and communities of color. Would you support legislation to prevent book removal due to personal or political views in public and school libraries, require public libraries to adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, and protect librarians from retaliation?

YES.

4. **Location Shield Act.** Would you support legislation to ban the sale of cell phone location information, which can be used for surveillance and targeted harassment of any population, including abortion patients and providers, LGBTQIA+ individuals, religious faiths, and other marginalized groups? (Y/N)

YES.

5. **Gender X Bill.** Would you support codifying into law the RMV's recent regulatory decision to offer an "X" marker on licenses and expanding its scope to cover more documents, including birth certificates, other ID options, and state forms? (Y/N)

YES.

6. **Massachusetts Parentage Act.** Although marriage equality has been the law of the land in Massachusetts for more than two decades, we have outdated parentage laws that disadvantage same-sex couples. Would you support legislation to ensure that every child has the same rights and protections under law as any other child without regard to the marital status, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation of the parent or parents? (Y/N)

YES.

7. **Language Access.** Would you support legislation to build the capacity of key public-facing state agencies to meet the language access needs of an increasingly diverse population by standardizing and enforcing language access protocols and practices? (Y/N)

YES.

8. **Indigenous People's Day.** Would you support legislation to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples in state statute as the recognized holiday on the second Monday of October? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **School Mascots.** Would you support legislation to prohibit the use of Native American mascots in Massachusetts public schools? (Y/N)

YES.

H. Good Government and Strong Democracy

A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine the system. Despite recent reforms, a weak public records system stymies government accountability: MA is one of only two states where all three branches of state government claim to be exempt. A strong democracy requires an engaged electorate, but voter turnout in midterm elections, and especially local elections, remains low. Although election modernization legislation in 2014, 2018, and 2022 helped bring much-needed reforms, we still lag behind states in New England and around the country in making voting accessible (Maine, for instance, has allowed for Election Day Registration since the 1970s).

A centralized power system, a skewed campaign finance system, and restrictive voting laws together help create a situation in which our elections are the [least competitive in the country](#).

MA has the least competitive elections in the country. (Source)

State Legislative Competitiveness Index in Massachusetts, 2010-2022					
Year	Open seats	Incs. in contested primaries	Major party competition	Competitiveness Index	Rank
2010	17.0%	8.4%	48.0%	24.5	41 / 46
2012	5.0%	10.0%	33.0%	16.0	44 / 44
2014	11.0%	9.6%	38.5%	19.7	41 / 46
2016	6.5%	10.7%	23.0%	13.4	44 / 44
2018	12.0%	11.4%	30.0%	17.8	46 / 46
2020	7.5%	12.4%	21.0%	13.6	44 / 44
2022	12.0%	11.9%	30.0%	18.0	46 / 46

Lower-income, ethnically diverse municipalities have lower voter turnout than whiter, more affluent communities, leading to reduced voice in state politics.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Turnout (Nov 2022)</u>
Lawrence	22.8%
Springfield	24.9%
Lowell	29.7%
Chelsea	31.7%
New Bedford	33.0%
Fall River	33.0%
Brockton	33.1%
Southbridge	34.3%
Holyoke	34.4%
Lynn	35.0%

Source: [MassLive](#)

1. **Please explain your principles and proposals relative to good government and strong democracy.**

I am a strong proponent of government transparency and accountability. As State Representative, I will work to improve transparency within our state government. I am also a supporter of voting rights and election integrity, and I will work to improve voting accessibility by supporting policies such as same-day voter registration.

2. **Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform, legislative rules reform, and access to voting.**

3. **Legislative Transparency—Part I.** The Massachusetts Legislature lacks many basic transparency measures found in other state legislatures around the country. Would you vote in favor of making the following items available online...? (Y/N)

a. **All committee votes, whether taken by electronic poll or formal roll call?**

YES.

b. **All written testimony submitted for or against bills (with appropriate redactions)?**

YES.

4. **Legislative Transparency—Part II.** Legislators only vote to change the rules at the start of the legislative session, but all legislators can model transparency on their own throughout the session. Would you commit to making your committee votes available online on your website, with reader-friendly language about the bills voted on? (Y/N)

YES.

5. **Public Records Law.** Massachusetts is the only state where the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Judiciary claim full exemptions from the public records laws. Would you support eliminating these exemptions? (Y/N)

YES.

6. **Expanding Access to Public Meetings.** During the pandemic, the ability to attend and participate in public meetings virtually has expanded the number of people who are able to participate, removing barriers faced by people with disabilities, people with small children, people with mobility issues, or people with scheduling conflicts (among many others). Would you support updating Open Meeting Law so that people can choose to participate remotely in public meetings on a permanent basis, even after the pandemic emergency ends, and providing the necessary funds to municipalities to implement this? (Y/N)

YES.

7. **Removing Barriers to Running.** The cost of child care can prove prohibitive to parents seeking to run for office. Would you support legislation to explicitly allow parents running for office to use campaign funds to pay for child care? (Y/N)

YES.

8. **Same Day Registration.** Massachusetts lags behind other states in making voting accessible for all. Do you support eliminating Massachusetts's arbitrary and exclusionary 20-day voter registration cutoff and allowing voters to register or update their registration at the polls on Election Day and during the early voting period? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **Local Elections.** Municipalities across Massachusetts have sought to expand the franchise for local elections, but remain hamstrung by the home rule process.

- a. **Would you support legislation to enable municipalities to expand the franchise to 16- and 17-year-olds for local elections?** (Y/N)

YES.

- b. **Would you support legislation to enable municipalities to expand the franchise to legal non-citizens (e.g., Green Card holders) for local elections?** (Y/N)

YES.

10. **Voting Rights Restoration.** Would you support restoring the franchise to incarcerated individuals serving time for felony convictions (Their right to vote was taken away by ballot twenty years ago)? (Y/N)

YES.

11. **Campaign Public Financing.** Would you support the extension of the limited public financing system to include campaigns for state representative and state senate? (Y/N)

YES.

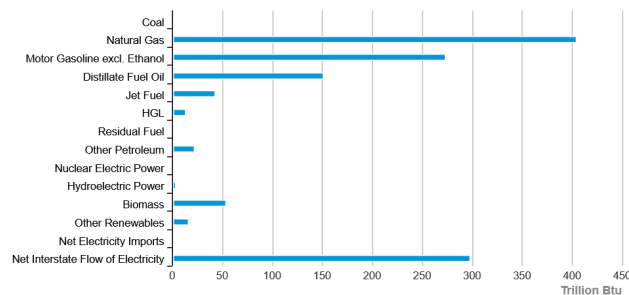
I. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

As a coastal state, Massachusetts will be hit particularly hard by climate change, but we are not responding with the necessary urgency. In order to avoid catastrophic climate change, global carbon emissions need to be [halved by 2030](#) and brought to net zero by 2050, and affluent countries and states must go further. In 2016, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the state has failed to meet its legal obligation to set and enforce annual limits on greenhouse gas emissions as outlined in the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act. Setting and reaching these goals, as well as the goals of the 2021 Next Generation Roadmap law, will require the decarbonization of our state economy and a transition away from fossil fuels toward clean, renewable sources of energy. In light of Congressional gridlock at the federal level, the state government must take a role in accelerating this transition and ensuring that equity is at the forefront.

Public transit must play a role in decarbonizing our transportation system, as well as advancing complementary goals of equity and inclusion. However, Massachusetts politicians have lost their understanding of public transit as a public good that benefits all residents and businesses in Massachusetts, not just those who use it in their daily lives. The greatest evidence of this is their neglect of the MBTA: its debt has grown to nearly [\\$5 billion](#), and it would need [more than \\$10 billion](#) to bring infrastructure and equipment up to a state of good repair. Regional Transit Authorities that serve communities, including Gateway Cities across the state, face enormous capital needs as well.

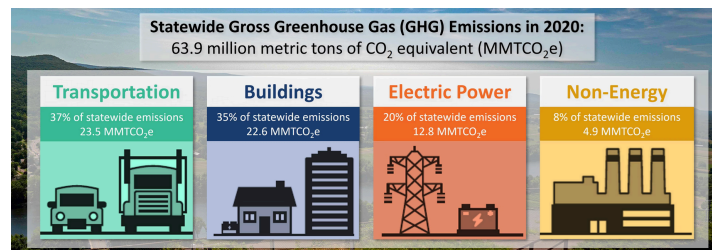
Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.

Massachusetts Energy Consumption Estimates, 2021



Source: Energy Information Administration, State Energy Data System

Transportation is currently the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in MA.



1. **Please explain your principles and proposals relative to sustainable infrastructure and environmental protection.**

I am an advocate for protecting the environment, combatting climate change, and promoting environmental sustainability. As State Representative, I will support policies to promote clean renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and public transportation.

2. **Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to protect the environment and expand access to public transportation.**

Throughout the 20th century, General Electric dumped PCBs into the Berkshires' major waterway, the Housatonic River. GE's cleanup plan has been totally inadequate and has created a landfill in Lee, where waste from the river is being dumped. As a Great Barrington Selectboard member, I have stood on the front lines with my community to fight for a fair solution to this situation, and as State Representative, I will continue to do so. Residents of the Berkshires should not have to bear the costs of GE's negligence.

3. **100% Renewable Energy.** Scientists have argued that, with existing technologies, the US could supply 100% of energy needs with renewable sources. Would you support requiring that Massachusetts adopt a target of sourcing electricity from 100% renewable energy sources by 2035? (Y/N)

YES.

4. **Expanding Solar Coverage.** Would you support legislation to create permanent incentives for siting solar projects where they have the least environmental impact, i.e., on buildings and disturbed land? (Y/N)

YES.

5. **Fossil Fuel Infrastructure.** Do you oppose the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure in the state? (Y/N)

YES.

6. **Make Polluters Pay.** Do you support holding the corporations who are most responsible for causing global climate change financially accountable to pay for damages caused by climate driven extreme weather and the infrastructure improvements needed for resilience? (Y/N)

YES.

7. **Zero-Carbon Renovation Fund.** Would you support creating a fund to jumpstart zero-carbon renovations in existing buildings like affordable housing and public schools, and in environmental justice communities? (Y/N)

YES.

8. **Environmental Justice.** Would you support requiring the Energy Facilities Siting Board to consider environmental justice, public health, and climate impacts in decision-making on siting projects? (Y/N)

YES.

9. **Plastic Bag Ban.** Would you support a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags? (Y/N)

YES.

10. **Electrifying Public Transit.** In Massachusetts, 43 percent of GHG emissions in 2016 came from transportation infrastructure and vehicles. Tackling this will require a shift away from cars and toward public transit, as well as electrification of both. Would you support requiring the electrification of the MBTA bus fleet by 2030, RTA fleets by 2035, and the MBTA rail system by 2035? (Y/N)

YES.

11. **Free Public Transit.** Do you support making public transit in the Commonwealth fare-free? (Y/N)

YES.

III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Limit answer to 150 words or fewer.

Use this space to add any other issues important to your vision for Massachusetts or any other matter you think progressive voters should know about your candidacy.