



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS**  
**2022 Legislative**  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Candidate:** Nika Elugardo

**Office Sought:** State Senator

**District:** Second Suffolk

**Party:** Democratic Party

**Website:** [www.electnika.com](http://www.electnika.com)

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## 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.** Feel free to expand your answers, but **please keep answers < 150 words.***

### **Issue Subsections:**

- A. Revenue and Taxation
- B. Jobs and the Economy
- C. Education
- D. Health Care
- E. Housing
- F. Racial and Social Justice
- G. Good Government and Strong Democracy
- H. 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'm running, because I deeply enjoy empowering communities to engage government from the inside to build justice movements and transform law and policy. As a servant leader and movement builder, public service is central to my theory of change for building community power and access. 2nd Suffolk is large and demographically diverse, relative to my current district. I'm excited to extend my learning and approach to more Boston communities.

Coming out of pandemic shutdown, it's critical to respond in tandem to the immediately pressing issues of 1. Ecological & Housing Justice (building generational wealth and the health of climate and community), 2. Economic & Entrepreneurial Opportunity & Development, and 3. Equitable Education for ALL (cradle to coffin and locally-controlled free public education and workforce training for young and older adults).

The demands of intersectional justice within these priorities and across all policy areas commits me to mindful bridge-building that reverses racism, xenophobia, ageism at both ends, genderphobia, criminalization of BIPOC culture, and ableism in all my policy work.

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

Over 25 years of experience in community and economic development with public, private, and nonprofit leaders and communities of color equipped me well for effective service on Beacon Hill. My professional career helping nonprofit and business leaders work together to break down injustice and open doors to opportunity began at the National Consumer Law Center in Boston. I later became founding Director of MassSaves, an economic justice collaborative jointly sponsored by community organizations, financial institutions, and then-Treasurer Steve Grossman. Most recently, I founded the research and consulting departments at the Emmanuel Gospel Center which is still developing breakthrough models and fostering collaboration in education, youth development and violence prevention, gender justice, and anti-trafficking in Boston and beyond.

I've also learned through formal education (B.S. from MIT in Urban Planning, MPP from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and J.D. from Boston University Law School with externships in tax law, human rights, and corporate social responsibility). On Beacon Hill, we need to change what we do, how we do it, and how we measure our results. We require comprehensive legislative solutions with ongoing monitoring and assessment. At BU Law I trained on this type of legislative development under renowned thinkers on evidenced-based legislative development. My work as a student and later as a faculty fellow brought me to work at the State House as Senior Policy Advisor to Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz, where I led on Housing and Healthcare Finance policy.

My skill set, progressive values, and passion for our District, combined with my experience and record in the House, position me to be an effective leader in the Senate.

**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'd say three major obstacles are 1) A prevailing mindset among leadership that their primary responsibility is to protect Democratic incumbents from the threat of a competitive election, 2) the top-down nature of decision making about what comes to the floor, and 3) the lack of representation across both legislators and staff, including Committee staff.

I can't do this topic justice in a few short paragraphs or even begin to describe the complex dysfunctionality of the mental models. In short, the first obstacle leads to aggressive shut down of minority voices. While Republicans may most imminently benefit from increased transparency, dismantling the black box in favor of open Committee and Floor data, not only on voting but also on a fair part of the deliberation and rationale, would head off some of the clever gymnastics and procedural trickery that can be used to shut down any policy, progressive or otherwise. I've worked on this through the Rules debates, but even more effectively I help colleagues develop depoliticized messaging for progressive policies, in Housing and Education funding for example, that can diffuse political time bombs in purple districts. I also offer electoral support (e.g., door-knocking) and encourage advocates to help colleagues who stand for progressive values in tough districts, even if those values seem remedial or basic from our perspective. That said, we need to elect more representative legislators (and leaders in the House and Senate) who experience a sense of urgency and commit to bring votes to the Floor on key issues of progressive justice that may not win in any given session. This will produce the data we really need to mobilize statewide.

**4. What is one policy pioneered by another state that you would like to see Massachusetts adopt?**

There are quite a few policies from other states I'd like to see Massachusetts exercise more leadership on (e.g., repro justice, progressive minimum corporate tax thresholds as high as \$200K for the wealthiest corporations, and TOPA), but I'll choose here the Public Bank of North Dakota. We need to tailor the concept of public banking to the Commonwealth's bigger and wealthier population and to account for the presence of quasi governmental agencies, especially in housing and development. Our unique economic profile notwithstanding, the banking industry is not structured to meet the needs of many demographics including women and BIPOC owned businesses and entrepreneurs, small farmers and even municipalities. I co-filed the public banking bill and want to continue working on it, both in terms of building support and tightening the language and outcomes.

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

**policy outcome.**

My style of leadership focuses on bridge-building and developing relationships between the most powerful and the most disenfranchised, bringing academic and evaluative excellence and skill to my partnerships and committees, training constituents and colleagues as I learn, and yet listening even more than I speak. As a result I have many examples of coalition building, from the Flag and Seal Commission to the DOC Structural Racism Commission, a bill co-drafted with incarcerated activists and initially flagged as DOA, to complex programmatic and agency culture shifting bills, especially in Housing, to the Family Mobility Act and SOA low-income student funding provisions.

These and other bills have moved through difficult committees with broad support or even passed thanks to broad coalitions across the State. However, my most exceptional and exciting moments of coalition building leadership have not always yielded the policy outcomes we ultimately are hoping for. Sometimes our ostensible coalition failures have done more to shift house culture and promote stronger democratic governance than all my successes combined. Examples of this include transparency votes, the CARE antiracism in education coalition, and the example I will share here, the Election Day Registration amendment debate on the Voting Rights Act.

EDR was a compromise response to Same Day Registration. This compromise language enabled advocates and me to secure support from key former opponents like the Municipal Town Clerks Association and influential House leaders. Members of the Speaker's leadership team were whipping votes for us against the Speaker. Ultimately over 60 people stood with me on the floor, but even more were standing with us and pushing behind the scenes for EDR. Even if we don't get EDR out of Conference, really listening and building bridges, but then standing boldly and leading from the floor as I did so people understand what's at stake, goes a long way to foster healthy soil for ongoing debate. That's a result that could yield benefits that far outlast this session.

**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.**

In two cases my votes departed from the PM position, because small business and nonprofit leaders and organizations in my district needed my help. One vote was about limiting a pandemic relief corporate tax break. I did not support this limitation, because the amendment to eliminate this break for big and exploitative corporations would also have eliminated it for small mom and pops. My small business constituents report bearing a crushing tax burden, while large multinational skirt taxes altogether. I would have supported a provision targeted at wealthier companies. My vote sought to protect those using entrepreneurial approaches to build community and generational wealth.

The second vote would delay the charitable tax deduction. While this benefit may primarily benefit wealthy earners, the result is thousands of dollars to local nonprofits that

are unable to replace that income. Contributions to the smaller local nonprofits make up a minority percentage of the dollars donated, but those dollars are essential to keeping their doors open. As a former nonprofit leader and executive consultant, and as a Rep in a district that has literally 99.5% more (i.e., double) non-profit workers than the typical district, I want to find ways to tax wealth that do not also harm, even a relatively small number of, institutions serving youth, elders, our public health and wellness, the arts, and so much more.

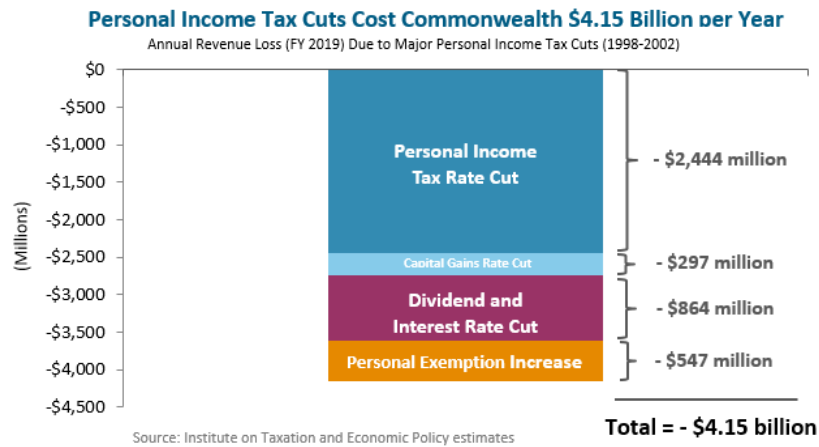
The Scorecard reflects that I did not cosponsor the VOTES Act. I actually thought that I was a cosponsor and actively have behaved like a cosponsor all session. I did have a medical recovery that delayed my co-sponsorships. Either this one fell off our radar during my catch up phase in late 2021, or by the time we made the official request it was no longer possible to cosponsor. I've worked hard on the issue, leading the House debate on Election Day Registration and partnering with advocates and the Suffolk County Sheriff to launch a pilot that provided data for some of the Voting Act's tenants. We presented on the pilot at the hearing for a related bill I filed with jail-based voting advocates. I used the pilot to help advocate for incarcerated voter enfranchisement before and during the Voting Act debate.

## II. The Issues

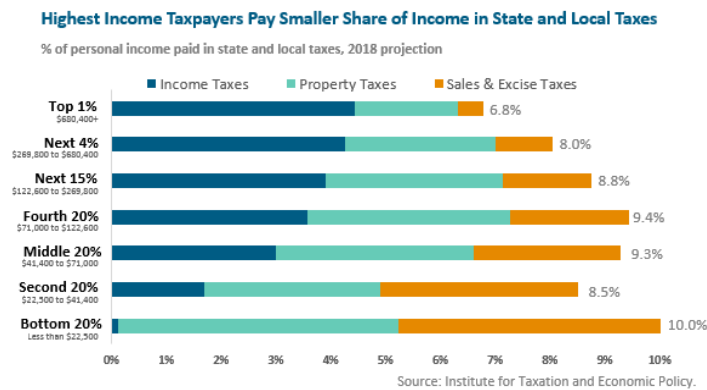
### A. Revenue and Taxation

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 loses over \$4 billion in tax revenue *each year*—\$4 billion that is not invested in our roads, bridges, schools, parks, and services, all of which have historically been part of why MA is a great place to live. Such cuts to the state income tax, combined with [low corporate income taxes compared to other states](#), have meant increasing reliance on fees, as well as sales, gas, and property taxes, exacerbating the overall regressivity of the system. Regressive taxation strains low- and middle-income families, and reduced revenue collection curtails 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.

**Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.**



**Massachusetts state and local taxes are regressive.**



**1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

I was first drawn to the State House as a law student in my studies of the legislative and constitutional limits and opportunities for bolstering justice and equity through progressive tax reform. Since then, I have consistently supported and advocated for revenue reform that supports the needs of low- and moderate-income individuals, families, and communities. I've been a strong advocate for increasing corporate taxes and closing corporate tax loopholes, while providing relief for low and moderate income individuals and small struggling community-oriented businesses. I work closely with Mass Budget & Policy to understand our options, their cost and viability.

I enthusiastically support the Fair Share Amendment and have voted to advance it to the ballot. Currently, I am lead House filer on the Hero bill and support creative revenue generation across multiple policy areas. Whether or not Fair Share passes, I'll support alternative progressive sources of new revenue, especially in my campaign policy priority areas of public education, affordable housing, climate justice, criminal justice reform and quality (single-payer) healthcare.

I've been reviewing tax breaks we give wealthy corporations. The GE tax-breaks should be a line we never cross as a Commonwealth. The state keeps small- and medium-sized businesses that create local and living wage jobs in the blind spot of economic development, and this trend must be reversed.

I advocate to eliminate automatic reductions in state income tax. I support reformulating the voluntary PILOT program in Boston and enabling legislation to create similar statewide PILOT programming for DOR to capture PILOT income.

**2. 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. Collecting and publicly disclosing information about the benefits to the state from any tax break?**

YES.

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

YES.

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

YES.

**3. Fair Share.** Do you support the proposed constitutional amendment to increase the



tax on annual income over \$1 million by 4%, with the resulting revenue devoted to public education and transportation needs (Fair Share Amendment)?

YES.

4. **Progressive Revenue.** The Fair Share Amendment ballot initiative will raise much-needed revenue for our commonwealth, but we will require more resources to meet current needs. 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. **Imposing a tax on the portion of corporations' US profits that are shifted to offshore tax havens?**

YES.

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

YES.

- d. **Raising the tax on long-term capital gains from 5% to 8.95%, in line with states like New York and Vermont?**

YES.

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

YES.

5. **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.

- a. **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. **Would you support requiring the Department of Revenue to regularly collect the data on the financial impact of lost tax revenue from tax-exempt institutions?**

YES.

6. **Public Bank.** Do you support the creation of a Massachusetts [public bank](#) that would

make loans to small businesses, local farmers, cooperatives, community development financial institutions, community development corporations, and municipalities?

YES. I am a cofiler on this bill in the House.

7. **Divestment.** Do you support divesting public investments from private prisons, fossil fuel companies, and weapons manufacturers?

YES. I have filed weapons divestment bills and advocated with and on behalf of student and alumni groups for university fossil fuel divestment.

## 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 the recently passed minimum wage increase will eventually lift the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, this is [still not a living wage](#) for many.

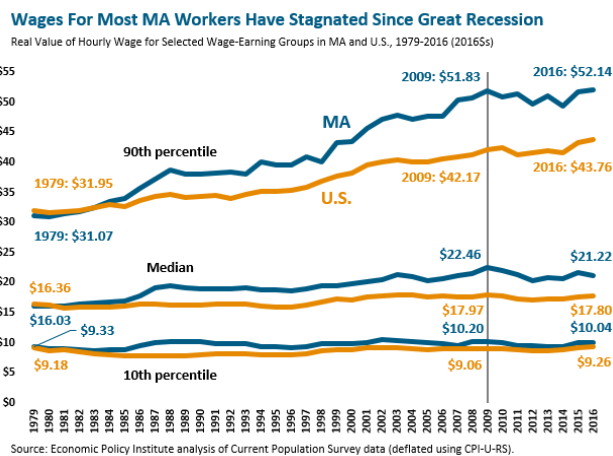
In recent decades, unions have been under attack. However, unions played—and continue to play—a pivotal role in creating a strong middle class. With weaker unions (or no unions at all) come weaker social and economic rights and an imbalanced economy.

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



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

### Wages for most MA workers have remained stagnant since the Great Recession.



<https://archive.massbudget.org/reports/swma/wages-income.php>

**1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.)**

Much of my 30 years of career and organizing experience has centered around building individual, family, and community wealth, both income and assets. As far back as my undergraduate time at MIT I was fiercely advocating for more visibility and accuracy for the living wage calculators (which weren't as good in the early 90's). I pushed the President to incorporate ending MIT's exacerbating socio-economic disparity into his mission. Since then I've continued to fight for both culture shift and pragmatic economic justice programming in every job and institution I've worked. I was a partner to leaders in the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and running a related statewide program when they were doing the research and reporting that became The Color of Wealth, now being updated by FRB Boston.

At the State House I've partnered with unions as an out front and behind the scenes leader on Gig Economy, public defender unionizing, PFML expansion, and more. I coordinated two briefings on BIPOC community access to advanced manufacturing resources. I've also led on benefits issues from EBT card parity in pandemic shopping to ensuring meaningful access to both pre-pandemic and COVID era benefits. I've partnered with other legislative leaders on eliminating asset limits and cliff effects and on promoting financial literacy, LITC and child tax credit expansion, and matched savings programming. In the district I have centered earmarks on closing the wealth gap and closing the resources gap for BIPOC and small mom and pops. I also work actively with incarcerated activists on their WFD agenda. This session I've intentionally pursued mentoring on labor and employment law and have been working on several related bills to close the wage, jobs or assets gap for women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ workers, including one on decriminalizing debt and another securing requirements for employer accommodation of employees experiencing domestic violence or bullying. I helped our team secure endorsements from AIM and MA Restaurateurs for the latter bill which actually increased their obligations by arguing that, especially in our pandemic era, it is both an ethical imperative and a win-win economically and PR-wise for business leaders to demonstrate culture shift that respects and honors women and BIPOC essential workers. In the State House, I've been an active supporter to staff of Beacon BLOC, an organized group of BIPOC State House staff demanding that legislative leadership address longstanding inequities impacting BIPOC staff.

I've done significant additional work on jobs and the economy in the community, both locally and globally. Whether workforce development in trades and advanced manufacturing, bolstering Main Streets and entrepreneurial support, or advocating for strengthening the Boston Resident Jobs Policy implementation, issues of economic opportunity and justice are central to my campaign, governance and advocacy.

Asset Development & Consumer Protection Publications:

• Dave Floreen, George "Scott" Guild, and Nika Elugardo, Working Collaboratively to Teach Financial Capability: The Massachusetts Example, BUSINESS EDUCATION

FORUM 68(4) (2014)

· Researcher: GARY KLEIN ET AL., SURVIVING DEBT (National Consumer Law Center 1999) (I was listed in the “et al”)

2. **One Fair Wage**. Do you support eliminating the subminimum wage for tipped workers?

YES.

3. **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.

4. **Wage Transparency**. Would you support requiring the submission of wage data to a public database maintained by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and broken down by gender and race?

YES.

5. **Fair Scheduling**. Many workers in the service sector face irregular working hours, making it difficult to plan for other life events. Do you support providing workers the right to 14 days advance notice of hours and the right to request specific hours without retaliation from the employer?

YES.

6. **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.

7. **Paid Vacation Time**. The US is the only advanced industrial country to not guarantee workers paid vacation time to use as they wish. Would you support making Massachusetts the first state to require employers to provide paid vacation time to their workers?

YES.

8. **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.

9. **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. **Do you oppose the November 2022 ballot initiative backed by Uber and Lyft to rewrite current state labor law to exclude hundreds of thousands of workers from fundamental rights and protections?**

YES.

- b. **Will you oppose all legislation that weakens Massachusetts’s labor law protecting employees from being misclassified as “independent contractors”?**

YES.

10. **Worker Ownership**. Do you support allocating state funding (grants, loan guarantees, technical assistance funds) to support worker-owned and governed businesses and cooperatives in Massachusetts?

YES.

11. **Worker Governance**. Would you support incentives and/or requirements for large MA corporations to allow workers to elect at least some members of the board?

YES.

12. **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. **Do you support the unionization effort of the Massachusetts State House Employee Union?**

YES.

- b. **If elected, are you committed to creating a safe work environment for all of your employees in which harassment, especially sexual harassment, is not tolerated?**

YES.

- c. **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.

## C. Education

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.

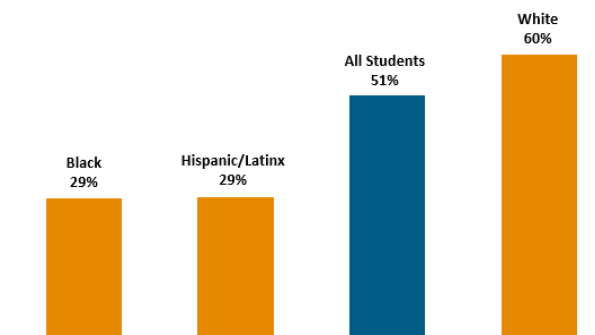
Public education has also been under attack by powerful corporate interests seeking to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups invest millions of dollars to promote the expansion of privately run charter schools, which siphon money from our public K-12 districts while largely excluding 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.

### Massachusetts has significant achievement gaps reflective of resource gaps.

#### Massachusetts Has Significant Achievement Gaps for Youth of Color in 4th Grade Reading

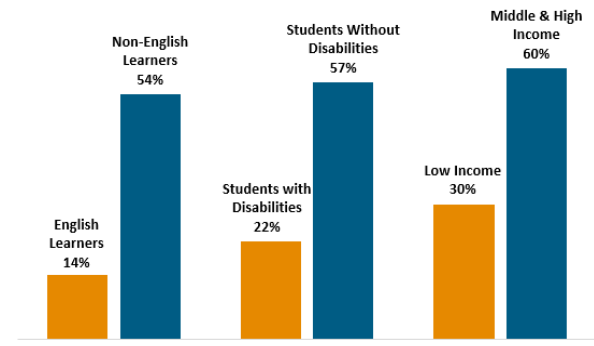
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### Massachusetts Has Significant Achievement Gaps for Disadvantaged Youth in 4th Grade Reading

Share of Mass. 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Category



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

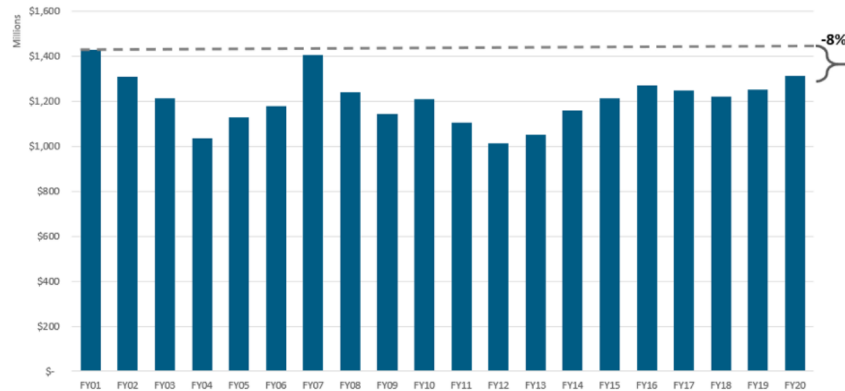
[https://archive.massbudget.org/report\\_window.php?loc=Towards-Equity-School-Funding-Reform-in-Massachusetts.html](https://archive.massbudget.org/report_window.php?loc=Towards-Equity-School-Funding-Reform-in-Massachusetts.html)

**Massachusetts has been disinvesting from higher education and shifting the cost burden onto students.**



## Massachusetts Has Cut Spending on Higher Ed. by 8 Percent Since FY 2001

State spending on higher education, FY 2001-2020 adjusted to inflation (2020 \$)



Note: FY 2007 total is adjusted downwards to account for the fact that significant funding during this year was for capital investments that supported activity during other fiscal years.

### 1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

My policy priorities in education include:

- Implementation of SOA
- Anti-racism & Equity Engagement
- Mental & Physical Health & Wellness Investments
- Investing in Place-based Education
- Collective Autonomy at the Local Level
- Cradle to Coffin Public (free, incl. debt forgiveness) Education
- Supporting Student Voices: Continuing to support the leadership of BSAC and to expand their voice and leadership on Beacon Hill.

I was an active coalition member and leader in the education justice movement that successfully passed the Student Opportunity Act. At the State House I've been a steadfast champion in its passage, and now crucially, its implementation with fidelity. Thinking more broadly than K-12 in this campaign, I am championing expanding education for all from pre-K (0-5) and to post-secondary training, including higher ed. With some battles behind us and many others yet ahead, I'll continue to use my platform, presence and vote whenever needed. I am an ally in the fight against state takeovers in Boston and statewide, as it is a strategy that continues to "fail up" despite no evidence of success. It's clear our district and city as a whole have spoken—we want more democracy and local control not less, we want more representation not patronizing mandates in a system with built-in systemic racism and inequality. I'll continue to drive state conversation and supportive legislation to support anti-racist pedagogy, curriculum and create the incentives and climate supportive for educators and students and families of color.

### 2. **Early Education and Child Care.** Do you support the Common Start Coalition's proposal to establish a robust system of high-quality, affordable early education and

care for children from birth through age 5, as well as after- and out-of-school time for children ages 5-12, and for children with special needs through age 15?

YES.

3. **Standardized Testing.** Massachusetts is now one of just 10 states for which an assessment like the MCAS is a condition for graduation. Would you support ending this requirement and allow students, especially students with disabilities, to have several pathways to demonstrate that they have met required competency standards?

YES.

4. **Charter Schools.** 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.

- a. **Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools?**

YES.

- b. **Would you support legislation to bring greater accountability to charter schools by requiring them to adhere to the same disclosure and disciplinary standards and offer the same support for English Language Learners and students with disabilities as public school districts?**

YES.

5. **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?

YES.

6. **Comprehensive Sex Education.** Do you support requiring public schools that teach sexual health education 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?

YES.

7. **Anti-Racist Education.** Curricula that reflects students' lived experiences and actively engages them in antiracism is crucial for students today. Would you support legislation that incentivizes districts to develop Ethnic Studies programs?

YES. I filed a coalition bill on anti-racist curricula and have actively advocated with the DESE Commissioner and both Chairs of Education for this and a package of equity bills, including indigenous education, religious intersectionalism in

education, LGBTQ+ curriculum and increased parity for disabled students. I've also advocated for local leadership and control in school resourcing and public health decisions.

8. **Higher Education Access.** Do you support granting in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students?

YES.

9. **Debt-Free College.** Do you support making tuition (and mandatory curriculum fees) free at public colleges and universities?

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. The pandemic has put a spotlight on these health care inequities and the need to invest in a stronger public health infrastructure and be more resilient for the pandemics and challenges of the future.

### Massachusetts health insurance premiums have skyrocketed over the past two decades.

#### Massachusetts health insurance premiums have tripled in 19 years and consume an ever-larger portion of earnings for middle class families.

Average total cost for Massachusetts family health insurance premiums and national cost of a new compact car



The share of middle-class commercially-insured Massachusetts families with more than ¼ of total earnings going to health care rose from 28% in 2013-2015 to 33% in 2016-2018.

Notes: Data are in normal dollars of the year shown.

Sources: Family Health Insurance premiums are for Massachusetts from the Agency for Health Care Quality – Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Insurance Component. Car cost information is based on car-specific inflation from the BLS and the compact car price index from Kelly Blue Book.

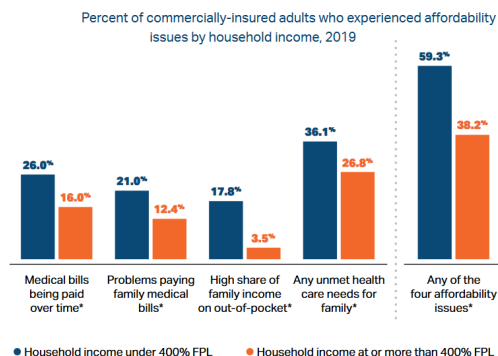
<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/average-new-car-prices-up-nearly-4-percent-year-over-year-for-may-2019-according-to-kelley-blue-book-300860710.html>

Earnings calculation includes employer premium contribution in both health care payments and in earnings total. See Massachusetts HPC 2019 Annual Cost Trends Report (p. 15)



Image411

## Many MA residents face difficulty paying health care bills.



### 1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

Perhaps more than any other policy area, health and wellness is entirely intersectional. Climate, housing, transit, education, immigration, economic development, stresses in each of these areas deteriorate health in disparate ways across race, gender identity, income and even zip code. A running thread throughout my lifelong leadership in and out of elected office has been eliminating race and gender gaps. In healthcare this includes working toward parity in social indicators of health and in behavioral healthcare for prisoners.

Like so many other issues, healthcare access and outcomes manifest glaring inequities across race and gender throughout the Commonwealth. This is why I am a champion for Medicare for All and endorsed by MassCare. This has been central to my campaigns since I first ran for State Rep and I will use the larger platform in the State Senate to continue to drive and support legislation that moves Medicare for All.

Concurrently, I support any measure that controls Massachusetts' record-breaking healthcare costs explosion. I have and will continue to fight to make sure we expand behavioral health and addiction services that respond to the substance use disorder epidemic as a healthcare and public health crisis. We have to get out ahead of the crisis too. That's why I've advocated successfully for more resources to schools and public housing developments for diverse and inclusive behavioral health and counseling resources. I will continue to advocate for more until the full demand for child behavioral healthcare is met with culturally competent and representative wrap around care. We will continue to negotiate for lower drug prices and increased regulation of insurers to guarantee coverage of essential healthcare services like cochlear implants. Currently insurance companies don't have to pay for medically necessary treatment in schools. I have a bill to study the cost of this abdication of payment responsibility onto our school districts.

The pre-existing need for LGBTQ-friendly housing has been exacerbated during the coronavirus pandemic, as LGBTQ+ seniors are less likely to have children or a

family network to care for them. If my new district is an indication of the magnitude of the problem, the isolation epidemic faced by aging LGBTQ+ residents could be our next public health emergency. I have also supported the MA Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth in policy advocacy, particularly for the Healthy Youth Act to ensure age-appropriate and medically accurate sex education in public schools and on issues of trans justice. As a State Senator I want to expand my work supporting Trans community activists, particularly in public safety, housing and jobs access and in protecting and honoring trans sex workers, who experience extreme levels of violence, discrimination and persecution as a result not only of societal views but also of systemically harmful policy. I'd also like to continue to advance support for closing the gap for immigrant residents in access to HIV diagnosis and care.

2. **Single Payer.** Would you support legislation to enact a single payer health care system in Massachusetts, which would guarantee health insurance as a right?

YES.

3. **Whole-Person Health.** Would you support legislation adding oral health and dental services as a requirement of state standards for MassHealth and commercial Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and other value-based care models?

YES.

4. **Reproductive Justice—I.** Do you support requiring health insurance plans to cover all pregnancy care, including abortion care, prenatal care, childbirth, and postpartum care, without any kind of cost-sharing?

YES.

5. **Reproductive Justice—II.** Would you support the creation of an uncompensated care program to reimburse abortion providers for services they provide to individuals without other means of paying for care, including those individuals traveling from out of state who would have qualified for MassHealth if they lived in the state?

YES.

6. **Reproductive Justice—III.** 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. I worked hard to persuade the former chair of judiciary and many other colleagues on the essential requirement of human rights and justice to extend all reproductive healthcare access to children, free from obstacles like courts and judges. In the end there was a compromise to allow for online judicial review. We need to do more work on this, because many sitting legislators don't seem to fully grasp the variety of threatening or even dangerous family or institutional dynamics that make it untenable and essentially prohibitive for some children to go through

family or courts to get healthcare. It's my understanding there's no other reproductive healthcare decision that requires them to.

7. **Menstrual Equity.** Would you support providing access to free menstrual products in schools, shelters, and prisons?

YES.

8. **Harm Reduction.** An essential part of addressing the opioid crisis, safe consumption sites allow medical professionals to respond to overdoses and engage participants in medical and behavioral health services. Would you support the legalization of SCSs?

YES.

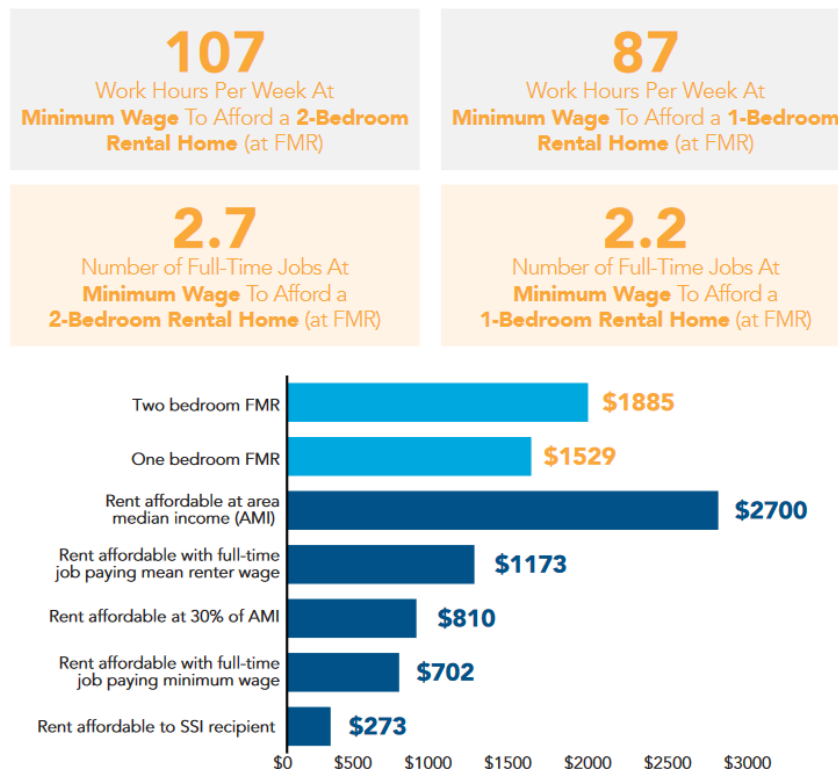
9. **Community Immunity Act.** Would you support strengthening the Commonwealth's immunization policies by standardizing the immunization requirements for all schools, daycare centers, and other covered programs and centralizing within the Department of Public Health (DPH) the processes for obtaining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

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). A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [87 hours a week](#) to afford a modest one-bedroom rental home at market rate (and 107 hours for a modest two-bedroom). Over the last ten years, the need for affordable housing has increased, while funds for affordable housing have decreased at both federal and state levels. This is unsustainable. It has led to expanding economic inequality, increased homelessness, and damage to our economy, as talented workers often leave the state for less expensive regions.

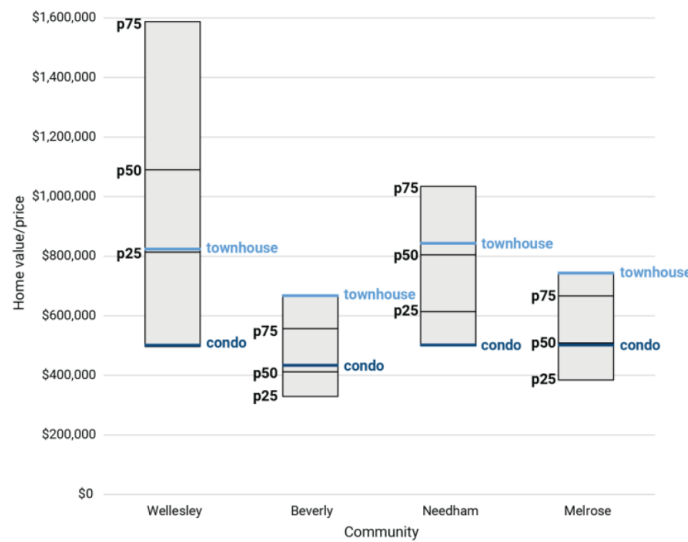
**With rental increases far outpacing wage increases, many are left with housing instability.**



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



**Small multifamily condos expand affordability in the wealthiest communities**  
 Comparing prices of new townhouses and condos to existing homes



Source: Existing home values taken from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey 2014-2018. Prices for new townhouses and condos from Crump, Mattos, Schuetz and Schuster (2020). **B** Metropolitan Policy Program at BROOKINGS

1. **Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

The mindset about affordable housing is cripplingly dysfunctional. It's an impoverished model that treats affordable rental as charity rather than investment and doesn't acknowledge homeownership subsidies and tax breaks within the public housing framework. This limits both how we conceive of publicly generated supply and how we levy (or fail to) state resources for affordable housing purposes. There is no comprehensive political or policy plan for sustainably housing all residents. We have lots of piecemeal policies but need a systemic approach within affordable housing development that also intersects thoughtfully with healthcare and transportation.

I've been crafting a framework for housing every resident. We have the resources to do it, and I've worked three years with a research team to demonstrate that to the Housing and Ways and Means Committees, on which I now sit. My framework is based on four cornerstones: 1. Sustainable Revenue; 2. Equitable and Accessible Supply (including transit equity and proximity to regions with concentrated severe housing burden); 3. Tenant Protections, and 4. Reenvisioning and Expanding the Public Housing Inventory. I have priority bills in all four areas and actively advocate for multiple bills in each category filed by colleagues at every level of government.

Housing Publications

- Nika Elugardo & Gary Klein, Sustaining Low-Income Homeownership: Advocates Needed, 32 CLEARINGHOUSE REV. J. POVERTY L. 129 (1998).
- Nika Elugardo, Guarding Against Servicer Abuses, 32 CLEARINGHOUSE REV. J.

POVERTY L. 139 (1998).

2. **Homeless Bill of Rights.** Would you support the creation of a Homeless Bill of Rights that extends anti-discrimination protections to persons experiencing homelessness, including protections when seeking employment, housing, voter registration, and access to public spaces and places of public accommodation; and secures the right of persons experiencing homelessness to rest, seek shelter from the elements, occupy a legally parked car, pray, eat, and avoid needless harassment in public spaces?

YES.

3. **Affordable Housing Funding—I.** Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a fee on real estate transfers to generate revenue for affordable housing, with the ability to create local exemptions as appropriate?

YES.

4. **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?

YES.

5. **Social Housing.** Would you support the creation of a state social housing authority to produce and preserve mixed-income homes that are union-built, sustainable, collectively owned, affordable for all income levels, and financially self-sustaining?

YES.

6. **Tenant Protections.** Would you support providing municipalities with the authority to implement rent control, just cause eviction protections, stronger condominium conversion and foreclosure protections, anti-displacement zones, and options to help tenants manage the upfront costs of leasing an apartment?

YES.

7. **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?

YES.

8. **Right to Counsel.** Would you support legislation to provide legal representation for low-income tenants in eviction proceedings?

YES.

9. **Eviction Sealing.** Eviction records create lasting stigma, are prone to error and impair access to stable housing. Would you support legislation to seal eviction records so that

both tenants and landlords can move on with their lives?

YES.

10. **Zoning Reform—Part I.** Throughout Massachusetts, restrictive and exclusionary zoning laws make communities unaffordable and exacerbate residential segregation. Would you support the following steps....?

**a. Prohibiting municipal and state zoning bylaws, ordinances, and land use decisions that discriminate based on race, socioeconomic status, or familial status?**

YES.

**b. Enabling municipalities to pass inclusionary zoning ordinances by a simple majority vote?**

YES.

**c. Enabling municipalities to pass zoning ordinances to eliminate parking requirements for multifamily residential development by a simple majority vote?**

YES.

11. **Zoning Reform—Part II.** The Department of Housing & Community Development recently released guidelines for the 175 MBTA communities to have a zoning ordinance or bylaw that provides for at least one district of reasonable size near public transit in which multifamily housing is permitted as of right. Would you support extending this requirement to include *all* municipalities that have public transit available, as opposed to only MBTA communities?

YES.

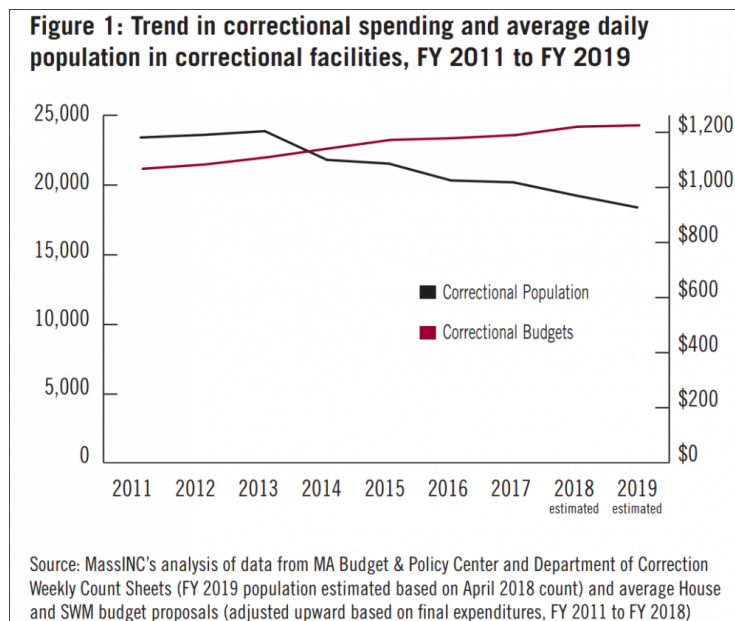
## F. Racial and Social Justice

Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds, especially on the systemic and institutional level.

Mass incarceration in Massachusetts has proven socially and economically destructive, breaking apart communities across the state. From 2011 to 2016, [spending on prisons](#) grew faster than any other part of the Massachusetts budget, while funding for necessary services languished. The average cost per year to house an individual in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections is [more than \\$60,000](#), 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.

Immigrants make up 16% of Massachusetts’s population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. Even though the administration in Washington has changed, we have seen a deportation agenda from both Democratic and Republican presidents, and it is important for states like Massachusetts to take leadership in protecting and advancing the rights of our immigrant communities and making clear that all are welcome.

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



**Significant racial disparities exist in incarceration in Massachusetts.**

Imprisonment by Race/Ethnicity (2019)	
White imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	63
Black imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	466
Hispanic imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	260
Racial/Ethnic Disparity in Imprisonment (2019)	
Black : white ratio	7.4
Hispanic : white ratio	4.1
Juveniles in Custody (2015)	
Total juveniles in custody	309
Committed	168
Detained	135
Diverted	0
Juvenile custody rate (per 100,000)	0
White custody rate (per 100,000)	18
Black custody rate (per 100,000)	166
Latino custody rate (per 100,000)	117
American Indian custody rate (per 100,000)	0
Asian custody rate	0

**1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

Structural racism can be reversed by law just as it is perpetuated by it. I use an anti-racist approach to elevating the concerns of disenfranchised populations, especially formerly incarcerated, elders, youth, LGBTQ+, and disability communities. My legislative initiatives bring their voices and an intersectional approach to both drafting and building partnerships. I've involved immigrants, street-involved youth, and currently and formerly incarcerated people in the drafting of legislation and in the evaluation of administration policy. I am the House Chair of the DOC Structural Racism Commission (I was lead advocate on passing the incarcerated activist-drafted bill forming the commission) and am working with an incarcerated subcommittee as well as Working Groups we established to ensure the report is robust and actionable. I've trained dozens of BIPOC youth in legislative advocacy and mobilization. It's also been important to me to spend significant time each month in listening sessions and fellowship with BIPOC elders, incarcerated activists and BIPOC youth and street workers and BIPOC and women business leaders. Great work has come out of these meetings, both in terms of budget/legislation and community initiatives.

I also lead on a number of research projects, including an ongoing inquiry of police

killings locally and nationally and the broken constitutional jurisprudence that continues at the root of injustices in police conduct in black and brown communities.

Legislatively I am active, behind the scenes and publicly, educating colleagues and House leadership as well as constituents on the intersectional impacts of our bills . The Chair of Ways and Means has been both solicitous of and responsive to my advocacy and leadership on antiracism and has added millions in funding to House Budget line items impacting BIPOC public housing residents and formerly incarcerated people. As a known outcomes-driven and skilled leader on dismantling structural racism in law and policy I've secured over \$1.25M in district earmarks targeted at anti-racist initiatives in criminal justice and housing (in addition to statewide budget increases). I want to develop an expertise in DOC funding transparency and outcomes accountability, particularly in the forthcoming implementation of the DOC Structural Racism Commission recommendations.

The list is long of initiatives I've started or actively supported to amplify BIPOC, incarcerated and immigrant communities in their leadership overturning systematic discrimination. Some of the work I put the most hours and energy into include the Safe Communities Act, funding the ELL and low-income school district provisions of SOA, The Family Mobility Act, TPS and DACA extensions, Black mother and infant mortality, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome awareness (understudied and vastly disproportionate impact on BIPOC women), the Indigenous Agenda, DOC BIPOC staff inequities, municipal voting for people without immigration status, decriminalizing debt, Election Day Registration, and extending public goods, programs and services (e.g., higher ed residency, entitlement benefits) equally to all residents regardless of documentation. I bring the voice of advocates and residents into rooms with administration and legislative leaders and spend significant time fostering connections and pushing government leaders on these issues.

As a State Representative, I have learned the critical importance of building bridges to resources and investment in all our communities, especially those that are underinvested. This includes, especially, women and queer, femme, and trans women and girls who deserve champions that fight for their right to fully live and express their identities, lead, and flourish in every community, school, and workplace. I want to help the legislature strengthen efforts to undergird Black Trans leadership that is ending and healing impacts of violence and discrimination against trans and other non-conforming gender identities (especially black trans women) with equitable legislative and policy infrastructure.

2. **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. **Supporting strict regulations on government use of face surveillance like those initially enacted by the House and Senate in 2020, before Governor Baker rejected them?**

YES.

- c. **Requiring a vote by a local legislative body (city council, town meeting) before a municipality can acquire military or surveillance equipment?**

YES.

- 3. **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?

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. I am a prison abolitionist and don't believe in mandatory minimums.

- 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. It should be 26, and some of the practices in juvenile should be extended systemwide, such as officer accountability and appeal practices.

- 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. **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?

YES. This right needs to be extended to some other classes as well.

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](#). Would you support legislation to address this discrepancy by taking [measures](#) such as (but not limited to) providing all incarcerated people with access to at least 1 hour of structured programming each day for 5 days a week, and offering a minimum of 50 minutes of therapy per week to everyone in segregated confinement by qualified clinical mental health providers; and requiring that all people held in solitary confinement be given a minimum of 4 hours out of cell time?

YES.

7. **Prison Visitation.** Maintaining connections with friends and family outside prisons is one of the most important factors in ensuring successful reentry. In March 2018, the DOC severely limited the ability of prisoners to receive visits and the rights of family and friends to visit their loved ones in prison. ([Read more on this here.](#)) Would you support legislation to end these restrictions?

YES.

8. **Prison Profiteering—Part I.** While Massachusetts does not have private prisons, the DOC invites private companies to profit off the families of incarcerated individuals by price gouging, as incarcerated individuals have no alternatives but to buy from the sole providers of goods in prisons. Would you support ending such price gouging by the DOC for necessary items and requiring DOC to adequately supply incarcerated individuals with the basic requirements necessary for life and maintain good health and hygiene?

YES.

9. **Prison Profiteering—Part II.** The cost of phone calls can be as high as \$4-\$5 (or more) for 15 minutes of phone time for incarcerated individuals in some parts of Massachusetts. Do you support making phone calls free for incarcerated individuals?

YES.

10. **Prison Moratorium.** Would you support a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails in the Commonwealth?

YES.

11. **Expungement.** Would you support legislation to automatically expunge marijuana offenses with state-level coordination, firm deadlines, and a study on the impact of the expungements?

YES.

12. **Safe Communities Act.** Do you support the Safe Communities Act, which limits local



and state police collaboration with federal immigration agents, bars law enforcement and court personnel from inquiring about immigration status, and ensures due process protections?

YES.

13. **Work and Family Mobility Act.** Do you support removing immigration status as a barrier to applying for a license or learner's permit?

YES.

14. **Data Equity.** Do you support allowing state agencies to collect, organize, and assemble public data on major ethnic subgroups for all racial groups to create more visibility for the diverse experiences within communities and enable policymakers and community organizations to be more responsive to community needs?

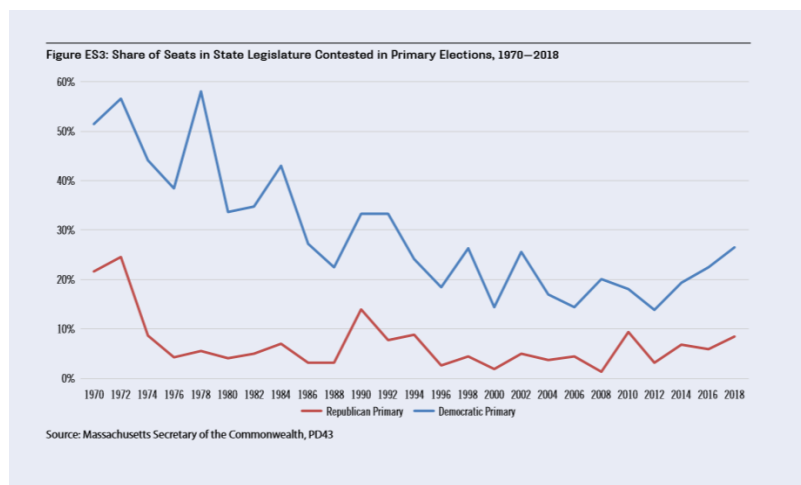
YES. And this data needs to be disaggregated by age, zip code, ability status, and gender identity.

## G. 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 and 2018 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](#).

**Our elections have grown less competitive over the past four decades.**



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

<b><u>Municipality</u></b>	<b><u>Turnout (Nov 2020)</u></b>
Springfield	52.67%
Lawrence	52.72%
New Bedford	55.27%
Chelsea	56.94%
Holyoke	58.89%
Lowell	59.71%
Fall River	60.04%
Southbridge	60.44%
Brockton	63.86%
Lynn	64.07%

**Bottom 10 municipalities in terms of 2020 voter turnout**

- 1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

In my intro question 5 on coalition building I described the EDR debate as one of the most exciting in my two session tenure. Nothing bolsters democratic governance like a fully engaged electorate, and that starts at the ballot box. However, this enfranchisement must continue throughout the legislative process. I love helping to decode the stages of bills to help constituents and sometimes even seasoned advocates be as strategic as possible in convincing legislators to move bills or exercise leadership from within. With modern technology it should be so easy for the public to track a bill, its movements, and the rationale and reasons for decisions made or not made about the bill. We need Senate and House leadership to get behind this, which I think means grooming progressive transparency advocates in the legislature who will stay long enough to BECOME those leaders or, alternatively, gain enough of a majority among democratic legislators that we will only vote in leaders with an open commitment to increasing transparency and information access and to staffing for it.

Another aspect of good governance is encouraging legislators to vote their passion, belief or conscience, not just their district voters' loudest voices. Leading in our districts on issues of equity and justice is a critical part of the job. There are barriers in how we make voting and messaging decisions at the State House that limit this type of leadership. I've been working on this, but need help! So many people think the way we currently do procedure is the best and most feasible approach to passing bills.

- 2. 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...?
  - 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.

- c. **Reader-friendly summaries of bills currently in or reported out of committee?**

YES.

3. **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 doing the following...?

- a. **Standing for a recorded vote when a colleague asks for one on any amendment which you have co-sponsored?**

YES.

- b. **Making your committee votes available online on your website?**

YES.

4. **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?

YES.

5. **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).

- a. **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?**

YES.

- b. **Would you advocate for continuing the practice of allowing people to testify virtually at legislative hearings?**

YES.

6. **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?

YES.

7. **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?

YES.

8. **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?**

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?**

YES.

9. **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)?

YES. I think it should be unconstitutional to take away a vote for any reason other than perhaps treason (presuming capital punishment is abolished so that this is a relevant).

10. **Redistricting.** Would you support legislation to codify the goal of creating [influence districts, crossover districts, and coalition districts](#) in order to expand opportunities for representation and voice for communities of color?

YES.

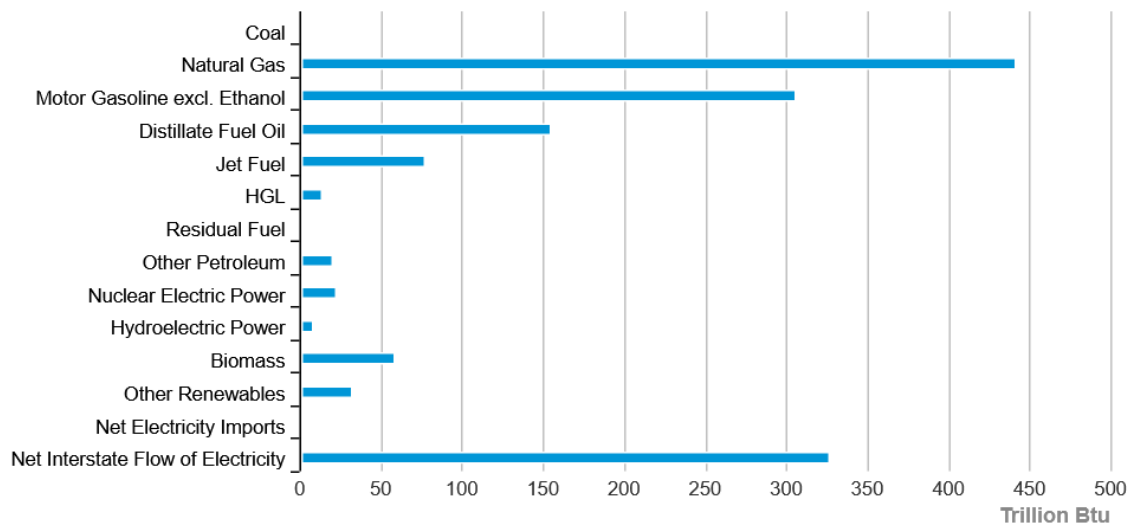
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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, 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.

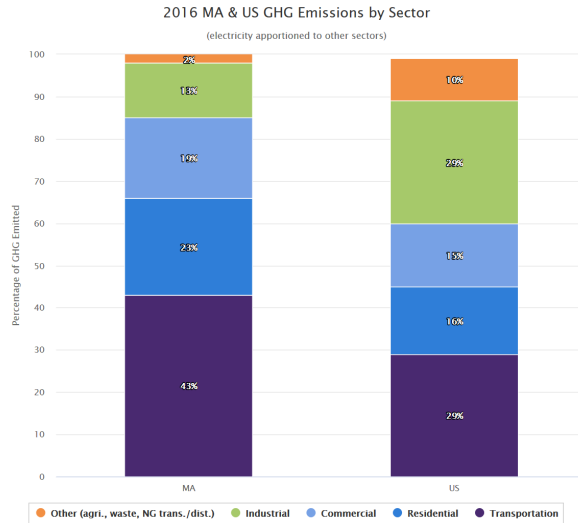
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

### Massachusetts Energy Consumption Estimates, 2019



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 this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

My Ecological Justice model includes policy platforms for 1)Climate Action, 2) Access to public space access to community fitness, nature, and arts as healing, 3) Green & Equitable Transit, 4) Green & Healthy Sustainable Housing.

A comprehensive approach to slowing then reversing climate change requires a holistic, community-led and engaged decision-making process that generated incentives and mandates to activate strategic choices in the interacting policy buckets below:

- ADAPTATION: Resilience to the present impacts of climate change, including changing our heating systems, greening municipal zoning codes, preparing social and physical infrastructure to withstand climate change impacts, and resourcing climate refugees and their receiving neighborhoods.
- CONSERVATION: Mitigation efforts to reduce emissions includes transitioning to fully renewable energy sources and using less energy, regardless of the source.
- RESTORATION: Initiatives that promote an understanding of our ecological commons and reverse impacts through technology and ecologically-based (nature-led) healing of the earth and the ozone hole.

This cannot be a legislative or even government strategy alone, but does require a legislative and administrative infrastructure to undergird, activate/incentivize, hold accountable, and amplify the impactful work of civic, nonprofit, and corporate sectors.

My work on Climate Action includes filed bills (e.g., RPS, the HERO coalition bill),

advocacy on colleague bills (e.g., see [350 Mass legislative agenda](#) for a partial list), and activism in the form of speaking, research and State House briefings to both legislative offices and advocates. Research topics as a legislator and prior include: Renewable Portfolio Standard impacts and shortfalls; Environmental Justice needs and impacts; and Impacts of climate on public housing residents, especially elders and youth (I engaged youth in performing and presenting this research). I've also supported university student research on the silent killers of particulate pollution and vehicle exhaust and their disparate impacts on the health of BIPOC urban residents of Massachusetts. I've worked with and supported student and alumni activism around university divestment from fossil fuels and have supported divestment bills. I provided mentoring and support to my district's youth leaders in the first Boston Climate Strike.

I am an avid supporter of a broad range of colleague leadership legislatively, from eliminating gas leaks to promoting pollination to geothermal heating in EJ neighborhoods. Right now I am actively supporting a loosely forming coalition around an omnibus climate bill by calling various chairs and filers and discussing the interconnectivity of HERO bill, smart green financing bills, and other bills that taken together can support the upcoming House climate bill to produce actionable and funded goals.

One of the most important aspects of my leadership is creating and bridging access for my constituents to high level officials responsible for change, like the Commissioner of DCR or the mayor or her Chiefs. One such example is small group meetings I coordinate between neighborhood leaders representing various modes of transit and DCR leadership. I also regularly create Walk n Rolls that encourage residents from different neighborhoods to walk, wheelchair, walker or cycle together, and discuss accessibility to public spaces and streets as we go. These important opportunities for voice, innovation, and accountability also provide content for my own sharing with groups like Emerald Necklace Conservancy or Boston Cyclist Union on issues of Ecological Justice.

2. **Next Generation Roadmap.** At the start of this legislative session, the Legislature passed a bill that requires emissions reductions of 50% from 1990 levels by 2030, 75% by 2040, and at least 85% by 2050. How can the Commonwealth exceed these targets, and what will your priorities be in advocating for that?

Even to meet the 2030 targets, we need more than a dozen bills to pass over the next 5 years, which is why I have been advocating for more legislative coalition building to get a couple of omnibus bills done each session. I track and support the 350 Mass Legislative Agenda bills in: Housing Energy & Efficiency, Reducing Vehicle Emissions, Food Justice, Justice-driven Green Labor Transitions, Solar Generation.

We have great EJ champions in the legislature, but we need more support from the Executive Branch. I try to support them all and to encourage working together, as do many others. We must elect executive branch visionary leaders and legislators who will support them with Green New Deal and Beyond. We also need strong partnership between levels of government. I reached out to then councilor Michelle Wu to collaborate on analysis and research on the costs and benefits of free buses statewide. Our work product was the formation of my advocacy during



the house debate on transportation revenue. I presented to leadership and colleagues in several settings. I've also supported the advocacy community through presence at rallies and actions across the state when I can.

I've learned from other states as well. I recently met State Senator Hickman, food justice champion and the first openly gay black state Senator in Maine, who led on a Constitutional amendment to create a right to food security. I am hoping we can do something similar. I've been a strong supporter and speaker on Water Justice, which is related. While clean water access is a global issue, the local responsibility is vast. Two thirds of water is used for agriculture (esp wheat and rice), and in the US 40% of food is waste. In the budget I support investment in urban farms and food forests. As a senator I look forward to resourcing and partnering with local neighborhood groups working on environmental and food justice. In my district, especially in Mattapan which has tree deserts, heat islands are a real problem. So basic actions like planting the right kinds of trees becomes very important.

Community level education is also essential, with a special focus on disproportionately impacted populations like communities of people living on the street, youth and elders, and mixed status families. Impacted populations need to be ready and also part of the leadership on solution making for mitigation/conservation, adaptation and restoration.

Finally, we cannot rely on fixed targets we set in early 2021 and were probably drafted even earlier. We have to remain flexible and course correct based on what's actually happening from year to year. IPCC reports out every 5 years, and warming is accelerating faster than the globally accepted predictions. To stay on top of this we need an executive office dedicated to Climate Change and Ecological Justice, as well as more permanent funding that doesn't swing based on earmarks and advocacy.

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 2030?

YES.

4. **Rooftop Solar.** Would you support requiring that all new construction be built to accommodate solar energy installations?

YES.

5. **Fossil-Fuel-Free Construction.** Would you support legislation to enable municipalities to ban oil and gas heating pipes in new construction?

YES.

6. **Fossil Fuel Infrastructure.** Do you oppose the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure in the state?

YES.

7. **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?

YES.

8. **Just Transition**. Do you support the creation of a Just Transition Office to assist workers that are displaced in the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy?

YES.

9. **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 the electrification of the MBTA bus fleet by 2030, RTA fleets by 2035, and the MBTA rail system by 2035?

YES.

10. **Free Public Transit**. Do you support making public transit in the Commonwealth fare-free?

YES.

11. **Regional Transportation Funding**. The unavailability of state funds for infrastructure spending has meant the deterioration of regional transportation systems. Do you support allowing municipalities to place a question on the ballot to raise revenue for local and regional transportation projects?

YES.

### **III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

***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.***

I run as I govern, following the lead of impacted communities, and working hard through presence, listening, strategy, and facilitating partnership across my district and beyond. I help constituents develop an intersectional understanding of policy issues, so we're not legislating and budgeting in silos, but rather in ways that address challenges systematically and sustainably. My distinctive practice is boldly pressing on all fronts to move culture, to make movements, to empower others. I have learned this style of leadership from many incredible mentors and while it doesn't always yield a lot of publicity for me, it does yield real change, both in the culture of those working with me and in policy.

I undergird my signature legislation, whether in housing, equity in education, climate justice, creative finance and revenue, voter access, criminal justice reform, or decriminalizing debt, with sound research and assessment from academia and advocates. I share openly with colleagues and learn from them and their staff as well. I will continue this thoughtful learning team-based approach while working hard to support my colleague's work on key issues where I rely heavily on their expertise, such as public health.

I bring unique life experiences and extraordinary training and skill to the work of bringing out the extraordinary leadership in others, especially women, youth, elders and people who have been overlooked or relegated to back rooms, prisons, or other margins of society. While amplifying the leadership and power and voice of disenfranchised people has been my life's work, here in the legislature I have found more untapped opportunity to do so in three years than in my 25 combined years of prior service elsewhere. This newly drawn Senate district is special—truly extraordinary. The strength of my leadership and message is contagious and inspiring, and I cannot wait to partner with all 7 neighborhoods to take Boston's leadership on equity and justice to a new level. I hope to have your partnership in doing so. Thank you for your consideration.