



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2022 Legislative
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Roberto Jiménez Rivera

Office Sought: State Representative

District: 11th Suffolk

Party: Democratic Party

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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 am a proud husband and dad raising my son in a city where he can grow up hearing Spanish on the same streets that have welcomed immigrants for decades. Inspired by generations of working families who fought to keep this community whole, I am working to protect our people from getting pushed out by greedy developers and corporate polluters. As a School Committee member, I advocated for millions of state dollars that are now flowing into our schools, ensuring a bright future for my son and all the children of Chelsea and Everett. Now I'm running for State Representative to bring my energy and our values to the State House — working for better access to high quality education, healthcare, and transit systems for all, and to ensure everyone has the opportunity to grow deep roots in our community.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

One of the most important things that we need in the State House is more legislators who understand grassroots organizing and building people power. Both as a School Committee member and as a union organizer I have demonstrated my ability to mobilize people, work with coalitions, and push against the status quo. In both of my elections to the Chelsea School Committee, I have been the highest vote getter in the city because I put in the time and effort that is needed to connect with voters. As an elected official, prioritizing civic engagement is how we can generate a movement for change, which is what we desperately need to keep building in Massachusetts.

Beyond that, my experience growing up in Puerto Rico has shown me what can happen when you don't invest in people. The lack of infrastructure investment is what led to monthslong blackouts after Hurricane Maria. Lack of investment in education is why we have one of the lowest educational attainment rates in the country. My organizing is focused on the types of investments that create a strong social safety net to protect residents from poverty, and opportunities for everyone to reach their full potential.

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?

The troubling growth in power of the Speaker's office is the biggest obstacle, but in particular the pay structure for legislators. Individual representatives don't have the power to push for legislation they believe in, and too often simply vote in lockstep with the Speaker. We have seen this become a roadblock for popular legislation when it can't even get out of committee, even with a majority of committee members having co-sponsored it. The pay structure keeps base salaries low, and only allows increases through leadership stipends that are controlled by the Speaker, effectively making them "the boss". This becomes exponentially more difficult to combat once you get one of these stipends,

because going against leadership will most likely mean losing that additional income.

Because of these structures, there is also often a lack of trust even among representatives with a progressive reputation. We need to take advantage of opportunities to build trust among representatives who share our values, and ensure we have a unified agenda. This will involve an inside-outside organizing approach that allows us to support people internally while also pressuring elected officials from the outside to do the right thing.

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

We are facing a huge educator and mental health professional shortage. While there are many things we can do to ameliorate this, the single biggest policy change we could make is to make college free, in particular for these specific careers. I believe we should look at New Mexico's recent free college program as a model for what we could do. We could even expand it to meet Master's level requirements for professions that require it for which there is a shortage.

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

The Legislature was supposed to start funding the Student Opportunity Act in 2020. However, due to the pandemic, both the Governor and Legislature decided to punt on it, even as districts and students needed even more funding than before to support remote learning, mental health crises, and the compounding effects of systemic injustice on our school system. At the first sign that we would lose this funding, I realized that to put pressure on state leaders, we would need a BIG coalition, so I decided to organize leaders in the Gateway Cities in addition to the work I was doing with teachers unions and community organizations through MEJA. In the end, the letter I wrote was signed by over 130 City Councilors, School Committee members, superintendents, and educator union presidents. Together with efforts from MEJA and other advocacy organizations, we were able to secure more funding than we expected for FY22, which is paying dividends down the road as more funding is phased in this year. Had we given up our efforts, I believe it's likely the entire SOA plan would have been pushed back a full year. Instead, we reduced the implementation timeline from seven years to six.

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.

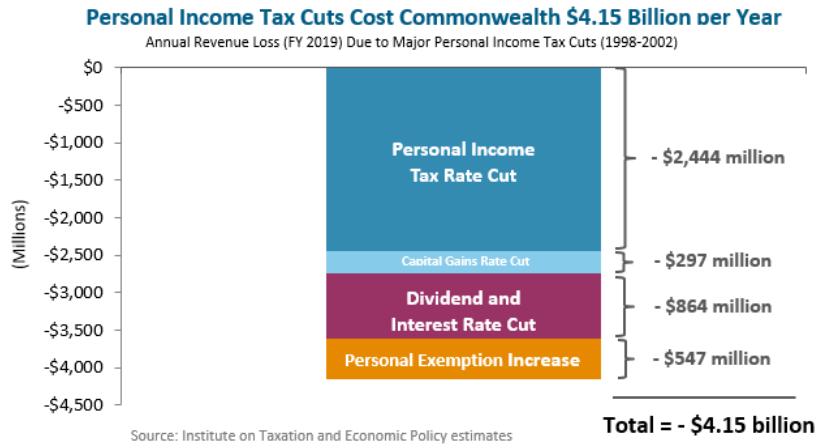
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II. The Issues

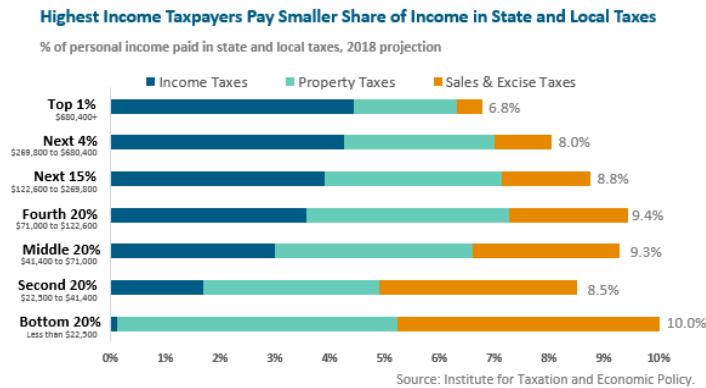
A. Revenue and Taxation

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.).

The pandemic further highlighted the huge disparities that exist in Massachusetts around access to quality healthcare, housing security, and even food security. It also increased the gaps in need between students in low-income districts and elsewhere. All of these could be solved with state investments into systems that will actually help people. In a state as wealthy as Massachusetts, I believe our government has a moral imperative to use all means possible to support its people, and that means raising revenues.

Wealthy individuals and giant corporations have to pay their fair share of taxes, and that means we should pass the Fair Share Amendment. I have been and will continue to work on the FSA campaign, both through my BTU work and by mobilizing people in my district after the primary. However, our need is much bigger than education and transit, and therefore we have to think bigger. I fully support all of the measures listed below, and would like to work with community partners to identify additional potential sources of revenue. Our people deserve these investments, and so we should do everything in our power to make them happen.

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

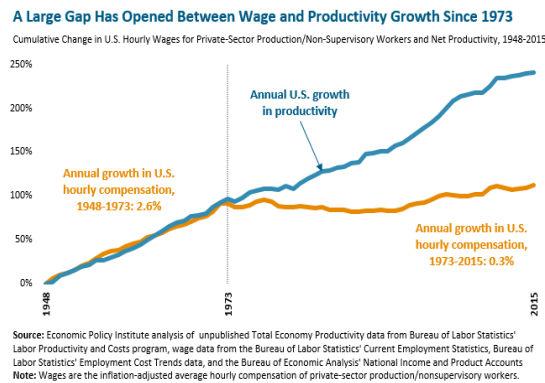
YES.

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 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.

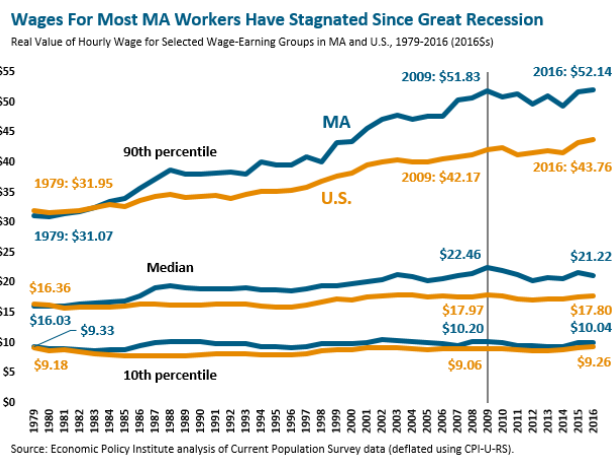
In recent decades, unions have been under attack. However, unions played—and continue to play—a pivotal role in creating a strong middle class. With weaker unions (or no unions at all) come weaker social and economic rights and an imbalanced economy.

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.)

Everyone deserves the opportunity to provide for themselves and their family with the equivalent of one full-time job, and to be protected against hardship that may occur. To make this a reality, we need to have a strong labor movement, and I have been proud to stand with unions both in my role as an elected and through my job with the Boston Teachers Union. In Chelsea, I supported our educators and we signed a new contract that gave educators a 14% raise over 3 years, a huge win for both them and our district, as it improves staff retention. I also stood with two different groups of SEIU 509 workers at the North Suffolk Mental Health Association who were (1) seeking to unionize and (2) asking their employer to come to the bargaining table. With the BTU, I have attended numerous rallies in support of educator working conditions during the pandemic, organized members to attend rallies for other unions, and been at a number of May Day/Labor Day events. Beyond direct labor movement support, I am also supporting the BTU's efforts to pass the Fair Share Amendment and to beat Uber and Lyft through the Mass Is Not For Sale coalition. One thing that is not mentioned here that I would definitely support is giving public employees the right to strike.

I would like to see Massachusetts peg the minimum wage to inflation in some way, so we don't have to rely on political will to improve the livelihood of working families. In addition, we should do everything in our power to protect workers against wage theft, ensure prevailing wages are the norm in every publicly-funded project, and incentivize/require it for private projects as well.

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.

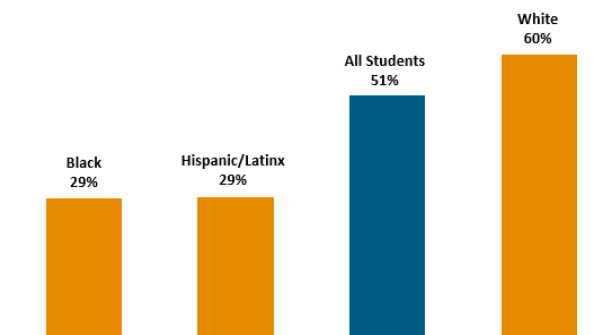
Public education has also been under attack by powerful corporate interests seeking to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups invest millions of dollars to promote the expansion of privately run charter schools, which siphon money from our public K-12 districts while largely excluding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

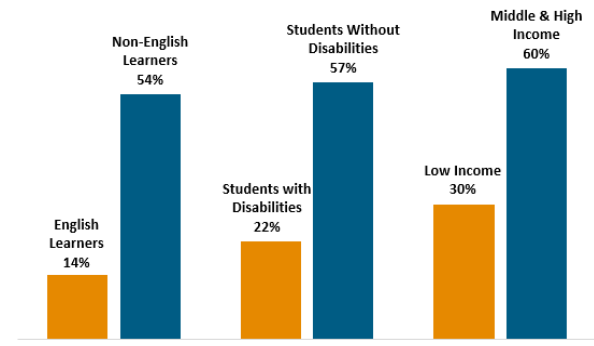
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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



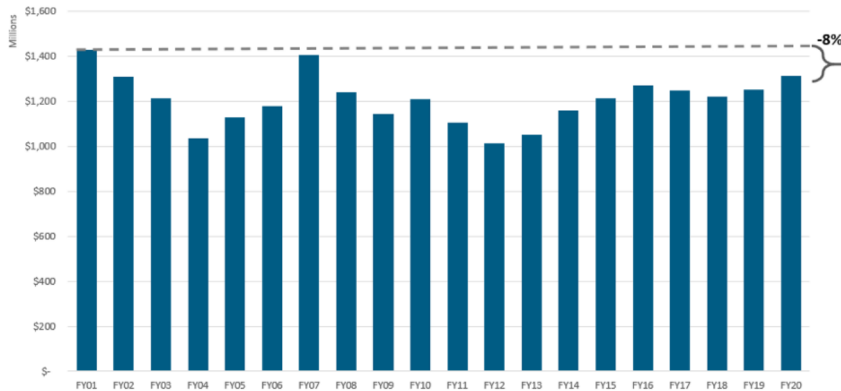
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

https://archive.massbudget.org/report_window.php?loc=Towards-Equity-School-Funding-Reform-in-Massachusetts.html

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.).

Education justice has been the central focus of my first decade of work. I started my career supporting students who were applying to college, in particular low-income students of color. As I became an expert on the college admissions process, I was able to contextualize my K-12 experience (<https://www.latinosforeducation.org/2018/03/20/pr-college-admissions/>) and name it as systemic injustice, and that is when I began to advocate against standardized testing and for more equitable school funding (which I wrote about here: <https://www.latinorebels.com/2019/03/21/latinxcommunitywithgoodschools/>) It is that advocacy that led me to run for School Committee and to leave my admissions career to join the Boston Teachers Union, where I fight for education justice through our legislative efforts and in coalition spaces such as MEJA.

There are three priorities that I see in this work:

- Properly fund our schools: we need to properly fund the Student Opportunity Act each year so that we can reach full implementation on time, and then assess whether there are still gaps, so that we can address them if they still exist

- Improve educator pipeline and retention issues: we need to incentivize people becoming educators (especially POC), which we can do through free college programs, improving licensure systems, and creating parent-to-educator and paraprofessional-to-teacher programs; and incentivize educators staying in the profession by ensuring educators have flexibility to use their professional expertise, creating structures to lift the voices of educators of color, and better tracking data on hiring and firing of educators of color

- Supporting Ethnic Studies curriculum in districts so that students can see themselves and their histories reflected in their schoolwork, further empowering

them to explore their identities and how those are perceived by our societal hierarchies

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.

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.

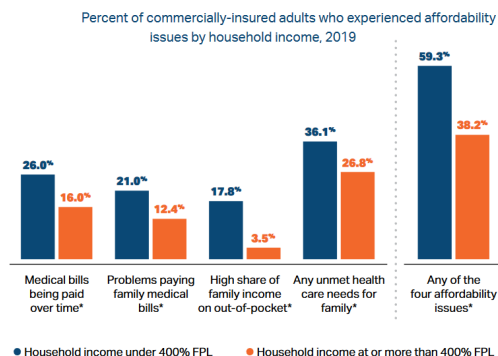
<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/average-new-car-prices-up-nearly-4-percent-year-over-year-for-may-2019-according-to-kelley-blue-book-300860710.html>

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.).**

Health care is a human right and I will fight for free, universal health care. Massachusetts arguably has the best health care system in the country, and yet so many of our residents are underinsured and don't have true access to the care they need. Among the changes that we desperately need is expanding coverage to dental and mental health without needing different plans. As far as I'm aware, your mouth and your brain are part of your body, and we should treat them as such.

Massachusetts was the blueprint for what ultimately became Obamacare, and I believe it's our turn to lead once again. While I support a single payer system, I believe that federal law would need to change in order for us to properly establish it at the state level because there is no way to prohibit employers from providing health insurance as a benefit. Also, the negotiating power we would have if we did it at the federal level would be significantly higher than at the state level. While I would advocate for and support single payer, I think we also need to explore intermediate steps such as a public option and caps on drug prices. These will effectively reduce costs for families until we can start making progress on the ultimate policy goal of free universal healthcare.

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.

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.

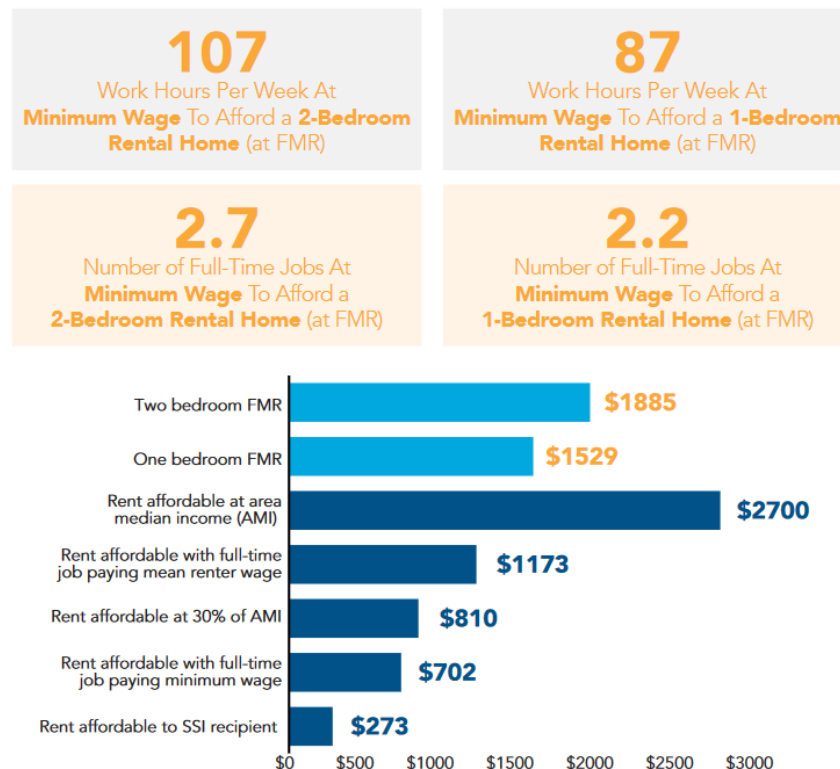
9. **Community Immunity Act.** Would you support strengthening the Commonwealth's immunization policies by standardizing the immunization requirements for all schools, daycare centers, and other covered programs and centralizing within the Department of Public Health (DPH) the processes for obtaining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

YES.

E. Housing

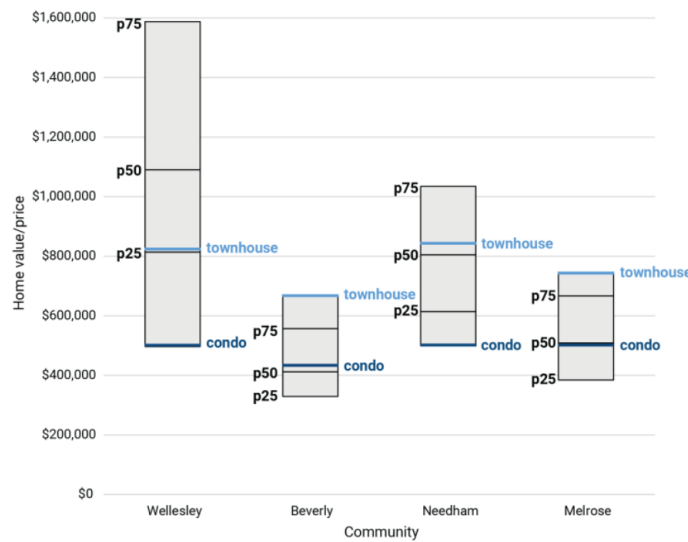
Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. The [US News & World Report's annual state rankings](#) put Massachusetts at #40 in housing affordability (and #47 in cost of living). A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [87 hours 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). 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.).**

I believe that housing is a human right and that we have to protect people from being displaced. Beyond that, however, we need to ensure that homes are healthy for both children and adults, regardless of if they are public or privately owned. In particular, we have to invest in removing lead and asbestos from buildings. Additionally, I would like to tackle the problem of homelessness among schoolchildren, by both increasing protections for families with children and targeting resources to any of them that find themselves without a home.

One of our biggest challenges is that new developments do not have enough affordable housing. We should require a minimum of 50% affordable units in any new development, and that should be scaled between 30-80% of the AMI, so that even our most vulnerable residents have access to it. Ultimately, though, we need wealthy communities to pull their weight in solving the housing crisis. We need to find ways to require them to develop density and do their part, while also supporting communities like Chelsea and Everett that disproportionately are supporting families in deep poverty. This also has to be tied to public transit development so that we can further connect suburban communities to the city. GreenRoots is in the process of establishing a community land trust that I hope to support both individually and as a legislator, which will help many families in our district.

In addition to developing more housing, we need to protect families from being displaced. We can do that by stabilizing rents, sealing eviction records, and

protecting tenants from eviction through just-eviction requirements and right of first refusal to purchase their home. We should also have assistance programs so that tenants can actually exercise that right.

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.

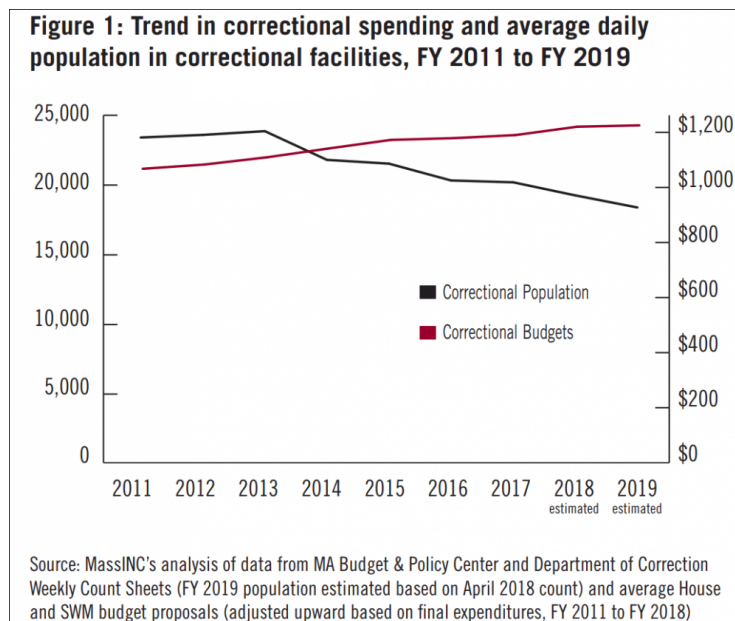
F. Racial and Social Justice

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.).

Massachusetts went through the entire Trump presidency without passing a single piece of legislation protecting immigrants, which should be the final nail in the coffin for our progressive reputation. My district has been a gateway to almost every wave of migrants to the greater Boston area for over a hundred years, so this is a crucial policy area for my constituents. I have attended rallies with and been part of the Driving Families Forward coalition through my work at the BTU in support of drivers licenses for all, and had the opportunity to write an op-ed on the Boston Globe supporting equal access to in-state tuition for undocumented students. As a Rep, I will continue to push for these and other measures that will protect immigrants from our punitive and inhumane immigration system.

Beyond this, we need to refocus our public safety and correctional systems on de-escalation and rehabilitation instead of punishment. There are far too many circumstances where a person with a gun only makes the situation more volatile, so we should invest in alternatives to police and ensure that mental health situations can be managed by mental health professionals. For situations where police is involved I believe there needs to be proper scrutiny over actions where civil rights violations have occurred. This includes eliminating qualified immunity

and requiring body cameras.

Lastly, once someone is involved in the legal and corrections system, we should provide the necessary resources to assure their rehabilitation. That means helping people maintain healthy relationships with friends and family outside (free phone calls, visitation rights), supporting them in finding good jobs, and ensuring that young people are not pushed back to prison by treating them as minors until they are 21 years old.

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.
 - b. **Raising the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21, in line with research that shows that young offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to reoffend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood?**

YES.

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

YES.

- d. **Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application?**

YES.

5. **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.

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?

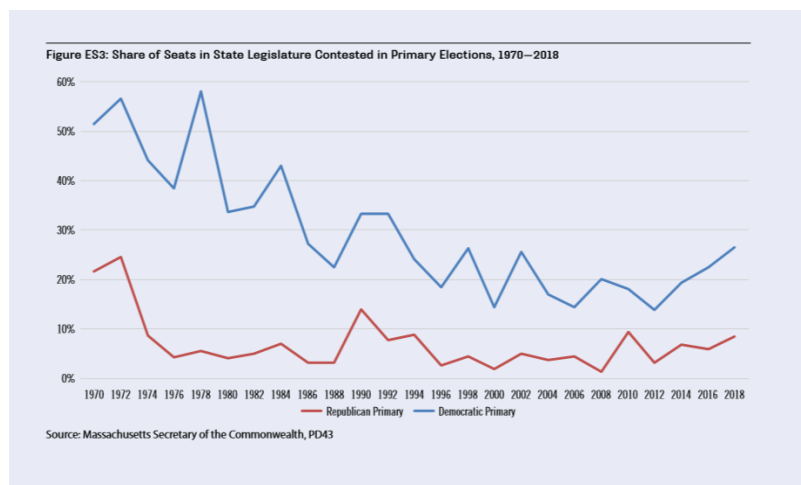
YES.

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.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Turnout (Nov 2020)</u>
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.).

A strong democracy requires us to maximize engagement, and it's unfortunate when we see some elected officials blame residents for lack of civic engagement, when the responsibility lies with us as leaders to give people a reason to vote. That is why I have always prioritized direct voter contact when I have run for office, and the people have responded, making me the highest vote getter in the city both times that I have run. Therefore, I support anything that makes it easier for people to engage in our electoral process, and anything that expands who can participate in it.

This district has one of the highest, if not the highest, rates of non-citizen residents in Massachusetts, so the best thing we can do to ensure that we reflect the will of the people is to enfranchise non-citizens. I would also support giving the vote to 16 and 17 year olds, since they have the most at stake when it comes to the future we are building. Also, the housing pressure that residents face in this district and elsewhere means that people can be disenfranchised just because they moved too close to the primary election. That is one of many reasons why I support and have mobilized people to support same-day registration, on top of all the other protections in the VOTES Act.

In addition to all this, my biggest involvement on this issue was the 2020 redistricting process. While this process resulted in Chelsea getting put together for the first time in decades, which is a huge win for the people of this district, there were many opportunities left on the table, particularly on the Senate side. I was a loud voice in coalition spaces and beyond in advocating for the creation of a second strong-POC-majority district in Boston, and an almost-majority Black district in Brockton. Unfortunately, neither happened, but I believe there is an opportunity for us to codify a set of guidelines into law that would go beyond the Voting Rights Acts requirements for majority-minority districts. This will maximize

the opportunities for communities of color to be properly represented in the Legislature come 2030.

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.

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.

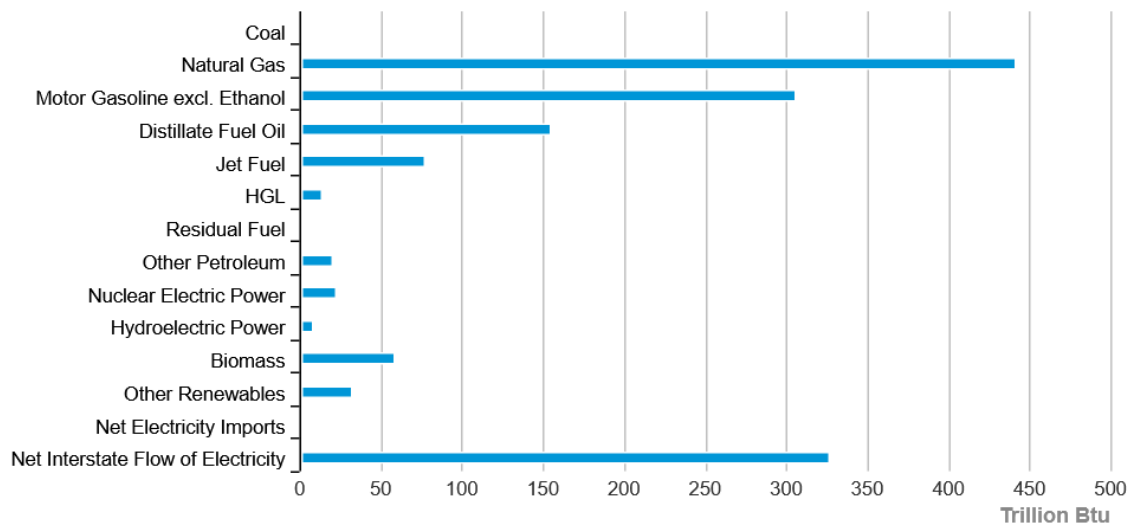
H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

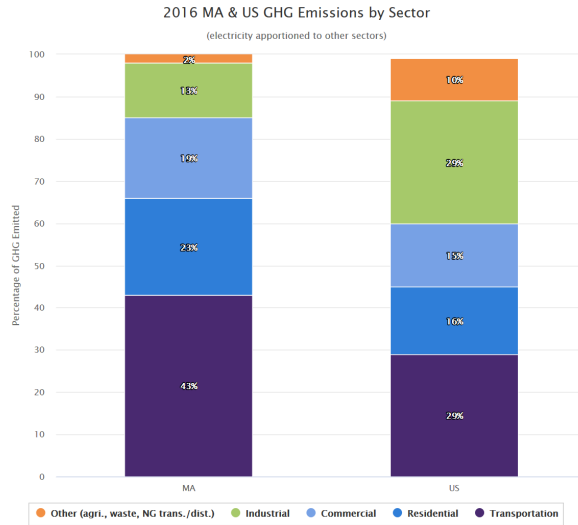
Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.

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.).

Everyone has a right to breathe clean air, and yet the people of Chelsea and Everett are consistently denied that. Each day, more than 63,000 vehicles cross the Tobin Bridge, dozens of planes fly over Chelsea, and multiple ships navigate down the Chelsea Creek. Industrial areas like the Chelsea salt piles, the New England Produce Center, and the fuel terminal in Everett further worsen our air quality. We must hold corporate polluters accountable for the harm they inflict on our community. Environmental justice requires us to look forward and protect our environment for future generations. However, it also requires us to look backwards and invest in the communities that have carried the environmental burdens of climate change and industrialization.

The people of Chelsea and Everett also deserve a public transit system that allows them to get to work and back in a timely manner so they can rest and spend time with their families. And yet, working-class communities like ours have been historically underserved by public transit systems. Our residents often work weekends and evenings, and the MBTA is not doing enough to serve us. Even though we are right next to Boston, Everett's average commute is 44% higher than the US average, and over 5% of people in Chelsea have a 90+ minute commute, almost double the national rate of "super commuters". Everett lost the Orange Line in 1975, so now, like Chelsea, it is only regularly serviced by buses. Buses are often late and overcrowded, and also mean that residents have to transfer vehicles multiple times to reach their destination.

We have to invest in public transit, renewable energy systems, and repairing the harm that polluters have caused so we can transition to a green economy. This will

strengthen our community and our economy, while promoting public safety, public health, affordability, and reliability for our infrastructure.

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?

In order to reach or exceed these targets, we have to prioritize investments and regulations that we know are going to have the biggest impact on emissions. These include:

- Continuing to expand offshore wind energy production, establishing a 100% renewable, carbon-free electric grid by 2030.
- Expanding the MassSAVE program to target communities that have been most impacted by environmental injustice, while phasing out its funding for fossil fuel systems.
- Mandating electrification of public transit systems and public vehicles, and incentivizing it for privately-owned fleets.
- Developing green space projects across the district to improve air quality and reduce heat islands.
- Implementing a fee system for polluting companies, with revenues allocated to impacted municipalities for further investment.
- Retrofitting homes with heat pumps and electric appliances to make them safer, healthier, and more energy efficient, reducing utility bills and improving safety.
- Freeing the T: making all MBTA bus and train routes free for all riders, to encourage the use of public transit instead of driving.
- Further expanding the commuter rail and MBTA systems, including: (1)expanding the Silver Line to Everett, (2)connecting the Red and Blue lines, (3)creating a commuter rail stop in Everett, and (4)connecting other communities to Boston through the commuter rail

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.