



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2024 County Office
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: John E. Powers, III

Office Sought: Clerk of Superior Court (Civil Business)

Party: Democrat

Instagram: [@PowersforClerk](https://www.instagram.com/PowersforClerk)

Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

About Your Candidacy

1. Why are you running for this office? What are your top three priorities if elected?

I am running for a full term as Clerk of Civil Courts because I believe I can continue to make a real and impactful difference in our court system. If given the opportunity to continue serving you, my top priorities would be:

Maintaining High Standards of Professionalism and Efficiency:

I will ensure that my court operates at its highest capacity by continuing to implement best practices, streamlining procedures, and utilizing available technology. This reduces delays and makes the court system more efficient for everyone involved.

Enhancing Accessibility and Equal Access to Justice:

It is vital that every resident has equal access to our court system. I will continue to advocate for expanding pro bono legal services, for additional resources for self-represented litigants, and support for those facing financial, linguistic, or physical barriers.

Promoting Transparency and Public Trust

Upholding transparency and accountability are essential for maintaining public trust in our legal system. I will continue to ensure that court operations are open and transparent, provide timely and accurate information to the public, and foster a culture of integrity and professionalism within the clerk's office.

2. What prepares you to serve in this office?

Since being appointed Clerk of Civil Courts in 2023, it has been my honor to serve our County each and every day. My deep commitment to public service and the legal field is reflected in over three decades of experience within the Suffolk County legal system, including key roles at the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and, prior to my appointment as Clerk within the very office I now lead. My extensive background has equipped me with the knowledge, expertise, and dedication necessary to uphold the principles of justice, fairness, and efficiency in the role of Clerk of Civil Courts, ensuring that our office operates at its highest capacity and remains accessible to all residents.

3. What do you think are the most significant challenges facing the office, and how do you intend to address those challenges?

The two biggest challenges facing my office are ((1) the need to increase our technological capabilities to meet the growing demands of court users in the 21st century and (2) the need for additional resources to assist self-represented litigants in

navigating the complex world of civil litigation. Although these challenges cannot be addressed by myself alone, I will continue, through my membership in the statewide Superior Court Clerk's Association, to advocate with my fellow Clerks statewide to push for more resources, whether that be through the Trial Court Administration or through the Legislature. My commitment is to maintain a transparent, responsive, and accessible office that meets the evolving needs of our community.

4. What progressive policies or programs will you implement if elected?

Please my answer to question 1.

5. (If an incumbent) What are your proudest accomplishments in the office to date?

My proudest accomplishment during my time work in Civil Clerks Office would be the work we did ensuring the court system remained functional and accessible during the COVID-19 pandemic. We swiftly transitioned to virtual court proceedings, enabling justice to be served without interruption. Implementing online filing and remote access to court documents significantly increased efficiency and accessibility for both legal professionals and the public. Our team worked tirelessly to maintain a safe environment for essential in-person services, adhering to all health guidelines. These efforts ensured that our justice system continued to operate smoothly and equitably during unprecedented times. I am proud to say that while much of the world shut down in the early days of the pandemic, my court remained open for business and accessible to the public.

6. Why should people care about this election and this office?

People should care about this election and this office because the Suffolk County Superior Court Clerk for Civil Business plays a crucial role in ensuring the efficient and fair operation of our civil justice system. The effectiveness of our office directly impacts the timely resolution of legal disputes, access to justice, and the transparency of court processes, which are essential for upholding the rights and interests of all residents. Voting in this election allows you to choose a candidate who will prioritize these values and work diligently to improve our civil courts for the benefit of our community.

7. If a voter asked you what this office does, how would you answer (in no more than 3 sentences)?

As the Suffolk County Clerk of Civil Courts, my office is responsible for managing and maintaining all records related to civil legal proceedings within the county. We ensure that court documents are accurately filed, preserved, and made accessible to the public while also providing administrative support to judges and attorneys. Our goal is to facilitate a smooth, efficient, accessible, and transparent civil justice system for all Suffolk County residents.

8. (As Relevant) What do you view as the role of county government in Massachusetts? To what extent would you like to see it expanded or limited?

County government does not exist in Suffolk County, as it was abolished by the state legislature in 1999. Although some county governments in Massachusetts are still in place, most no longer exist. In the late 1980's the state began to assume control (and the cost) of operating courthouses throughout the Commonwealth, including the Suffolk County Court House. Today, all courts are managed by the Massachusetts Trial Court. Although Suffolk County pertains to my court's jurisdiction, the court budgets are provided by the state legislature.