



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

**Candidate:** James Arena-DeRosa

**Office Sought:** State Representative

**District:** 8th Middlesex

**Party:** Democratic Party

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

**Twitter:** n/a

**Facebook:** [James Arena-DeRosa for State Representative](#)

## 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 have spent a lifetime helping others meet their basic needs and making sure that the voices of the community are heard by those in power. My priorities are:

- That community voices and advocates have a seat at the table as we develop public policy for the Commonwealth.
- That we stand up to the coming national onslaught from the right wing, and continue to fight for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice for all, gender equity and reproductive freedom, and marriage equality.
- That every resident of this district knows there is at least one person in government they can turn to when they need help navigating the government bureaucracy.

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

My experience managing multi-million dollar programs for Oxfam and USDA under the Obama Administration demanded both that I learn to navigate bureaucracy and advocate for communities. On a more local level, I have served on my town Finance Committee and served my town in many ways and understand the important relationship between local communities and the state. I am comfortable in the corridors of power but will always be a person from and of the community. While not an expert, I have broad exposure and involvement with issues related to public health, education, the environment, agriculture, food security, and social and economic justice.

### **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?**

It is absolutely essential for blue states like Massachusetts to live up to their liberal reputations and safeguard fundamental rights from the right wing onslaught. In Massachusetts, we must address the structural, procedural, and transparency issues in the state legislature that too often prevent us from advancing progressive causes, even when there is widespread support for them among elected officials. We also need to be more effective at coalition building among our diverse constituents. I am excited by the opportunity to be a progressive voice representing a purple district – it is a real opportunity for Progressive MA and progressives statewide to have a progressive voice representing a somewhat more moderate part of the state.

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

The State of Maine is one of two states in the country that offers free universal school breakfast and lunch to every student regardless of income. This does several things. First,

it ensures that every child has access to good nutrition which we know is a key to successful learning. Second, it removes the stigma from children who previously had to prove their income situation and were treated differently in line – that change alone will drive participation rates higher. And finally, this program helps everyone, including the many working parents who - as we saw during the pandemic - are juggling many responsibilities while ensuring their children are well cared for.

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

Long before environmentalists from the Global North were focusing on the Amazon, Indigenous peoples there in their home communities were fighting to preserve their culture and environment. At Oxfam, I was responsible for building the coalition to protect the rainforest by partnering with Indigenous peoples and protecting their land, not just the flora and fauna. This pancontinental coalition linked indigenous tribes in the Amazon with environmental groups, international lawyers, activists and foundations. Together we created a partnership that respected all participants. Under my leadership, my team staffed the initial coalition and organized the launching conference. Many initiatives emerged from the coalition, but I am most proud of a campaign in a small village in Bolivian Amazon that led to thousands of Indigenous peoples marching on the capital and culminated in 500,000 acres of Amazon rainforest being designated as Indigenous lands.

**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.**

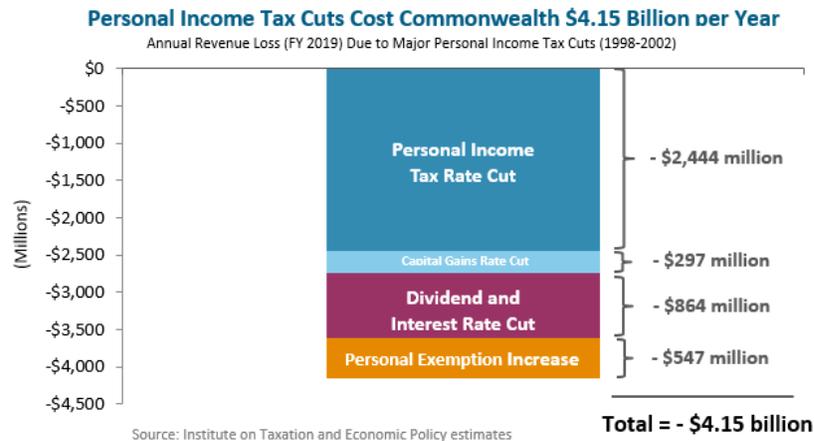
N/A

## II. The Issues

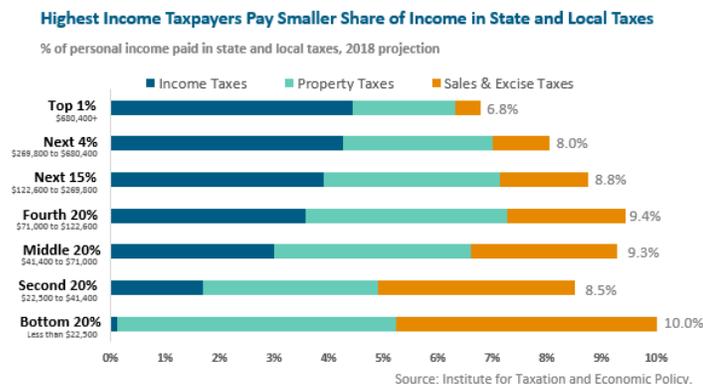
### A. Revenue and Taxation

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.).**

In general, I think those with more means to pay should contribute more and I certainly support the Fair Share amendment. I have always advocated for increasing the exemption for lower income families; while on the Holliston Finance Committee I always supported increasing opportunities for seniors on fixed incomes to pay reduced property tax.

I am disappointed that the state is now considering general tax relief while so many needs are going unmet. I would rather see targeted relief (e.g., rollback UMASS tuition increase, PFAS mitigation to hard hit communities). This is a time when we should be thinking about our "common wealth" and not a few extra dollars in our individual pockets. Progressive MA supports a number of programs that need more funding.

**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. I am comfortable with this concept in 4e, but would like to be clear about what is meant by "modest." Perhaps there should be consideration of how much universities are paying in financial aid and other support to low-income and historically oppressed students, investing in their local communities, and meeting their payment in lieu of taxes obligations.

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.

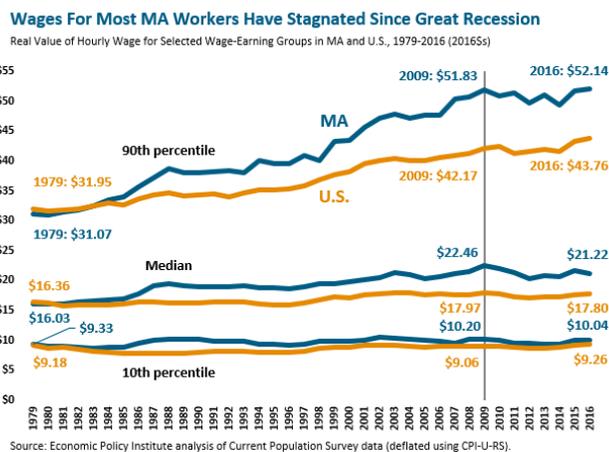
In recent decades, unions have been under attack. However, unions played—and continue to play—a pivotal role in creating a strong middle class. With weaker unions (or no unions at all) come weaker social and economic rights and an imbalanced economy.

### 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.)**

As a former SEIU union member and contract negotiator, I have been and will always be a friend of labor. I was co-leader of contract negotiations that ensured that lower wage workers who had not been compensated fairly in the past got larger raises to compensate for past inequity. As the Director of Public Advocacy at Oxfam, I worked to ensure that Black farmers were fairly compensated by the Department of Agriculture following years of inequitable treatment compared to white farmers. This lawsuit was resolved in their favor during the Obama Administration. Despite important victories like this, there are far too many structural issues in our economy that continue to disproportionately affect historically oppressed communities. We need to look beyond minimum wage and fight for a living wage, rethink labor relations to account for the gig economy's impact on workers, and get out front of protecting the rights of working men and women.

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. I support Senator DiDomenico's efforts and would look forward to partnering with the House team on next steps if they are successful this year. Beyond the current bill I think at some point repeat offenders on wage theft should be ineligible for state contracts, or should have to pay into a fund that will be set aside for victims of wage theft.

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.

As the gig economy blossoms I am very concerned about the potential for abuse. Now that these jobs have evolved into full-time occupations for many people, we need to provide them with the same protections as other full-time workers, including benefits such as insurance, sick time, etc. The economy has changed, but worker protections have not kept up.

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. As a former SEIU union member, I fully support the workers right to choose a union without any interference or intimidation. If they choose a union that is their prerogative and I will support them.

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.

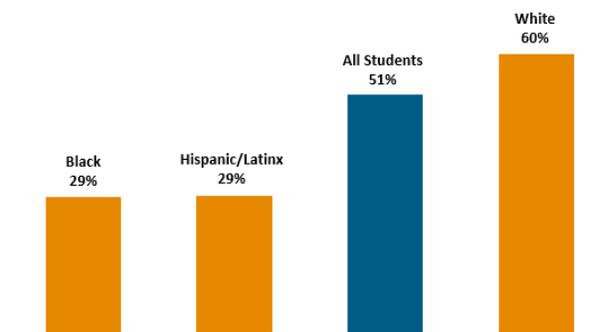
Public education has also been under attack by powerful corporate interests seeking to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups invest millions of dollars to promote the expansion of privately run charter schools, which siphon money from our public K-12 districts while largely excluding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

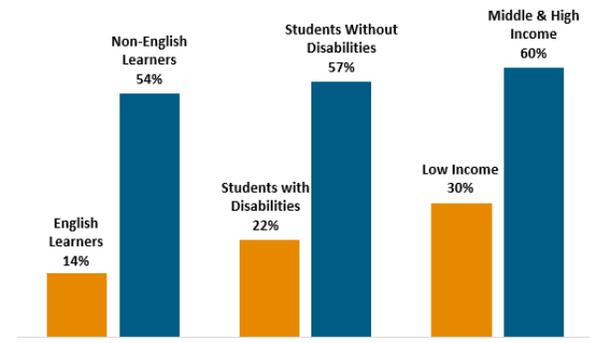
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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



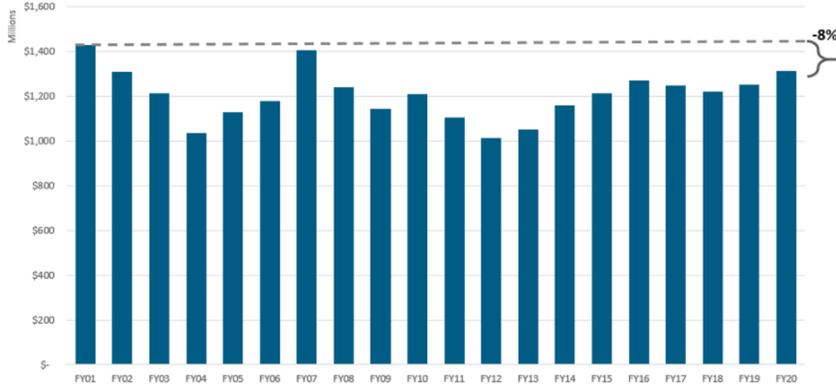
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

[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.).**

I believe in the education of the whole child. We have over-focused on testing at the expense of health and nutrition, exercise, arts and music, sports, social engagement, community service. Students with a wide array of experiences tend to do better academically and often do better on those tests! It was an honor to lead USDA Food and Nutrition when Michelle Obama was championing child nutrition. I worked closely with school systems throughout the Northeast advocating for expanded breakfast and lunch programs.

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. I support a moratorium on the practice. However, while I agree that the current system is not working, I would like to ensure that there are some safeguards other than receivership in place in the rare event that school committees are truly not serving their communities' needs or worse, are abusing their positions.

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. I support this concept but recognize it may not be economically feasible immediately. As we problem-solve how to address the budget implications of free public colleges and universities, I believe there are important interim steps we can take. Let's start by freezing tuition and fees. The legislature is contemplating general tax relief. Perhaps instead they should cover the increased costs the UMASS system will face with inflation and not hike student tuition next year.



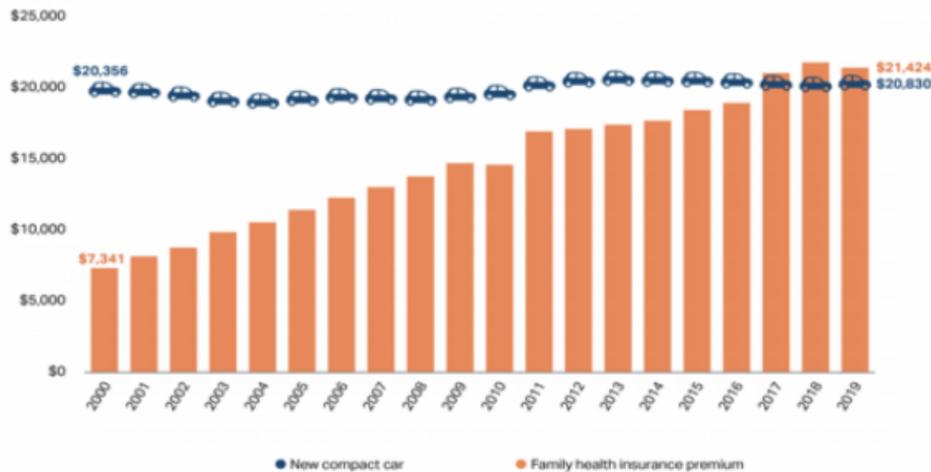
## D. Health Care

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.

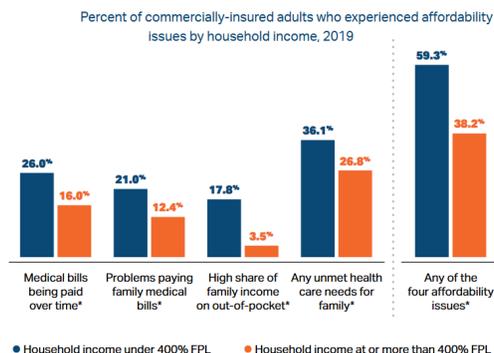
Sources: Family Health Insurance premiums are for Massachusetts from the Agency for Health Care Quality – Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Insurance Component. Car cost information is based on car-specific inflation from the BLS and the compact car price index from Kelly Blue Book.

<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.).**

I have always supported single payer.

With an aging population, the system is much too complex. The government created a Medicare system that only covers 80%, which necessitates layer upon layer of bureaucracy and supplemental benefits. It is more a federal issue, but I would start by making Medicare 100% coverage.

It was such a blessing to lead Food and Nutrition during the Obama Administration – when the First Lady was a lead advocate from important links between good nutrition, health and learning. I think too often we address issues on the back end and need to be more proactive around preventive care, health and nutrition. Our policies on agriculture are completely backwards, as a nation we subsidize unhealthy food and nutritious food costs more. Given the choice, people will choose healthy food if it is affordable.

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 support the recent changes made by the legislature. I am also ok with removing onerous judicial barriers as long as medical providers in those instances provide some guidance for teens.

Re: question 4,5,6 I am appalled by the coming strike down of Roe by the SCOTUS .. this is only the opening gambit by the right wing. Our campaign posted immediately on the gravity of this situation and the need for MA to get out front (I applaud CT's recent legislation). As far as we know my opponents have continued to be silent on this important issue.

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. I support the AMA position to allow and start with small pilot services as part of a comprehensive approach to the drug problem and by generating information that can be evaluated and inform policymakers on the feasibility of these clinics.

9. **Community Immunity Act**. Would you support strengthening the Commonwealth's

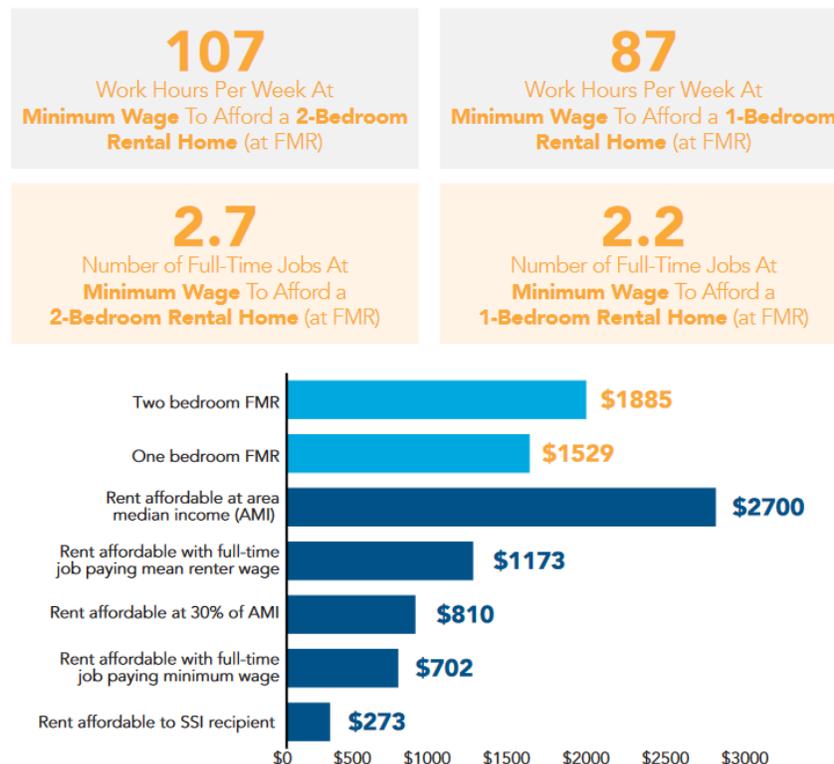
immunization policies by standardizing the immunization requirements for all schools, daycare centers, and other covered programs and centralizing within the Department of Public Health (DPH) the processes for obtaining an exemption from those requirements?

YES.

## E. Housing

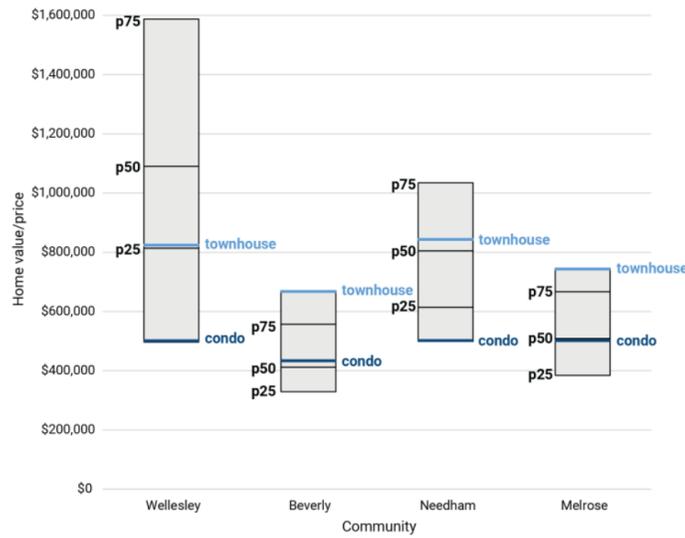
Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. The [US News & World Report's annual state rankings](#) put Massachusetts at #40 in housing affordability (and #47 in cost of living). A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [87 hours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

So much of family stability and building family wealth starts with affordable housing. The dearth of affordable housing in Massachusetts will have grave consequences if we do not address this shortfall. Seniors cannot afford to stay in their homes, young people cannot afford new homes, young families of color and from modest incomes cannot get into the market.

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. I support the concept. But note that the guidelines need some work – they based it on 50 acres with no consideration for the size of the community. One town I hope to represent has approximately 1500 current units of housing and would be expected to add 750 units (a 50% increase– so I question the “reasonable size” parameter ) – they have no town water and no town sewerage and are several miles from the nearest train station. That kind of explosive growth is environmentally irresponsible – and as a progressive I care very much about the environment as well as affordable housing. I support the building of more affordable housing (which those guidelines do not even address – this is just about housing stock – there are no set asides for affordable housing which I think was a mistake). Every community must do its part to help with affordable housing - I would much rather the guidelines were smaller in scope/acreage for adjacent communities (i.e. those not within walking distance of the trains) but actually included specific requirements for affordable housing unit set asides. I am sure this wasn't the intent of the state but in the wealthier suburbs in adjacent communities, these guidelines are more of a boon to developers, in some cases are not sustainable, will build a bunch of \$750,000 townhouses, and won't really help with affordable housing for families. I support the MAPC position which suggest that we tweak the guidelines, consider lower density, and insist on some affordable housing

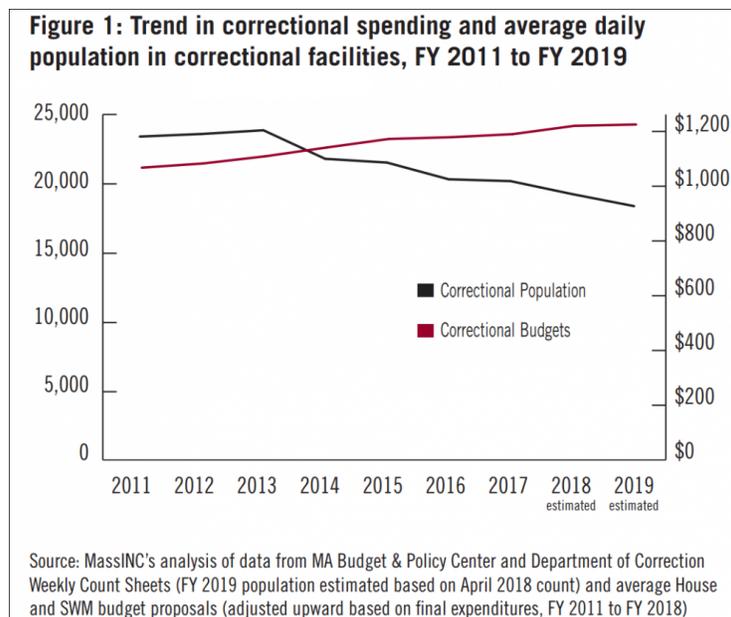
## F. Racial and Social Justice

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.**

<b>Imprisonment by Race/Ethnicity (2019)</b>	
White imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	63
Black imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	466
Hispanic imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	260
<b>Racial/Ethnic Disparity in Imprisonment (2019)</b>	
Black : white ratio	7.4
Hispanic : white ratio	4.1
<b>Juveniles in Custody (2015)</b>	
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.).**

My perspective on social and racial justice was shaped in part by my mother's involvement in civil rights. Inspired by her and the people I met, I have fought for racial and social justice values my entire career. As I mentioned previously, my professional advocacy has significantly contributed to Indigenous people in the Amazon achieving land recognition, Black farmers receiving just wages, and low income families of color being able to access nutrition benefits. As an electoral activist, I have organized on behalf of Black candidates in Georgia and North Carolina and fought voter suppression which disproportionately impacts voters of color.

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. The so-called "war on drugs" was a catastrophe for communities of color

and targeted the wrong population. It barely touched the cartels and resulted in the incarceration of a generation of young Black and Brown men. I believe in restorative justice and a complete rethinking of our criminal justice system.

- 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. Those costs are unconscionable.

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. Looks like this is finally happening as both a public safety issue acknowledged by many police chiefs, and as a fairness issue for workers and families who need to drive.

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?

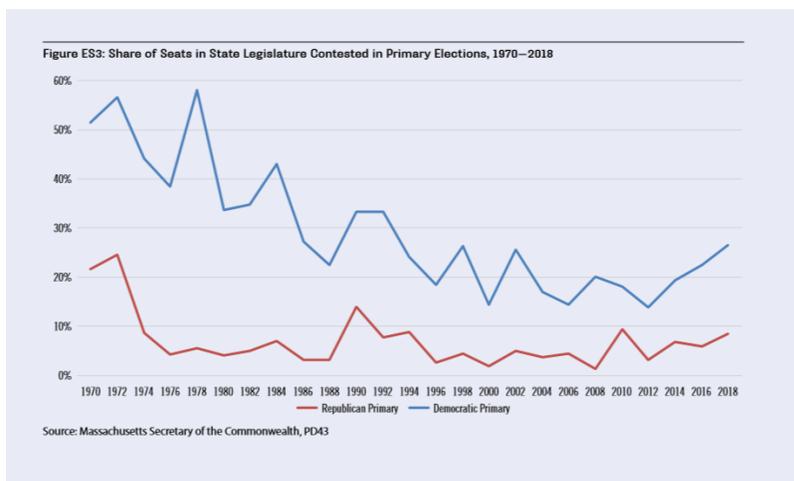
YES.

## 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.**

<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.).**

Very disturbing that Massachusetts lags the entire country in this area. I support the agenda below – as for my own actions: When I took over a \$12 billion program for the Obama Administration I opened my door to advocates, community leaders, and also spent time in the community meeting with people with lived experience facing a variety of challenges that our programs were intended to address. (I did this against the advice of some who said I should only be meeting with commissioners, lead legislators, and governors but that is a very limited approach to public service and public policy.)

- 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.

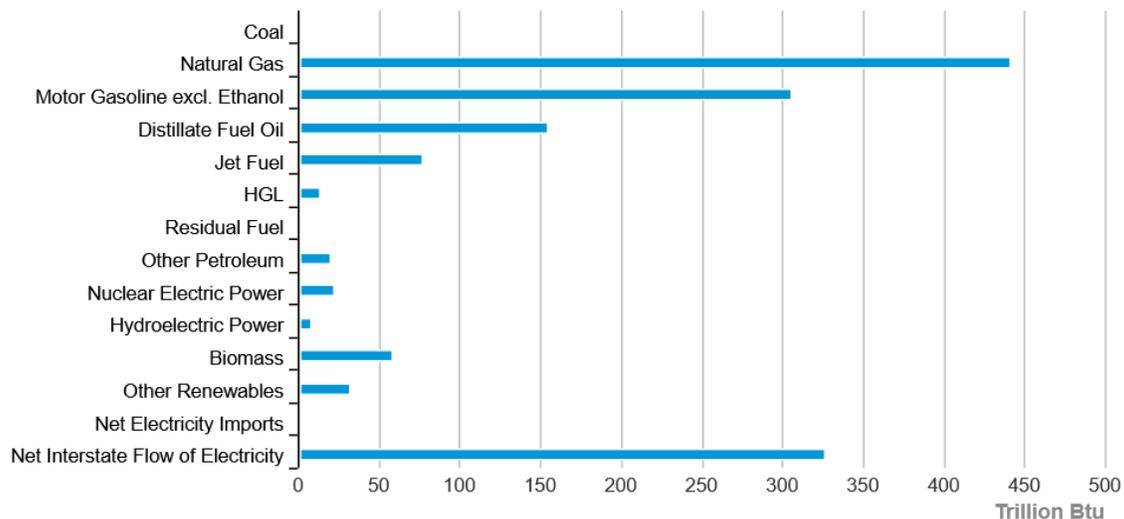
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

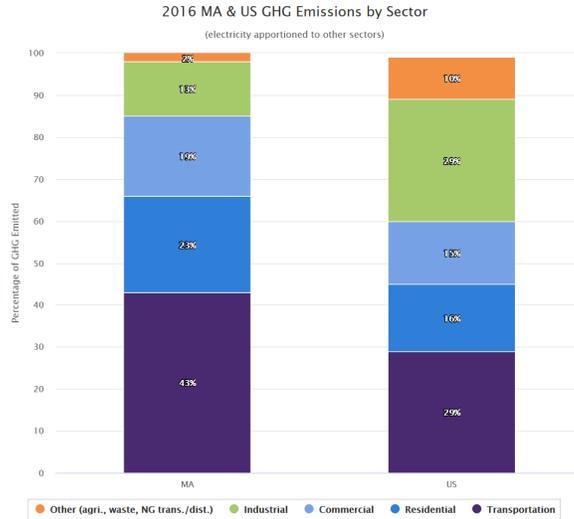
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

### 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.).**

We have reached critical mass on this issue.

As a leader in food justice and sustainable local agriculture and as an advocate at Oxfam I have worked on a number of environmental issues over time but we have huge challenges as a society. We know that a significant part of the transportation carbon footprint in agriculture is moving food large distances. Locally sourced food is healthier, better for small business, and better for the environment.

As a guiding principle on the larger issues, it is simple for me. I am not going to grandstand on Net0 and the climate crisis; my focus will be fighting for the funding that can actually make the transition to Net0 happen and make sure we protect workers and communities along the way.

**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?

By funding the underlying renewable energy programs that will actually lead to these critical reductions and not over focusing on “targets” “statements” “press releases” and political grandstanding on climate change.

**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. Yes but again - “adopting a target” and “requirements” – although important statements – are not a solution. The state must fund the alternatives; we need a comprehensive package that addresses the problem.

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. I'm ok with the recent limit of up to 10. We need to get some experience around this as we are already pricing too many families out of the housing market. We also have to do this the right way. I am supportive of this concept as part of a comprehensive package (but not a standalone) that includes a just transition, worker retraining, job opportunities in the green economy with commensurate/prevaling wages.

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

YES. Again, yes, but only if we commit to making commensurate investments in the underlying infrastructure for solar, wind and geothermal and electric vehicles. I tend to support the House side of argument– I talked with Representative Roy about this - yes let's absolutely move forward with renewable energy targets and get to Net0 but to get there we must make the appropriate investments that will get us there. Again, I just think there is too much grandstanding and making political points on the concepts and not enough political will and commitment to actually fund these critical changes. We have a huge opportunity with wind if we have the political will make the investments

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. I like the concept of 10. Maybe start slow with the T/subways and buses, targeted to lower income users. I worry that if you make commuter rail free you are subsidizing wealthy commuters already taking the train. I'd rather invest the money in expanding the commuter system south and west and expanding parking and in that way making the T more accessible to more people. In some suburbs the lack of parking at the train station is a much bigger problem driving away train riders and not the cost of the train itself. We'll see as we emerge from covid, but some train parking lots near my town fill by 6:30 AM.

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.***

As you see I am very supportive of the Progressive MA agenda and am very open to learning more and having conversations about any issue Progressive MA deems critical in the coming session. As one stark contrast my two opponents supported the Republicans in the cycle that elected Donald Trump. I believe I will be a progressive champion on Beacon Hill and believe I offer the kind of alliance and creative problem solving that would help strengthen what we are trying to build in Massachusetts.

I look forward to a conversation with the committee and would enthusiastically embrace an endorsement from Progressive Massachusetts.