



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2026 District Attorney
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate: Jim Jamal Barakat

Office Sought: District Attorney, Norfolk County

Party: Democrat

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General Questions

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

I am running for Norfolk County District Attorney because I believe prosecutors have tremendous power to shape both public safety and public trust, and that power must be exercised fairly, transparently, and based on evidence rather than tradition. After more than a decade as a public defender, I have seen firsthand the strengths of our criminal justice system, but I have also seen where it falls short. Particularly this happens when mental illness, substance use disorders, poverty, or trauma are treated primarily through prosecution and incarceration instead of by meaningful intervention.

As District Attorney, my goal would not simply be to obtain convictions. It would be to reduce crime, improve public safety, support victims, and ensure justice is administered fairly, regardless of a person's background or resources.

My top three priorities would be:

1. Reduce violent crime through focused, data-driven prosecution. The office's resources should be concentrated on violent offenses, firearms offenses, domestic violence, sexual assault, exploitation, and repeat dangerous offenders while using evidence to identify what strategies actually reduce recidivism.

2. Expand diversion and alternatives to incarceration. For appropriate cases involving mental illness, addiction, and lower-level nonviolent offenses, I would expand evidence-based diversion programs like Restorative Justice ("RJ") that hold people accountable while addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior.

3. Increase transparency and accountability. The public deserves confidence that prosecutorial decisions are made fairly and consistently. I would increase public reporting of office data, evaluate policies using measurable outcomes, and foster a culture in which prosecutors see their role as seeking justice, not simply winning cases.

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

For more than a decade, I have represented thousands of individuals across Massachusetts as a public defender. I have handled cases ranging from minor offenses to the most serious felonies, conducted numerous jury trials, litigated complex constitutional issues, and advocated for clients from every background.

That experience has given me a comprehensive understanding of every stage of the criminal legal system. I have worked with victims, police officers, probation officers, treatment providers, judges, and community organizations. I have seen where prosecution effectively protects public safety, and I have also seen where different approaches produce better outcomes, and the collateral consequences of prosecution from the inside.

My experience has taught me that good prosecutors must exercise sound judgment, recognize the humanity of everyone involved, and understand that

justice requires both accountability and fairness. That perspective prepares me to lead an office committed to public safety while continually evaluating whether its policies are achieving meaningful results.

3. **Do you consider yourself progressive, and if so, how would you define “progressive”?**

Yes.

To me, being progressive means being willing to improve systems when the evidence demonstrates they are not producing the best outcomes for the public. It means recognizing that fairness, accountability, and transparency strengthen—not weaken—our criminal justice system.

A progressive “reform” prosecutor focuses resources where they have the greatest impact, prioritizes prevention alongside enforcement, supports victims, respects constitutional rights, and embraces policies shown to reduce recidivism rather than relying solely on incarceration. It also means being transparent with the public, holding government actors accountable when they violate the law, and continuously measuring success through data instead of assumptions.

Progressive / Reform ideals are not about being lenient or punitive. They’re about using the law thoughtfully, fairly, and effectively to create safer communities.

4. **Name two current or former DAs, anywhere in the U.S., whom you most admire for their approach to the office, and why?**

I admire Larry Krasner for his willingness to challenge long-standing prosecutorial practices and to reexamine whether traditional approaches to charging and sentencing to improve public safety. While not every policy implemented in Philadelphia would necessarily be appropriate for Norfolk County, I respect his commitment to using data, transparency, and evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of prosecution and to focus resources on serious and violent crime.

I also admire Kim Foxx for emphasizing fairness, transparency, and her efforts to reduce disparities within the criminal legal system. During her tenure in Chicago, she expanded diversion opportunities, increased transparency around prosecutorial decision-making, and promoted policies aimed at ensuring that similarly situated individuals are treated consistently. I believe her focus on accountability within the prosecutor’s office, alongside accountability for criminal conduct, reflects an important aspect of modern prosecution.

While I respect the work of both prosecutors, I would not seek to replicate any office wholesale. Every jurisdiction has unique challenges, and my responsibility would be to adopt policies that are supported by evidence, responsive to the needs of Norfolk County, and consistent with my obligation to seek justice rather than simply secure convictions.

5. **What is one specific policy or procedure instituted by another DA’s office you would like to replicate, if elected?**

I would establish a formal system of ongoing policy evaluation modeled after offices that regularly collect and publish data on charging decisions, diversion outcomes, recidivism, racial disparities, and case processing. Prosecutors make thousands of discretionary decisions each year, and those decisions should be informed by measurable outcomes rather than habit.

By partnering with independent researchers and publicly reporting key performance metrics, the office can continually improve its practices, strengthen public confidence, and ensure that policies are achieving their intended goals.

6. **What is your view on the legacy of the War on Drugs, and how will you use your office to rectify the intergenerational impact of these policies and disrupt ongoing continuation of the War on Drugs?**

The War on Drugs has contributed significantly to mass incarceration, disproportionately impacted communities of color, and often treated addiction as a criminal issue rather than a public health challenge. While law enforcement has an important role in addressing drug trafficking and fentanyl distribution, decades of experience have shown that arresting people struggling with addiction alone does not solve substance use disorders. We cannot continue to incarcerate our way out of every social problem.

As District Attorney, I would focus enforcement efforts on trafficking organizations, firearm-related drug offenses, and individuals exploiting addiction for profit. For individuals whose criminal conduct is driven primarily by substance use disorder, I would prioritize diversion, treatment, recovery support, and collaborative approaches that reduce recidivism while maintaining accountability.

The success of drug policy should ultimately be measured by reductions in overdose deaths, addiction, and repeat offending, and not simply by arrest numbers.

7. **What is your view on mass incarceration and how a prosecutor can help disrupt this phenomenon?**

Mass incarceration has imposed enormous social and economic costs while failing to improve long-term public safety. Prosecutors play a significant role because charging decisions, plea negotiations, bail positions, sentencing recommendations, and diversion policies all influence who enters, and remains in, the criminal legal system.

A prosecutor should reserve incarceration primarily for individuals who pose a genuine threat to public safety. For many nonviolent offenses, particularly those driven by addiction, mental illness, or poverty, evidence supports alternatives that hold individuals accountable while reducing the likelihood of future criminal behavior.

Reducing unnecessary incarceration does not mean reducing accountability. It means using incarceration where it is most effective while expanding evidence-based alternatives that better protect communities over the long term.

Alternatives to prosecution and incarceration

1. **What specific types of programs will you implement or expand related to individuals with mental health issues? Please give examples of programs in other jurisdictions that you would seek to replicate or adapt.**

Far too many people with untreated mental illness encounter the criminal legal system because they have been failed by our behavioral health system. While prosecutors cannot solve our mental health crisis alone, the District Attorney's Office can play a significant role in reducing unnecessary criminalization and connecting people with appropriate treatment while concurrently protecting public safety.

I would expand diversion opportunities for individuals whose criminal behavior is substantially driven by untreated mental illness and who do not pose an ongoing danger to the community. This includes increasing collaboration with mental health providers, crisis response teams, specialty courts, and community-based treatment organizations to ensure that people receive meaningful services rather than cycling repeatedly through the criminal legal system.

I am particularly interested in expanding the already existing structure of Mental Health specialty courts, which emphasize diversion, coordinated treatment, and reducing unnecessary incarceration for individuals with serious mental illness. I also support expanding pre-arraignment and pretrial diversion programs that allow individuals to engage in treatment while being held appropriately accountable.

2. **What steps will you take to minimize the involvement of youth in the criminal legal system? How will you address disparities among municipalities across the district in handling school-related incidents involving students?**

Young people are fundamentally different from adults in their cognitive development, decision-making, and capacity for rehabilitation. Whenever public safety permits, our response to youthful misconduct should recognize that reality and prioritize interventions that reduce future involvement with the criminal legal system.

As District Attorney, I would work to expand diversion, restorative justice, counseling, mentoring, and community-based interventions for juveniles whenever appropriate. School-based incidents should not automatically become criminal cases simply because they occur on school property. Whenever possible, schools should be equipped to address disciplinary issues without involving police or the courts.

I would also review referral data from across Norfolk County to identify disparities in how municipalities, school districts, and law enforcement agencies handle similar conduct. Geographic differences alone should not determine whether a young person enters the juvenile delinquency system. Working collaboratively with educators, law enforcement, and community stakeholders, I would seek to develop more consistent countywide practices that promote fairness while allowing flexibility for prosecuting serious or dangerous conduct.

The goal should be to intervene early, address the underlying causes of misconduct, and reduce the likelihood that a young person's first contact with the justice system becomes the beginning of a lifelong cycle.

3. What role, if any, do you think there is for SROs and the police in our schools?

School Resource Officers can play a constructive role when their primary purpose is protecting students from genuine threats to their safety and building positive relationships with young people. However, they should not become the default response to ordinary disciplinary matters that are better handled by educators, adjustment counselors, and school administrators.

Schools should remain safe places for learning, not extensions of the criminal legal system. Student behavior that does not present a genuine threat to safety should generally be addressed through school discipline, restorative practices, counseling, and other educational interventions rather than criminal prosecution.

I support clearly redefining the responsibilities of School Resource Officers so that their focus remains on school safety, emergency response, and serious criminal conduct; not routine disciplinary issues. Doing so protects students while reducing unnecessary justice system involvement that can have lasting consequences for young people.

4. Under what circumstances would your office seek diversion and alternatives to incarceration?

Diversion and alternatives to incarceration should be considered whenever they are consistent with public safety, the interests of victims, and the long-term goal of reducing recidivism. The decision should not be based solely on the charged offense, but on the totality of the circumstances, including the individual's criminal history, the nature of the alleged conduct, the underlying causes of the behavior, the wishes of the victim when appropriate, and the likelihood that treatment or other interventions will better protect the community than incarceration.

My office would actively pursue diversion for many first-time and lower-level offenders, as well as for individuals whose conduct is substantially driven by poverty, mental illness, substance use disorder, or other treatable behavioral health conditions, provided they do not pose an ongoing threat to public safety. Diversion should require meaningful accountability through treatment, counseling, restorative justice, community service, education, or other individualized conditions designed to address the root causes of criminal behavior.

Alternatives to incarceration should also be considered at sentencing, particularly when research demonstrates they are more likely to reduce future offending than a jail or prison sentence. Probation with evidence-based conditions, specialty courts, restorative justice programs, and structured treatment can often produce better outcomes for both the individual and our community.

Recognizing however that diversion is not appropriate in every case. Individuals who commit serious acts of violence, repeatedly victimize others, or present a significant ongoing danger to the community may require incarceration after conviction to protect public safety. My responsibility as District Attorney will be to exercise prosecutorial discretion thoughtfully, using incarceration where it is necessary, expanding evidence-based alternatives whenever we can safely, and effectively achieving accountability, rehabilitation, and public safety.

Charging/Pre-Trial:

1. **Do you support the elimination of cash bail? (Y/N) If not, under what circumstances do you think cash bail is appropriate?**

Yes, I support moving toward eliminating cash bail as a determinant of pretrial release. A person's financial resources should not determine whether they remain incarcerated while presumed innocent.

That said, Massachusetts has an important distinction from many other states: commercial bail bonds are prohibited, meaning bail is posted directly with the court rather than through for-profit bail bond companies. While this makes our system in MA less punitive than those in many jurisdictions, it does not eliminate the inequities that arise when two individuals with similar risk profiles receive different outcomes based solely upon their ability to pay.

Decisions about pretrial detention should be based on risk, not wealth. Individuals who pose a genuine danger to the community or a substantial risk of failing to appear should be addressed through the existing legal mechanisms for preventive detention, such as dangerousness proceedings where authorized by law, rather than through setting an unattainable cash bail. Conversely, individuals who do not present those risks should generally be released on the least restrictive conditions necessary to ensure public safety and further appearance in court.

2. **Under what circumstances would you move for dangerousness/58A?**

There cannot be an à la carte approach to moving pursuant to 58A to detain a defendant. While the statute delineates which offenses are eligible, that does not mean that every offense on every occasion deserves the extraordinary step of moving for detention pursuant to 58A. This should involve sound prosecutorial discretion along with weighing what circumstances rise to the level of the most serious of pre-trial detentions for each individual case.

3. **Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe that adult sanctions should be sought against a juvenile?**

The overwhelming majority of young people who come into contact with the justice system should be addressed through the juvenile system, which recognizes the differences between adolescent and adult development and focuses on accountability, rehabilitation, and reducing future involvement in the criminal legal system.

Research and experience demonstrate that young people are still developing the judgment, impulse control, and decision-making abilities that distinguish them from adults. For that reason, seeking adult sanctions against a juvenile should be an extraordinary measure and not a routine prosecutorial tool.

My office would reserve consideration of adult sanctions for the rarest and most serious cases involving a juvenile who is alleged to have committed an exceptionally violent offense, where there is a significant threat to public safety, and where a careful assessment demonstrates that the juvenile system cannot provide an appropriate level of accountability or protection for the community.

Any decision to seek adult sanctions would require heightened supervisory review and consideration of the individual circumstances of the youth, including age, maturity, developmental history, role in the offense, prior interventions, capacity for rehabilitation, and the specific facts and severity of the alleged conduct.

The goal of the juvenile justice system should be to hold young people accountable while recognizing their capacity for change. Adult sanctions should be reserved only for the truly exceptional cases where no other option can adequately address the seriousness of the conduct and the need to protect the community.

4. **What steps will your office take to limit unnecessary criminal prosecution for those accused of minor non-dangerous offenses?**

Criminal prosecution is one of the most serious actions the government can take against an individual, and it should be used thoughtfully. A criminal record can create lifelong barriers to employment, housing, education, and overall stability. For individuals accused of minor, non-dangerous offenses, prosecution should not be the automatic response when other approaches can achieve accountability and improve public safety.

As District Attorney, I will implement clear policies encouraging prosecutors to consider alternatives to traditional prosecution, including diversion programs, restorative justice, treatment-based programs, community-based services, warnings, and other appropriate resolutions. Prosecutors will be trained to evaluate not only the alleged offense, but also the individual's circumstances, prior history, underlying causes of the conduct, likelihood of reoffending, and the interests of any impacted victims.

My office will prioritize resources toward cases involving violence, exploitation, repeat dangerous conduct, and threats to public safety. At the same time, we will recognize that many lower-level offenses are better addressed through interventions that reduce the likelihood of future harm rather than creating unnecessary barriers that can make successful reintegration more difficult.

I will also establish mechanisms to review charging practices and collect data to ensure that discretionary decisions are being made consistently and fairly across Norfolk County. The goal of prosecution should not be to maximize the number of cases filed, but rather, it should be to achieve justice and improve safety in our communities.

5. **In many cases a minor criminal charge can have devastating immigration consequences. What will you do to work with our immigrant populations to ensure they are not exposed to additional punitive consequences? Would your office commit to considering immigration consequences as part of the prosecution decision?**

Yes. My office will consider immigration consequences as part of individualized prosecutorial decision-making.

A criminal conviction for these individuals can have life-changing consequences beyond the sentence imposed by a court. For many members of our immigrant communities, even a minor criminal matter can affect their ability to remain with

their families, maintain employment, or continue building their lives in Massachusetts. These consequences must be considered when prosecutors make charging and resolution decisions.

As District Attorney, I will ensure that prosecutors understand their obligation to make informed decisions that account for the full impact of a criminal case. This includes meaningful consultation with defense counsel (to the extent that they are ethically able) regarding potential immigration consequences and careful consideration of whether a particular charge or disposition is necessary to achieve accountability and public safety.

My office will also work to improve language access and communication with immigrant communities so that victims, witnesses, and defendants can meaningfully participate in the justice system. Trust in law enforcement and the courts depends on ensuring that all residents feel safe seeking help and engaging with the legal system.

Considering immigration consequences does not mean excusing criminal conduct or creating a separate standard of justice. It means recognizing the full consequences of prosecutorial decisions and ensuring that outcomes are fair, proportionate, and consistent with the interests of justice.

6. **How will you take mandatory minimums into account in charging decisions? In what circumstances will your office avoid pressing charges that carry mandatory minimum sentences?**

Mandatory minimum sentences significantly limit judicial discretion and can result in punishments that are disproportionate to an individual's actual culpability, or are inconsistent with the interests of justice. For that reason, my office will not treat charges carrying mandatory minimum sentences as routine charging decisions.

Every case involving a potential mandatory minimum sentence will receive heightened supervisory review to determine whether the mandatory minimum charge is both legally appropriate and necessary to achieve justice and protect public safety. That review will consider the individual's role in the offense, criminal history, the circumstances of the alleged conduct, the impact on victims, the strength of the evidence, and whether a different charge would more accurately reflect the individual's conduct while still ensuring meaningful accountability.

Where the evidence and the interests of justice support doing so, my office will consider amending charges to avoid unnecessarily triggering a mandatory minimum sentence. Prosecutors should exercise their discretion thoughtfully, recognizing that "one-size-fits-all" sentencing schemes often fail to account for the unique circumstances of each case.

At the same time, there will be cases involving serious violence, the exploitation of vulnerable victims, or other conduct posing a significant threat to public safety where charges carrying mandatory minimum sentences are appropriate. My guiding principle will be that charging decisions should reflect the facts of the individual case, and not simply the most severe charge available. Every person deserves careful, individualized consideration before facing a sentence that removes much of the Court's ability to tailor a just outcome.

Goals, Access, and Transparency

1. **In many prosecutor's offices, prosecutor performance is measured by their conviction rates. How would you go about changing a culture where the focus is on achieving justice, not just 'winning'?**

A prosecutor's role is not to win cases; it is to seek justice. A conviction is only meaningful if it is achieved through a fair process and reflects a just outcome. A culture that measures success primarily through conviction rates risks creating incentives that prioritize outcomes over judgment, fairness, and public safety.

As District Attorney, I would establish clear expectations that prosecutors are evaluated based on the quality of their decision-making, their preparation, their ethical obligations, their ability to exercise sound discretion, and their commitment to treating victims, witnesses, defendants, and the courts with respect.

The success of a prosecutor's office should be measured through broader outcomes, including reductions in violent crime, victim satisfaction, diversion success rates, recidivism, case processing times, racial and geographic disparities, and the fair and consistent application of prosecutorial discretion. A prosecutor who dismisses a case because the evidence does not support a conviction has fulfilled their duty; not failed.

Changing culture requires leadership from the top. I would prioritize training, mentorship, and supervision to reinforce that prosecutors are ministers of justice, not simply advocates seeking the highest number of convictions or the longest sentences. I would create an environment where prosecutors are encouraged to ask not only "Can we prove this case?" but also "Is this the right case to bring, is this the right resolution, and does this outcome make our community safer?"

The strongest prosecutor's offices are not those that win the most cases on paper. They are those that earn the trust of the communities they serve by making careful, ethical, and transparent decisions every day.

2. **What efforts will you take to increase language access for immigrants beyond the right to a court interpreter? What will you do to reduce language barriers between your staff and the witnesses, victims, and others they serve or interact with?**

Language access is essential to ensuring that every person can meaningfully participate in the justice system. Interpreters in court are necessary, but they are only one part of creating a system that is accessible and trusted.

As District Attorney, I will work to expand language access throughout the office by improving translated materials, providing staff with access to qualified interpretation services during investigations and community interactions, and ensuring that victims and witnesses can communicate with prosecutors in the language in which they are most fluent and comfortable.

I will also evaluate the language needs of the communities we serve and provide training to staff on working effectively with individuals from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Our goal should be that language is never a barrier to reporting a crime, seeking assistance, or receiving fair treatment from the criminal justice system.

3. **Will you commit to collecting and sharing data with the public in multiple languages?** (Y/N)

Yes.

4. **Do you commit to bringing in academic research partners to evaluate new and old policies and to publishing results publicly?** (Y/N)

Yes.

Civil Forfeiture

1. **In what, if any, circumstances will your office seek civil forfeiture?**

Civil forfeiture can be an important tool when used appropriately to disrupt criminal enterprises, seize the proceeds of illegal activity, and prevent individuals or organizations from continuing to profit from serious criminal conduct. However, because forfeiture can result in the loss of property without a criminal conviction, it requires careful oversight and a commitment to protecting due process rights.

As District Attorney, my office would seek civil forfeiture only in limited circumstances involving a clear connection between the property and serious criminal activity, such as organized criminal enterprises, large-scale drug trafficking, fraud, or other cases where forfeiture is necessary to prevent continued harm or remove the financial incentives of criminal conduct. It should not be used as a routine enforcement tool or as a substitute for proving criminal wrongdoing.

2. **Do you think it is appropriate for forfeited assets to be given to law enforcement?** (Y/N) **Why or why not?**

I do not believe forfeited assets should automatically be directed back to the law enforcement agencies responsible for making seizures. Doing so creates a potential conflict of interest by allowing agencies to benefit financially from enforcement decisions. Any forfeiture system must prioritize justice, transparency, and public confidence rather than creating incentives for unnecessary seizures.

3. **Do you agree to hold yourself to a higher standard for civil asset forfeiture than that required by law, i.e., to increase the standard of seeking forfeiture from a preponderance of evidence to beyond a reasonable doubt, and only after a conviction has occurred in the case in which the office is eligible to seek forfeiture?**

Yes, I would commit to holding my office to a higher standard than the minimum legal requirements for civil asset forfeiture. With that being said, only the legislature can turn that standard of proof into statutory law. But, whenever possible, my office would seek forfeiture only after a criminal conviction and additionally where the evidence establishes the connection between the property and criminal conduct beyond a reasonable doubt. The power to take someone's property is significant, and prosecutors should exercise that authority with the highest level of caution and fairness.

The goal of forfeiture should be to prevent and disrupt serious criminal activity; not to generate revenue or impose punishment outside the protections of the criminal justice system.

Post-Conviction

1. **Lengthy terms of probation and supervised release can impede a person's successful reentry into society. What do you consider to be the role of probation in reentry?**

Probation should serve as a tool to support successful reentry, promote accountability, and reduce the likelihood of future harm. Not to create unnecessary barriers that make stability more difficult to achieve.

Conditions of probation should be individualized, evidence-based, and focused on addressing the factors that contribute to criminal behavior. Excessively lengthy supervision periods, unnecessary conditions, and technical violations that do not involve new criminal conduct can undermine the very goals probation is intended to achieve by creating obstacles to employment, housing, treatment, and family stability.

As District Attorney, my office would consider probation recommendations that are proportionate, achievable, and connected to legitimate public safety goals. We should recognize successful reentry as a public safety strategy and support pathways that allow individuals who have served their sentences to become productive members of their communities.

Probation works best when it provides accountability while connecting people with the resources they need to succeed. The goal should not be supervision for its own sake, but reducing recidivism and improving long-term safety for victims, families, and communities.

2. **Prosecutors have a role in supporting or objecting to expungement petitions that otherwise meet all the eligibility criteria of the law. What standards/criteria will you use to support or oppose an otherwise eligible petition?**

When an individual meets the legal requirements for expungement (or “sealing” a record), my office will approach the petition with the understanding that successful reentry and reintegration into society are important components of public safety.

A criminal record can create significant and lasting barriers to employment, housing, education, and other opportunities, even after a person has completed their sentence and demonstrated rehabilitation. Continued opposition to an otherwise eligible petition to seal should not be automatic simply because a conviction occurred in the past.

In reviewing an expungement request or petition to seal, my office would consider factors including the nature and seriousness of the offense, the amount of time that has passed, the individual’s conduct since the case was resolved, completion of court-ordered obligations, evidence of rehabilitation, and any demonstrated risk to public safety. The views of victims and the impact of the original conduct would also be considered where appropriate.

My office would support eligible petitions when continued public access to the record no longer serves a legitimate public safety purpose. Any opposition would be based on specific, individualized concerns, and not upon a general presumption against allowing people who have earned a second chance to move forward.

The goal of the criminal legal system should include accountability, but it should also recognize rehabilitation. For many individuals, removing barriers created by old records can strengthen families, improve economic stability, and reduce the likelihood of future system involvement; which in turn improve our community.

3. **What factors would you prioritize when deciding whether to support an application for parole or clemency?**

Decisions regarding parole and clemency should be individualized and based on a careful assessment of public safety, accountability, rehabilitation, and the circumstances of the original offense.

In evaluating whether to support an application, my office would consider factors including the individual's conduct while incarcerated, participation in education, treatment, or vocational programs, acceptance of responsibility, demonstrated rehabilitation, release plan, community support, age at the time of the offense, and the likelihood of successful reentry. We would also consider the impact on victims and survivors, while recognizing that their perspectives are one important factor among many in determining whether continued incarceration serves a legitimate public safety purpose.

A sentence should provide accountability, but public safety is not always served by the continued incarceration of individuals who have demonstrated meaningful rehabilitation and who no longer present a significant risk to the community. My office will approach parole and clemency matters with fairness, transparency, and a commitment to evidence-based decision-making.

4. **What will you do to ensure that medical and elder parole is made available to qualifying incarcerated people notwithstanding the opposition of victims' families?**

Medical and elder parole are important components of a justice system that recognizes that circumstances change over time and that continued incarceration is not always necessary to protect public safety. When an incarcerated person meets the legal criteria for release, those decisions should be based on the statutory requirements, the individual's current circumstances, and an informed assessment of risk, and not solely on the understandable emotions surrounding the original offense.

When a medical or elder parole matter involving a case prosecuted by my office comes before the appropriate authority, my office will conduct an individualized review that considers the severity of the original offense, the individual's conduct and rehabilitation while incarcerated, medical condition, age, release plan, and current risk to public safety. We will provide the decision-maker with an accurate and complete assessment from our perspective rather than opposing release automatically.

The purpose of parole is not to disregard the harm caused by a crime. It is to determine whether continued incarceration remains necessary to achieve justice

and public safety. A fair system must be capable of recognizing both the lasting impact of serious offenses and the possibility that people can change over time.

5. **Do you commit to creating a conviction and/or sentencing integrity unit to review past cases for misconduct, mistake, and consonance with justice? (Y/N)**

Yes.

A conviction integrity unit is an essential component of a modern prosecutor's office. A prosecutor's obligation to seek justice does not end when a conviction is obtained; it continues through ensuring that convictions were achieved fairly, lawfully, and consistently with the interests of justice.

The Norfolk County District Attorney's Office already has a conviction integrity process in place, and as District Attorney I would build upon and strengthen that foundation. I would ensure that the review process is transparent, independent-minded, and focused on identifying cases where new evidence, potential misconduct, unreliable evidence, constitutional violations, or other circumstances call the reliability or fairness of a conviction into question.

A conviction integrity unit should not be viewed as a criticism of past prosecutors or law enforcement officers. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that our justice system is imperfect and is at its strongest when it has the ability to examine itself and correct mistakes when they occur.

The work of such a unit should also help identify systemic issues and improve future practices, including through training, policy review, and data analysis. Public confidence depends not on pretending errors never occur, but on demonstrating that the justice system has the courage and commitment to address them when they do.

6. **In [*Commonwealth v. Mattis*](#), the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that mandatory life sentences without the possibility of parole are unconstitutional for "emerging adults" who were aged 18, 19, or 20 at the time of their offense. The decision is retroactive, giving hundreds of convicted individuals the opportunity for a parole hearing. What are your thoughts on the *Mattis* decision, and what would be your approach if one involving your office went before the Parole Board?**

The Supreme Judicial Court's decision in *Commonwealth v. Mattis* recognizes an important principle supported by science and experience, that is, that young adults continue to develop in ways that can affect judgment, decision-making, and capacity for change. At the same time, the serious nature of the offenses involved cannot be overlooked, and the impact on victims and survivors must remain a central consideration.

I believe accountability and the possibility of rehabilitation can exist together. A sentence should reflect the seriousness of the conduct, but our justice system should also recognize that people can grow, change, and demonstrate meaningful rehabilitation over time.

If a case prosecuted by my office were to come before the Parole Board under *Mattis*, my office would conduct an individualized review of the circumstances. We would consider the facts of the offense, the impact on victims and survivors, the

individual's conduct while incarcerated, participation in education or treatment programs, acceptance of responsibility, evidence of rehabilitation, release plan, and any other factors relevant to assessing current risk and public safety.

My office would not take a categorical position for or against release simply because of the nature of the original conviction. Instead, we would provide the Parole Board with a thorough and honest assessment based on the available evidence and our obligation to seek justice. The question before the Board should be whether continued incarceration is necessary to protect public safety and whether the individual has demonstrated the capacity to successfully reenter the community via rehabilitation.

A justice system that recognizes accountability while also recognizing human capacity for change is a stronger and more effective system.

Police/Government Actor Misconduct

1. **Do you commit to creating a Do Not Call List to keep track of police officers that commit misconduct, and that your office will no longer call to testify at trial or allow to initiate cases, write sworn police reports, testify at pre-trial hearings, etc.?**

Yes. This would be a number one priority. For far too long, corrupt police officers have destroyed justice for victims and have caused far too many wrongful convictions. They are a liability to the entire community.

2. **Are there any other sanctions that you will commit to to attempt to prevent police officers from committing misconduct?**

Yes. While a District Attorney cannot directly discipline or terminate police officers, the office can and should use its authority to promote accountability and protect the integrity of the justice system.

In addition to maintaining a robust Do Not Call list, my office will promptly disclose credibility and misconduct information as required by law and our constitutional obligations. Where it is discovered that an officer has engaged in serious misconduct, I will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and refer the matter to the Massachusetts POST Commission for investigation or decertification.

My office will also establish clear protocols requiring supervisory review whenever allegations of officer misconduct arise during a criminal case. Where misconduct undermines the integrity of an investigation or prosecution, prosecutors should be prepared to dismiss charges, decline prosecution, or take whatever corrective action justice requires.

Finally, accountability should be proactive, not merely reactive. I would work collaboratively with police leadership to identify patterns of misconduct, improve training where appropriate, and encourage policies that reduce the likelihood of constitutional violations. Effective policing and police accountability are not competing values, but rather they are mutually reinforcing, and both are essential to maintaining public trust.

3. **When it is determined that certain law enforcement officers have committed serious misconduct or criminal activity in past or present cases, do you commit to**

reviewing all cases previously or subsequently handled by those officers? What do you plan to do with the cases you identify, if anything? Would you initiate a sentinel event review?

Yes. When a law enforcement officer is found to have committed serious misconduct or criminal activity, particularly misconduct involving truthfulness, bias, the use of excessive force, the fabrication or destruction of evidence, or other conduct that calls into question the integrity of criminal investigations. My office will conduct a systematic review of cases in which that officer played a material role.

The purpose of that review will be to determine whether the misconduct has affected the reliability of the evidence, the fairness of the proceedings, or the outcome of the case. Where appropriate, my office will disclose newly discovered information to defense counsel, support post-conviction relief, dismiss charges, or take whatever other action justice requires. Our obligation is not simply to defend past convictions, but to ensure confidence that convictions were obtained fairly and lawfully.

I also support conducting sentinel event reviews in appropriate circumstances. These reviews should focus on identifying systemic failures rather than assigning blame alone. When conducted collaboratively and transparently, they can reveal weaknesses in investigative practices, evidence handling, supervision, or communication that, once addressed, reduce the likelihood of future misconduct and strengthen public confidence in the criminal justice system.

Police accountability must be viewed as an essential component of public safety. Holding officers to high professional standards protects the integrity of legitimate investigations, strengthens public trust, and ultimately supports the countless officers who perform their duties honorably.

4. Will your office commit to using independent prosecutors to investigate cases of alleged police misconduct and brutality?

Yes.

Protecting Access to Reproductive Health Care

1. Will you oppose any effort to criminalize, penalize, intimidate, or surveil people who seek, provide, or assist in accessing reproductive health care, including the criminalization of pregnancy outcomes? (Y/N)

Yes.

I will oppose any effort to criminalize, penalize, intimidate, or surveil individuals seeking, providing, or assisting in accessing legally protected reproductive health care. Decisions regarding reproductive health care are deeply personal medical decisions that should be made by patients in consultation with their healthcare providers; not through criminal prosecution.

As District Attorney, my office will respect and enforce Massachusetts law protecting access to reproductive health care and will not use prosecutorial resources to pursue cases based on legally protected medical care, ever. The criminal legal

system should not be used to target patients, healthcare providers, or those assisting individuals in accessing lawful healthcare services.

Protecting public safety includes protecting people's ability to access healthcare without fear of criminal punishment or government intrusion.

2. **Will you support protecting patients, providers, and all those involved in facilitating access to reproductive health care services from out-of-state investigations, prosecutions, or civil actions related to legally-protected reproductive and gender-affirming health care service and commit to enforcing Massachusetts shield laws by declining to investigate or prosecute out-of-state subpoenas and arrest warrants related to legally-protected health care activity?**
(Y/N)

Yes.

I support protecting patients, healthcare providers, and all individuals who assist in accessing legally protected reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare services in Massachusetts. As District Attorney, my office will follow Massachusetts law, including applicable shield laws, and will not use prosecutorial resources to investigate or prosecute conduct that is lawful in this Commonwealth.

Healthcare decisions should not become the basis for criminal investigation or prosecution simply because another jurisdiction has adopted different laws or policies. The role of a prosecutor is to seek justice and enforce the law fairly, and not to use the power of the office to undermine legally protected rights.

My office will ensure that individuals seeking healthcare, providers delivering lawful care, and those assisting patients can access and provide services without fear that the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office will participate in efforts to criminalize conduct that ought to always be lawful.

White-Collar Crime

1. **Since the 1990s, prosecution of white-collar crime has [declined dramatically](#). How would you describe your approach to prosecuting financial crimes and other white-collar crimes? What principles, experiences, and priorities would you bring to this work?**

The criminal legal system must operate on the principle that justice applies equally to everyone, regardless of wealth, power, profession, or position. A prosecutor's responsibility is not only to hold individuals accountable for crimes committed in our communities, but also to ensure that those with influence and resources are not treated differently under the law.

White-collar crimes can cause devastating harm to individuals, families, businesses, and public institutions. Financial fraud, exploitation of vulnerable populations, wage theft, corruption, identity theft, and schemes targeting seniors can have profound consequences, even when the harm is less visible than traditional forms of crime. These offenses deserve thoughtful, well-resourced investigation and prosecution.

As District Attorney, I would prioritize collaboration with specialized investigators, financial experts, regulatory agencies, and law enforcement partners to identify and prosecute cases where the evidence demonstrates criminal wrongdoing. I would also ensure that prosecutorial resources are directed based on harm and public safety impact, and not on the status or resources of the accused.

My experience as a public defender has reinforced the importance of evidence-based decision-making and careful review of every case before acting. That same commitment to fairness applies regardless of whether the accused is a person with limited resources or someone with significant wealth and influence.

Recent years have reinforced the importance of maintaining public confidence that our justice system does not operate under a different set of rules for the powerful. A fair system must be one where accountability is determined by conduct and evidence, and not by a person's connections, title, or their ability to hire advocates.

Legislation & Advocacy

1. **Sentencing Reform.** The 2018 criminal justice reform bill was an important first step in reducing mass incarceration. However, in our “liberal” state, incarceration rates remain much higher than they are in other countries, and sentencing laws can be even more punitive than those in states viewed as conservative. Do you support the following reforms?
 - a. Eliminating mandatory minimums for all drug offenses? (Y/N) **Yes.**
 - b. [Raising the age](#) of criminal majority from 18 to 21, in line with research that shows that young offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to reoffend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood? (Y/N) **Yes.**
 - c. Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth close in age? Massachusetts is one of only three states that criminalizes consensual sexual activity between two adolescents. (Y/N) **Yes.**
 - d. Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application? (Y/N) **Yes.**
 - e. Restructuring joint venture sentencing such that accomplices to murder are sentenced proportionally to their level of responsibility for a death rather than a minimum sentence of life without parole? (Y/N) **Yes.**
2. The 2020 police accountability law passed by the Massachusetts Legislature contained a number of steps forward, but important measures were left out. Would you support legislation to do the following?
 - a. Eliminating qualified immunity for state and local police and correctional officers so that individuals whose constitutional rights are violated can have their fair day in court? (Y/N) **Yes.**

- b. Enacting the recommendations from the special legislative commission on facial recognition, to implement privacy, civil rights, and due process protections to govern police use of the technology? (Y/N) **Yes.**
3. **Solitary Confinement.** Would you support legislation to create universal access to productive out of cell time with programming, education and vocational training for all incarcerated people? (Y/N) **Yes.**
4. **Prison Moratorium.** Would you support a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails in the Commonwealth? (Y/N) **Yes. Prisons do not make us safer- access to affordable housing, quality education, plentiful jobs, and health care infrastructure (including mental and substance use disorder treatment) are what reduces crime and makes communities safer.**
5. **DOC Oversight.** Would you support legislation to establish an inspector general for the Department of Correction? (Y/N) **Yes.**
6. **Keeping Families Connected.** Would you support eliminating the arbitrary, unnecessary restrictions on visitation rights in prisons and jails? (Y/N) **Yes.**
7. **Clean Slate.** The Massachusetts court system maintains a database of name-based court arraignment records, referred to as Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI). Many people are trapped in poverty and shut out of jobs and housing because of the difficult process to expunge their records, even for cases that did not end in a conviction or occurred when they were teenagers. Would you support...
 - a. Requiring the Commissioner of Probation to automatically seal criminal and juvenile records after the applicable waiting periods without requiring individuals to file a petition to do so? (Y/N) **Yes.**
 - b. Requiring the immediate sealing of a criminal offense if the charge did not end in a conviction? (Y/N) **Yes, with the limited exception to allow individuals to obtain copies of the dismissals for their own records (for example, if it ever becomes a question with immigration officers and the records are no longer available to be found).**
8. **Reentry.** The Department of Correction's stated mission is to "prepare [individuals in custody] for safe and successful reentry into the community," but regularly fails to live up to that. Do you support the following measures to strengthen reentry efforts...
 - a. Mandating that correctional facilities in Massachusetts assist incarcerated individuals in acquiring valid Massachusetts identification cards before their release? (Y/N) **Yes.**
 - b. Increasing funding for reentry-related programming? (Y/N) **Yes, as it stands, the DOC does little to prepare the convicted for societal reentry.**
9. **Gun Violence Prevention.** Will you vote YES to protect the 2024 gun safety bill on the ballot in November 2026? (Y/N) **Yes.**

I support protecting the 2024 gun safety law and believe Massachusetts should continue to pursue evidence-based measures that reduce gun violence while respecting the rights of responsible firearm owners.

As District Attorney, my focus will be on preventing gun violence through effective enforcement against individuals who use firearms to harm others, strengthening partnerships with communities and law enforcement, and supporting policies that reduce the likelihood that firearms fall into the hands of people who pose a danger to themselves or others.

Public safety requires a comprehensive approach, including holding those who commit gun crimes accountable while supporting proven strategies that prevent violence before it occurs.