



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

**Candidate:** Mary Ann Nelson

**Office Sought:** State Representative

**District:** 15th Suffolk

**Party:** Democratic Party

**Website:** n/a

**Twitter:** n/a

**Facebook:** [Mary Ann for Boston](#)

**Instagram:** n/a

## 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?**

The 15th Suffolk needs imaginative leadership who is willing to work to represent the district. The Rep has to start again from the bottom. In late April, I looked at the field of candidates and decided we deserved better. I decided to run because I want the best state rep as possible.

My 1st legislative priority is to pass the legislation proposed by the City Council and the Mayor to keep Boston a diverse and affordable city. I anticipate the City will be looking for Rent Stabilization legislation and other affordable housing legislation.

My 2nd legislative priority is making sure the annual state budgets adequately funds education, natural resources & environmental protection and transportation.

My 3rd Legislative priority is major systemic change; this includes restructuring of MBTA and RTAs to improve public transportation; changing the state education law, specifically eliminating the receivership provisions and improving insurance health coverage for all.

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

Many years of experience as a Boston resident, my legal background, my state government experience, my community involvement and my public health background. I am very imaginative, good at problem solving and can often find the way for everyone to find the outcome successful. I am also good at making connections between matters that could lead to resolution of matters.

### **3. What do you view as the biggest obstacles to passing progressive policy at the state level, and how do you plan to overcome these obstacles?**

I have no personal experience with this. I speculate that a significant portion of the population in certain districts may not want the progressive legislation. The state legislators may be voting the way their constituents want. 1st NGOs need to educate voters who can contact their elected officials. As State Rep, my job is to identify objections to legislation of my fellow reps and remove them.

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

Property Tax Legislation that allows cities and towns to tax homes of Seniors at significantly lower amounts. Currently, the main Senior Tax program allows Seniors to defer taxes until property transferred or owner's death.

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

Saturday, May 14, my organization opened a new community garden on a formerly City owned lot. This required getting most of the community to support the garden plan as opposed to the affordable housing proposal.. We organized meetings of the gardeners and had them speak with their neighbors about the gardening plan. We met with the affordable housing people to negotiate another city owned parcel for them and worked with the DND staff, Not a board coalition, but everyone working towards the best outcome.

**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.**

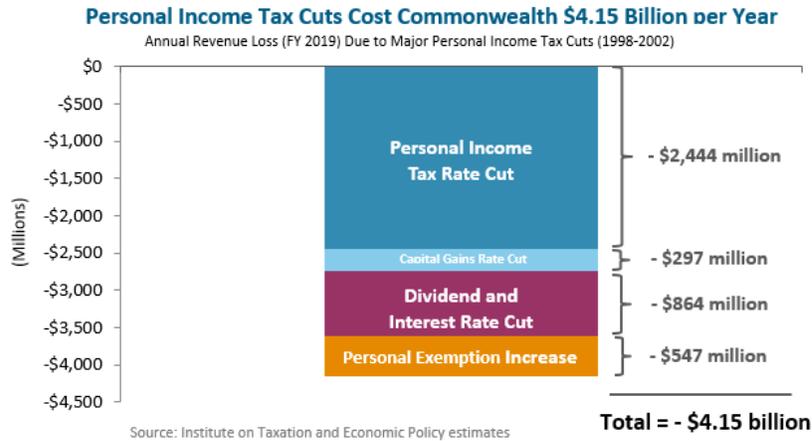
N/A

## II. The Issues

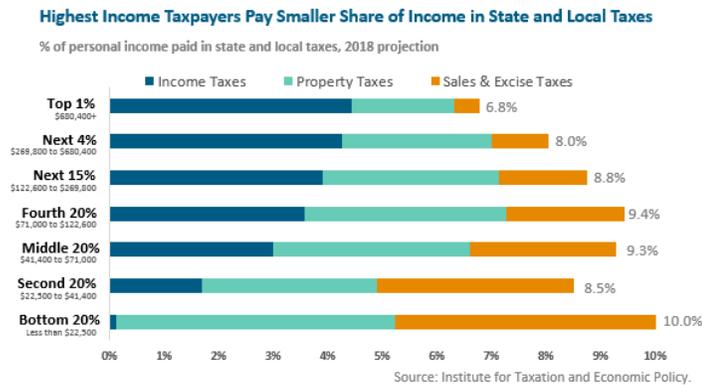
### A. Revenue and Taxation

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.).**

Haven't done much

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.

I need to learn more about this.

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)?

NO. As a voter, I would vote yes, if it's on the ballot. As a state Rep., I would have to ask, what is it trying to achieve and is there a better way to accomplish the same thing. Maybe restructuring the tax code. Also except special taxes on a partic;ar industry or product or entry fees to a facility, I don't support designating the use of funds outside of the budget process.

4. **Progressive Revenue.** The Fair Share Amendment ballot initiative will raise much-needed revenue for our commonwealth, but we will require more resources to meet current needs. Do you support the following measures to make a more progressive tax code?

- a. **Raising the corporate minimum tax for larger companies? (The corporate minimum tax is currently only \$456.)**

YES.

- b. **Imposing a tax on the portion of corporations' US profits that are shifted to offshore tax havens?**

YES.

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

YES.

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

YES.

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

YES.

5. **PILOT Reform.** Massachusetts is home to some of the world's most prestigious cultural, educational, and medical institutions, but many of them are exempt from property taxes.

- a. **Do you support enabling cities and towns to require large tax-exempt not-for-profit institutions (i.e., with property valued at or above \$15 million) to make payments in lieu of taxes to the municipality equal to 25 percent of the amount that would be paid if they were not exempt?**

YES. Not sure if 25% is the right amount and for institutions in not good financial position maybe a modification in the amount.

- 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?**

NO.

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. This seems to be a big topic which I need to learn more about. Black owned Businesses in Boston seem to support this as a source of capital.

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

YES. However, May have to reconsider for Mass based manufacturing companies.

## 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.

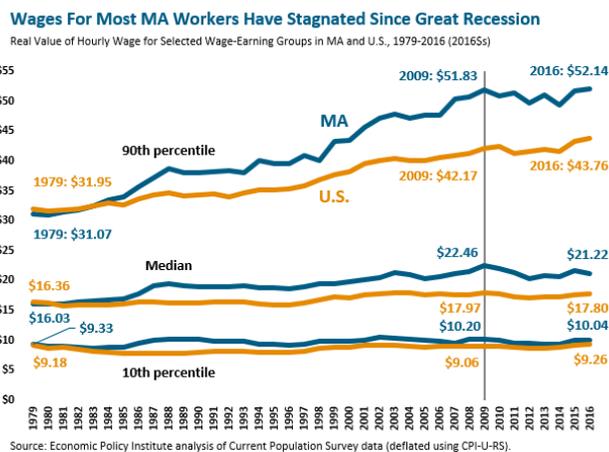
In recent decades, unions have been under attack. However, unions played—and continue to play—a pivotal role in creating a strong middle class. With weaker unions (or no unions at all) come weaker social and economic rights and an imbalanced economy.

### 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.)**

My own wages have been stagnant. I don't have any proposals or principles on this at the moment. May have some when I learn what options elected officials have to change this.

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

YES. Yes, but tipped workers who are earning significant amounts in tips may think \$50 an hour does not cover their lost tips. If the idea is to replace tips with an increase in wages. Need more information.

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?

NO. Need more info. A single relationship is different than a long term subcontracting relationship

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. I find the idea intriguing but wonder what the collection process would look like and what the value is?.

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?

NO. Service work by its nature has a certain flexibility required. I am not sure of what the issues are involved. Would there be an emergency exemption? In Parts of Boston, such as Mission Hill, some employees value long term service workers and operate their businesses to keep and retain staff. I have a feeling this is an exception.

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?

NO. I am defaulting to NO because I don't know that much about this. In many union contracts, I thought this was standard. Absent a union contract, I don't think employment contracts should require giving up legal rights but as I said, I don't know that much about this.

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. Would be good to see how the family leave was being implemented and its impact.

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. Municipal Unions should negotiate this.

9. **Gig Economy.** More than 200,000 workers in Massachusetts now work in the “gig economy,” with the rise of app-based platforms. However, their employers often seek to evade labor law in order to avoid treating them as employees and provide decent pay and benefits.

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

YES.

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

YES.

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

YES.

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

NO. Sounds like a good idea but I don't know enough to have an opinion so I default to no.

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?**

NO. I don't know that much about the unionization efforts at the State House: who is included; who is not. Employees should look out for the interest of the legislators and committees they are working for. A permanent protected staff of union workers may not be able to do that. The legislature may want to establish and fund job categories that all legislators and committees should follow.

- 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.

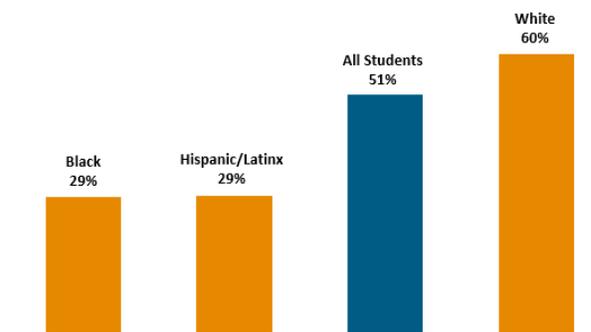
Public education has also been under attack by powerful corporate interests seeking to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups invest millions of dollars to promote the expansion of privately run charter schools, which siphon money from our public K-12 districts while largely excluding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

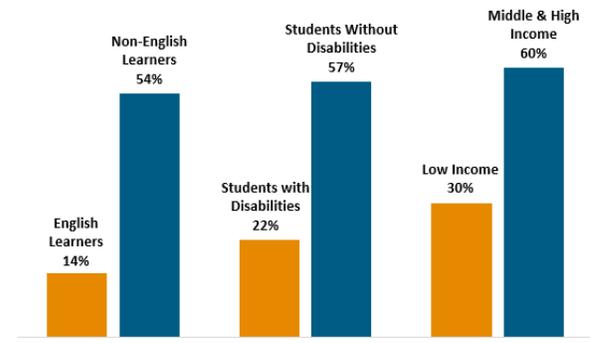
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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



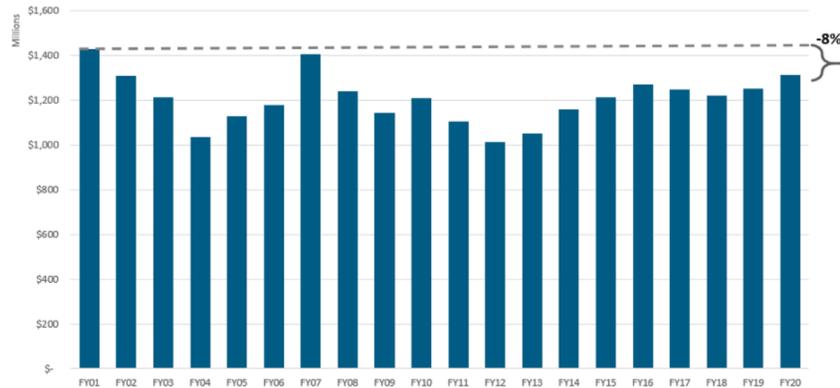
Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

[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.).**

This questionnaire is getting tedious. Are you getting candidates who have written papers on these topics. I support public education, having gone to public schools myself. We need to free up teachers to teach and stop micromanaging schools. All schools should receive sufficient funding. I have had no exposure to Mass. public schools so I don't know that much about them. i will listen to the concerns of parents in the district and the Mayor and work to supply what they think their schools and children need. Yes, the state needs to step up and fund public colleges and universities. Maybe they have some of the administrative bloat that private universities are experiencing and we could reduce that. That would be part of the budget process.

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. We should get major employers to provide some of this for their employees' families. Parents reading to children is the best way for them to get a good start in education. I had that benefit in my family. I understand that now most parents are too busy working to have time to read to their kids. I see toddlers on the T engaged in watching cellphones. I wonder if we can create ways for families to be more involved with their young children.

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. Charter schools are a drain on public schools.

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

YES.

5. **Receivership.** The Lawrence Public Schools, Holyoke Public Schools, and Southbridge Public Schools are currently under state receivership, with a state-appointed receiver assuming the powers of a superintendent or democratically elected school committee. The state takeover has not produced sustainable gains and has at times been characterized by [chronic mismanagement](#). Would you support ending the practice of state receivership and returning power to democratically elected school committees?

YES.

6. **Comprehensive Sex Education.** Do you support requiring public schools that teach sexual health education to provide age-appropriate, medically accurate information that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities and includes topics such as consent and the effective use of contraception?

YES.

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

YES. Curriculum should include this as part of all subjects taught. Have a broad education and understanding is important.

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

YES. But the devil is in the details. We need to create a system that prevents people from showing up and taking advantage of this. I think people may overstay their visas to avoid the expensive option of coming as an international student. Also people will move here to take advantage of this. Someone who came with their parents as a kid is totally different than someone who came as a late teen early 20 something. What about those who work here for 15 years and

then decided they want to go to school. Should they also get it? I am not sure.

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

YES. Sounds like a good idea, but this is very expensive. Also give the wide range of learning issues people have, we would have to make sure we could support them through college. 1st goal should be to reduce or stabilize tuition costs and to improve k-12 education.

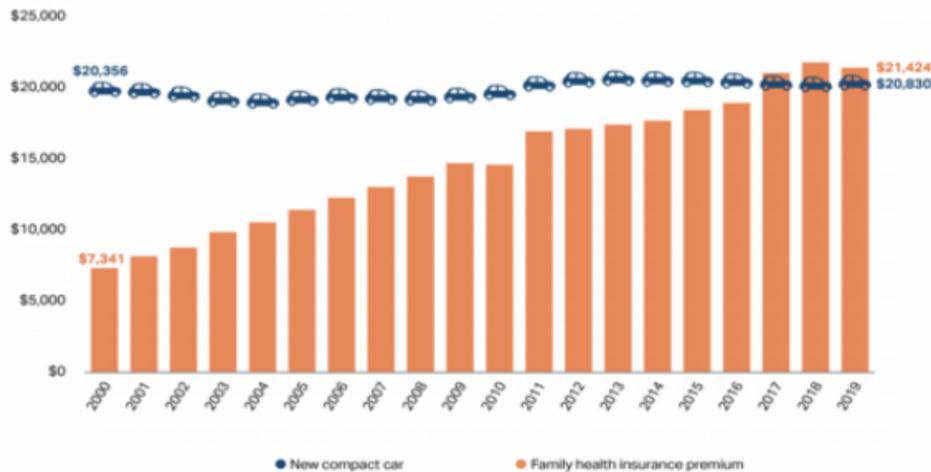
## D. Health Care

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.

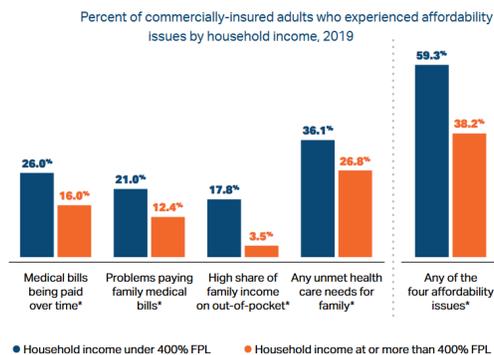
<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/average-new-car-prices-up-nearly-4-percent-year-over-year-for-may-2019-according-to-kelley-blue-book-300860710.html>

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.).**

No one should go bankrupt trying to pay for health care or forego health care because they can not afford it.

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. I am saying yes, but I don't know what the issues are in this and what the costs are.

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?

NO. I don't know that much about this. So I am saying No. What happens now? what about non-profit abortion providers who get donations for these services. Why should Mass residents pay for services for out of state residents when many important Mass issues/services are unfunded?

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. At the moment, yes. but I would need more information about this before casting a vote in the legislature. There may be an age limit to consider. I think an 11 year old may need some public or parental consent in making an abortion decision. Is the legislation suggesting they should be able to get one? Criminal actions involved in impregnating girls and young women need to be actively prosecuted.

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

YES. But only at Schools.

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?

NO. I have several drug addicts in my family, one of whom died recently from a fentanyl tainted heroin. Engaging in this type of behavior is something people do at their own risk. I personally do not believe in normalizing drug behavior which this would do.

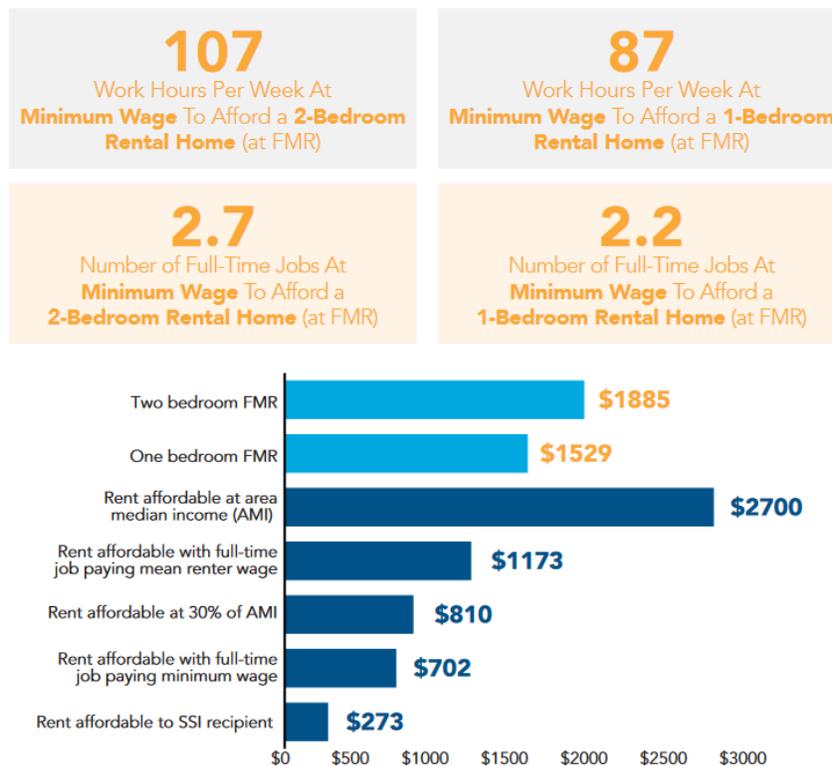
9. **Community Immunity Act**. Would you support strengthening the Commonwealth's immunization policies by standardizing the immunization requirements for all schools, daycare centers, and other covered programs and centralizing within the Department of Public Health (DPH) the processes for obtaining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

NO. I don't know that much about this, so I am saying NO at the moment. Most infants start getting immunizations starting at 2 weeks. Are you saying there is no medical standard that schools follow now? I have heard that parents who don't want to immunize their children according to the schedule have been referred to DCF? I once looked at the requirements to go to a local college and it required immunizations that were not common when I was growing up but now are. Just thinking out loud, do we need more bureaucracy in this matter?

## E. Housing

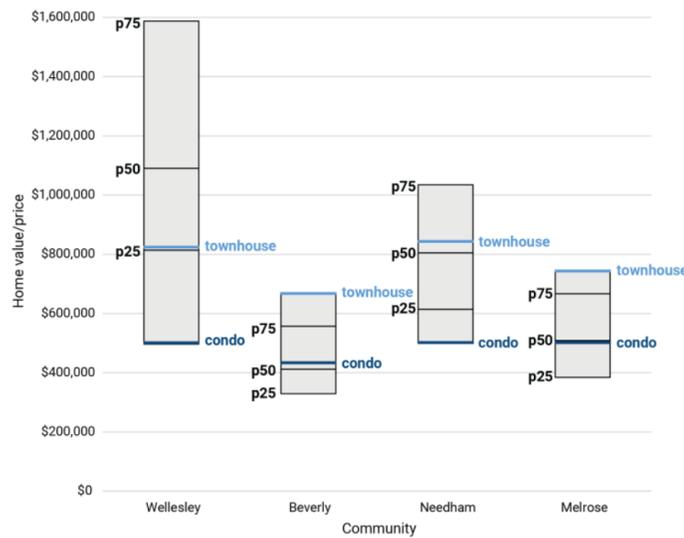
Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. The [US News & World Report's annual state rankings](#) put Massachusetts at #40 in housing affordability (and #47 in cost of living). A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [87 hours a week](#) to afford a modest one-bedroom rental home at market rate (and 107 hours for a modest two-bedroom). Over the last ten years, the need for affordable housing has increased, while funds for affordable housing have decreased at both federal and state levels. This is unsustainable. It has led to expanding economic inequality, increased homelessness, and damage to our economy, as talented workers often leave the state for less expensive regions.

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



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

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



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

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

I have been involved with housing issues on and off since I arrived in Boston in 1977. Though I have a lot to say about I am not doing it right now in this doc when it is due today. Here are some random thoughts/comments. I think if the government is investing money in housing people, it should get something in return. I realize that many think residents having the government pay their rent is enough. But I think the government should get more. Even an interest in the property. I served on the Local CDC board for 6 years from maybe 2002-2008. I suggested they get involved in condo-ing the triple deckers which were still available in the neighborhood for \$500k and making them mixed income housing. Instead the Board wanted to focus on development of a large lot. It's now in it's 3rd phase and homeownership has dropped to 10% as investors snapped up the triple deckers to rent to student. Currently working with Senior Homeowners on Mission Hill to keep them in their homes and renting to other Seniors and long term residents. Suggesting the city have an amnesty for long term homeowners whose deed and city assessment does not match what the City's inspectional services say they own. Housing people need to use affordable housing restrictions the same way the conservation movement uses conservation restrictions to create a permanent supply of affordable and moderate income housing. They can also be used to let Seniors to safely take out some of the value of their homes without reverse mortgages. Not sure why prison cost is part of the intro.

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?

NO. Sounds good but I don't know what this means so i am defaulting to NO. What does it mean for Mass and Cass in Boston? Can a drug addicted or mentally ill homeless person have rights that supersedes a non-homeless person?

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. Is this in addition to the CPA?

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?

NO. I don't know much about this, so I am defaulting to No. Given the absolute increase in property values hasn't revenue from this source been increasing? Is the problem that the state does not have access to it? Would a change in the capital gains tax be a better option?

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?

NO. I am not sure what this is about? Why yet another housing entity at the state level? Should the state be doing this or should we reinforced and better develop local housing authorities and CDCs? Would this prevent housing build by volunteer labor from being included, i.e. Habitat for Humanity projects? I have two brothers who are carpenters; one had his own construction company on Seattle. Neither were able to get into the carpenters union on either side of the country. Both were excellent and knowledgeable craftsmen. So are we going to prevent them from working on this housing because they are not union? Would this social housing create pathways to union membership? If I can see what you are trying to achieve, I may think differently.

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?

NO. I am defaulting to No because I don't know that much about it. Do you mean all developments? What happens in the current wave of Boston development, is someone builds a building, owns it for 5-10 years and then sells it to get their money out. So, are you suggesting every multi-family property would be subject to this? When I sell my triple decker, If the students I am renting to can come up with \$1.5 million from their parents or school loans, I would have to sell to them, as oppose to the deal I made with my brother in law? What if some of the parties default on their obligations?

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

NO. Saying No because I need more information. Generally, housing courts are good with pro se litigants in my experience. Not sure how this would work and who would pay. For every person in need I can.

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. I am sympathetic to the person who had some problems and was evicted. However the proposed 3 year time period for people evicted for cause or who negotiate a settlement is too short. , my friend who provided affordable housing without any subsidies & is a small landlord was screwed by her non rent paying tenant in housing court. Other Landlords should know about this type of tenant so they can evaluate their risks

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.

Sounds like good ideas

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?

NO. Default NO. Don't know enough. There is a difference between fix route service and buses. Not sure what would happen if bus service was discontinued.

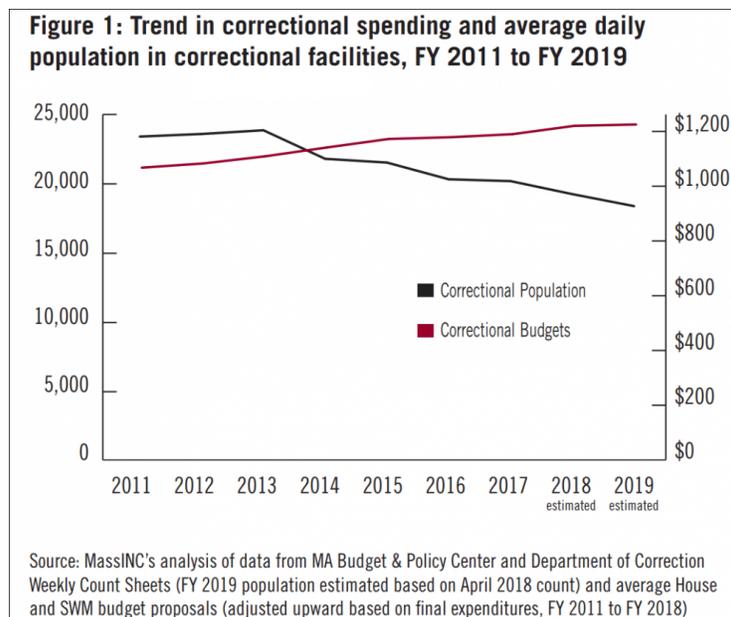
## F. Racial and Social Justice

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.).**

I have no proposals. Would be interested in learning some ways to decrease discrimination in law enforcement and prosecution. Is it legislatively possible? Any ideas about the plea bargain? My nephew in CT ended up spending 2 years in jail for the crime of being a black young man in a white community. (The prosecutor was gunning for 10 years if he lost of trial.) My neighborhood of Mission Hill would love for more arrest of loud partying suburban college students living in here, but they get treated differently than partying kids in other neighborhood.

Not sure what needs to be done to reduce pretrial detention and bail- your questionnaire says nothing about that. I haven't done any work in this area

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. Qualified immunity removal is very tricky. I would be interested in looking at scenarios where it could be removed and those it should not. I heard this may make recruitment and retention of offices difficult. Can't a person bring a cause of action against the department?

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?

NO. This seems very specific and may not be the best way. Why a grant program and not just fund test projects in some cities and towns? As a person who spends alot of time writing grants that i don't get, I say let's not waste time. Name 20 cities and towns and give them x amount of dollars for 3 years based upon number of reported calls of a certain type. I support exploring options for alternative crisis response. What about all the parents who can't get a response for their adult child with mental health issues, except through a prolonged process. Maybe if we made that easier, some calls may be avoided.

4. **Sentencing Reform.** The 2018 criminal justice reform bill was an important first step in reducing mass incarceration. However, in our “liberal” state, incarceration rates remain much higher than they are in other countries, and sentencing laws can be even more punitive than those in states viewed as conservative. Do you support the following reforms?

a. **Eliminating mandatory minimums for all drug offenses?**

YES.

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

YES.

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

YES.

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

YES.

These are all kind of slippery slope issues. How near in age? 19 and 14 versus 18 and 13? So, I shoot and kill 15 people intentionally I would be eligible for parole in 20 years? Many criminal laws have been applied discriminatorily, so should we eliminate them all? What about changing the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21. There are enough sad families who have their child's killer on the street too soon. Maybe prosecutors need more discretion; what kind of crimes are we talking about?

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. Why did the prisons limit visitation?

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?

NO. Reducing the price yes, but free no. Why should taxpayers subsidize phone calls for people convicted of crimes? Plus, as I understand it the calls have to be recorded and that also cost money. If it truly costs \$5 for a 15 minute call then that is cheap compared to other states.

However people in pre-trial detention should be able to get a certain amount of minutes of phone time free every week as they are not convicted of any crime.

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

YES. But this is assuming we have good quality prisons and non are substandard. Do any need replacement?

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. Sounds reasonable. How far back will it go? Are the proposed deadlines reasonable? How much would it cost? Unfortunately, we can't give people their time back.

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?

NO. I need more information about this. This is a default NO. If this is currently the law, then fine. There may be good reasons for doing these things. Not sure what due process protections need to be protected but I support everyone involved with the courts getting due process.

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

NO. The Legislature passed this law.

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?

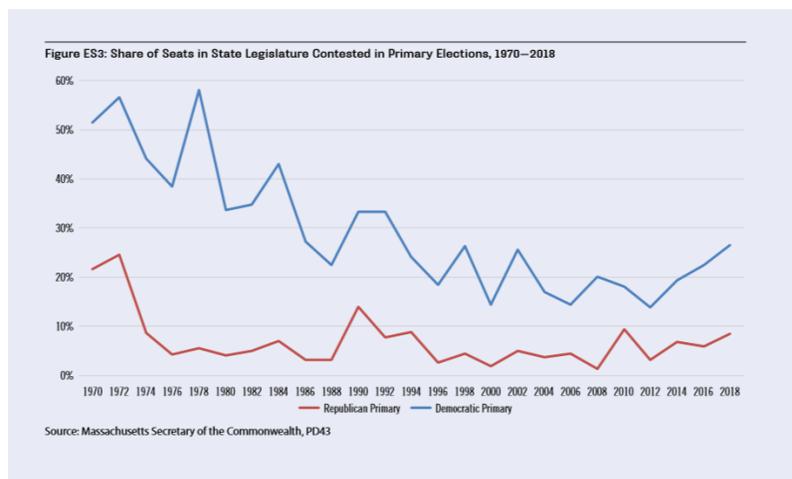
YES.

## 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.).**

Having parents who got to vote as part of the Civil Rights Movement, I always vote. (I can explain the 2 times I didn't.) We need to share stories with voters about how their vote has made a difference and encourage people to vote. People told me they didn't vote because the legislature doesn't do anything. They question if their vote counts. I had people who had questionable voter registration status sign my nominating petition to make a cause for them to vote. I shared my Mom's story of her determination of going to the polls to vote for President Obama a 2nd time even though she was seriously ill and the doctors told her and us, she didn't have much time left. Right now, I think anything over 50% is good in BIPOC communities given the level of . When Candidates run that energize the voters, they come out and vote.

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)?**  
NO.
  - c. **Reader-friendly summaries of bills currently in or reported out of committee?**

YES.

This is a lot of work for someone to make all testimony available online. Not sure if its a good use of resources especially considering what I hear about the legislative computer system's capability. Thousands of bills get submitted every legislative season. Summaries of bills reported out of committee make sense. OK about the votes. it lets constituents see how their legislators voted.

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?**

NO.

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

YES.

"Does 3a mean physically standing? what if someone can't. Not sure why one would need to stand for a vote, unless stand means something I don't know. Who is around to update websites with voting records? If a legislator doesn't update her website, what happens?"

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. The Courts gave themselves an exemption that was not in the original law.

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.

These sound like good ideas but then there is a question of money and

resources. However, having stayed all day at a legislative hearing waiting to testify, I support remote testimony

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. There may be other barriers to running we need to look at.

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?**

NO. Why? These teenagers are not adults legally.

- 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. Yes, but at what address? the Correctional facility or their domicile?

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.

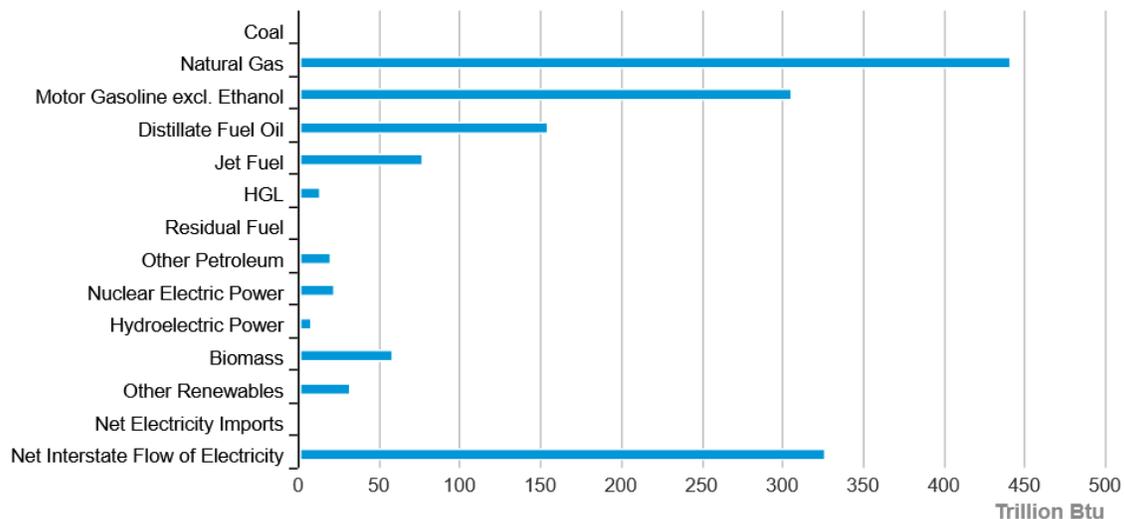
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

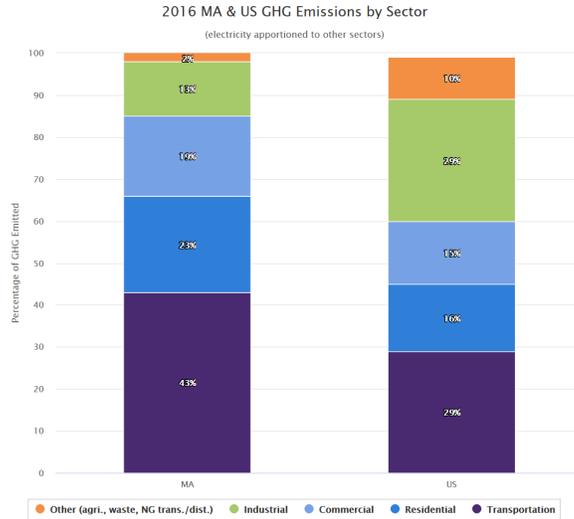
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

### 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.).**

I practiced environmental law for about 15 years and have worked in the transportation field or volunteered on transportation issues for most of my 45 years in Boston. I served on the board of a national environmental organization for 6 years in the 1990's, including heading up its delegation to the `1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. I served on the MBTA Riders Oversight Committee and Volunteer with a group focused on improving the Fairmount Corridor service.

- 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?

Improving public transportation choices to make it a viable option. increasing the % of renewable power used to run the T. Low income housing needs to become energy efficient

- 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. However, I am concerned about the role of Hydro in obtaining this goal. In particular, I am not a supporter of further expanding Canadian hydro production (HydroQuebec) to meet Massachusetts' goals. Also People in Maine and other NE don't want power lines through their communities

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

YES. As part of the public review process for a proposed building, I suggested a local university task it students in designing building skins that could produce electricity or participate in building climate control. There may be more options than just roof top solar.

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

YES.

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

YES. And dealing with the leaking gas pipes.

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. Also have T on 100% renewable energy by 2030

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

YES.

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

YES.

### **III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

***Use this space to add any other issues important to your vision for Massachusetts or any other matter you think progressive voters should know about your candidacy.***

Mary Ann Nelson Is an imaginative, problem solver who wants to enact state legislation that will improve the lives of people in the 15th Suffolk, the City and Massachusetts. She has worked with diverse people based upon mutual respect. These are the skills she is going to use to work with her fellow legislators to achieve break through legislation that keeps Massachusetts as the leader of social justice, environmental protection and legislative innovation.