



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS**  
**2026 Legislative**  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Candidate:** Persis Yu

**Office Sought:** State Senator, Norfolk and Suffolk

**Party:** Democratic

**Website:** [electpersis.com](https://electpersis.com)

**Social Media Handles:**

- **Facebook:** @ElectPersis (<https://facebook.com/ElectPersis>)
- **Instagram:** @ElectPersis (<https://instagram.com/ElectPersis>)
- **LinkedIn:** <https://linkedin.com/in/persis-yu/>
- **Bluesky:** @persisyu.bsky.social (<https://bsky.app/profile/persisyu.bsky.social>)

## 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.** If you leave a question blank, your answer will be recorded as a NO. Feel free to expand your answers, but **please keep answers < 150 words** and use your own words (we want human-generated answers, not AI-generated).*

### **Issue Subsections:**

- A. Revenue and Taxation
- B. Jobs and the Economy
- C. Education
- D. Health Care
- E. Housing
- F. Community Safety
- G. A Humane Immigration System
- H. A Welcoming Society
- I. Good Government and Strong Democracy
- J. 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?**

We are at a critical juncture in our history. Right now, we're facing huge challenges: a growing affordability crisis here in Massachusetts, and a dangerous rise in authoritarianism nationally. These are not separate problems. In fact, Trump and his allies are exploiting the cost-of-living crisis to push an authoritarian agenda. They rely on divide-and-conquer tactics—encouraging people to blame immigrants, trans youth, and communities of color for economic pain—instead of holding the powerful accountable.

And the Massachusetts legislature is failing to meet this moment. Too often, the legislature is slow, unresponsive, and unwilling to take bold action. By many measures, Massachusetts has one of the least effective legislatures in the country. I'm running because this is a moment for change; our communities deserve a senator who will fight as hard inside the State House as I've fought outside of it.

My campaign is rooted in the belief that true democracy starts at home; that to defend democracy we need the government to deliver for everyday people. That means access to safe schools and a quality education for every child, a fair economy where families—not billionaires—come first, and building a community that welcomes every voice and expands freedom for all—across race, faith, gender, and zip code.

My top three priorities for this office would be:

- 1) The PROTECT Act
- 2) The Corporate Fair Share Amendment to ensure that we have the resources to pass critical legislation such as Medicare for all, fully fund universal pre-K and expand to provide free childcare for all, and fully fund free college.
- 3) Implementation of transparency initiatives and other structural reforms to the Massachusetts legislature.

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

I am a long-time Hyde Park resident, daughter of an immigrant who fled fascism, and parent to two Boston Public School kids. I know firsthand the dangers of government corruption, repression, and economic insecurity. For nearly two decades, I have fought for families, workers, and consumers. I have taken on the biggest banks, loan servicers, and multiple presidential administrations—suing Betsy DeVos, Linda McMahon, Bank of America, and MOHELA when they hurt consumers. My strategic, bold, and innovative policymaking has transformed millions of lives. Where others have settled for half-measures, I relentlessly pursue the end goal—economic justice and freedom from debt. As a working parent active in my children's school family council and

school site council, I understand the day-to-day challenges families face—whether it's affording childcare, paying medical bills, or navigating underfunded schools. I will always fight for the families of Boston, Dedham, Norwood, Walpole, and Westwood to secure a future for our children where they will not just survive, but *thrive*.

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

Yes. “Progressive” means recognizing the inherent value and worth in the diverse range of human experience, and working towards a world that improves the human condition and ensures that power and resources reach everyone equitably.

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

The lack of transparency and current structure of leadership have led to Massachusetts having one of the least effective legislatures in the country. Organizing both inside and outside the legislature is critical to reform. I will push for transparency inside the legislature and support the stipend reform ballot initiative. Critically, one legislator cannot change the system alone, and I have deep experience as a coalition-builder. In order to ensure that the legislators are accountable to their constituents and not to leadership, we need to encourage more people to challenge incumbents and elect more reform minded candidates. This is why I have been a long-time supporter of election reforms such as ranked choice voting and public campaign financing.

**5. What is one policy pioneered by another state (or at the municipal level) that you would like to see Massachusetts adopt?**

A growing number of states have adapted their consumer protection laws to allow for non-profits and other community organizations to have standing to sue in the place of consumers. Too often consumers do not pursue consumer protection violations because it is expensive, takes a lot of time, and can be very invasive. Allowing non-profits and community organizations to sue corporations on behalf of their constituencies helps to rebalance the power dynamic between people and corporations.

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

In the fight for student debt cancellation, our campaign brought in labor and civil rights groups, along with organizations representing students and borrowers — emphasizing that the issue affected people across the country, and creating strong partnerships that continue to advocate for working people. This coalition grew to more than 500 national organizations, with labor and civil rights groups remaining front and center—including at the People’s Rally for Student Debt Cancellation that my

organization coordinated in front of the Supreme Court. Both through individual outreach and in our public messaging, we lifted up the stories of borrowers across many different industries to show that this was not an “elite” issue, as it had been framed by our opponents, but a critical issue for millions of working people, including blue collar workers, who took on crushing debt in order to provide for their families. Ultimately, it was the involvement of these labor and civil rights organizations that convinced President Biden to take steps to cancel student debt for tens of millions of Americans.

**7. (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.**

**8. (For challengers or candidates in open races only) How do you see yourself as similar to or different from the current holder of the office you are running for?**

I am running against the long-time incumbent, Mike Rush. He has held the seat since 2011, and was previously in the MA House of Representatives starting in 2002. Since he has held office, he has not faced a primary challenger. Senator Rush is a conservative Democrat.

I am the only candidate in this race who has been unwavering in my support for our immigrant neighbors (and I am the only candidate who has made public statements condemning actions by ICE); LGBTQ+ people and transgender kids; reproductive freedom; and a transparent, accountable democracy.

## II. The Issues

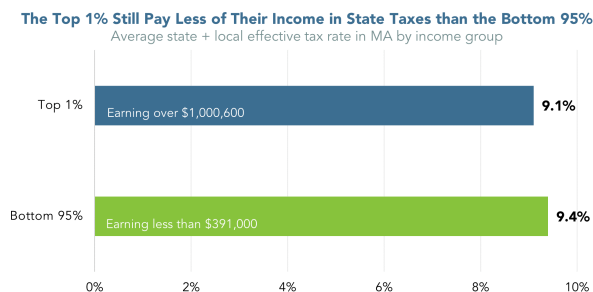
### A. Revenue and Taxation

Although Massachusetts has developed the moniker of “Taxachusetts,” our history shows the opposite. 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 lost over \$4 billion in tax revenue *each year*—\$4 billion not invested in our roads, bridges, schools, parks, and services. Such cuts to the state income tax, combined with [low corporate income taxes compared to other states](#), have meant increasing reliance on regressive taxes and fees and curtailing 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.

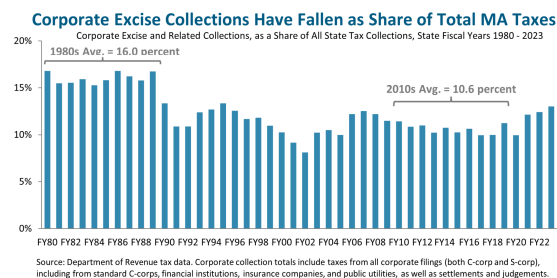
Although we saw a welcome shift when MA voters passed the Fair Share Amendment and added more progressivity to our tax code, the Legislature in 2023 voted to give tax cuts to multi-million-dollar estates, large corporations, and day traders, blunting the full impact of the win. We cannot tax-cut our way into competitiveness; MA strengthens our competitiveness when we invest in our people and infrastructure.

Moreover, Massachusetts faces the threat of steep federal budget cuts, but given that we have the same GDP as the country of Sweden, we have the ability to raise the revenue to meet needs if we have the will to do so.

#### Even with the recently passed Fair Share Amendment, the top 1% still pay a lower effective tax rate than the bottom 95%.



#### Even as corporations are securing an increasing share of total income, their share of taxes has been falling.



1. What principles do you bring to considerations of state revenue and tax policy? How should we raise more revenue to adequately fund our communities for the future?

Our economy should prioritize the needs of working families over the profits of corrupt billionaires. First and foremost, the wealthy and big corporations need to pay their fair share and we need to decouple our budget to ensure that Massachusetts does not incorporate the corporate tax cuts from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Moreover, we need to resist all attempts to lower taxes at a time when our schools and other social services are starved for funds.

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on revenue and taxation (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).
3. **Corporate Tax Breaks.** Corporate tax breaks cost Massachusetts [more than \\$1 billion in foregone revenue](#) each year. Which of the following steps would you support?
  - a. Repealing any tax break that does not provide the intended benefits in a cost-effective manner? **YES**
  - b. Establishing sunset dates for all tax breaks to require periodic review? **YES**
  - c. Ending the current sales tax exemptions for aircraft and aircraft parts, which costs the Commonwealth approximately [\\$30 million](#) each year? **YES**
4. **Corporate Disclosure.** Would you support legislation to make publicly accessible the reports that are already filed annually by publicly traded corporations, detailing their sales, profits, taxable income, and taxes paid? **YES**
5. **Corporate Fair Share.** Large multinational corporations like Amazon and Walmart hide significant profits offshore in order to avoid paying taxes here in Massachusetts and in other states. Would you support legislation to increase the amount of offshored corporate income subject to MA's corporate income tax to 50%, the maximum allowable amount and the amount taxed by most of our neighboring states? **YES**
6. **Taxing Extreme Wealth.** Would you support the establishment of a Massachusetts wealth tax, which applies only to extremely rich taxpayers (with a threshold of at least \$100 million) and taxes them on a percentage (e.g., 1% annually) of their wealth above the threshold? **YES**
7. **Digital Ads Tax.** Would you support imposing new tax targeted at large companies that amass our personal data, either through a data-mining excise tax or a tax on digital advertising, as introduced or passed in states like New York and Washington State? **YES**
8. **Preventing Regressive Tax Cuts.** Massachusetts needs to raise new revenue to advance a progressive agenda. At the same time, we also need to fight regressive tax

cuts that weaken our public services.

- a. MA stands to lose hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue each year due to corporate tax cuts in Trump's Big Ugly Bill that will automatically enter the MA tax code. Do you support permanently decoupling the state tax code from these federal changes? **YES**
  - b. Will you oppose the corporate lobby's ballot question to reduce the state income tax, a measure which would cost the state \$5 billion a year? **YES**
  - c. Will you oppose the corporate lobby's ballot question to reform the state tax collection cap law (62F) in order to make the state more frequently hit the cap and lose out on critical investments? **YES**
9. **Rainy Day Fund.** Massachusetts will see significant budget cuts next year due to Trump's Big Ugly Bill. Would you support using 15% of the rainy day fund in order to prevent cuts? **YES**
10. **PILOT Reform.** Do you support enabling cities and towns to require large tax-exempt not-for-profit institutions (i.e., with property valued at or above \$15M) 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**
11. **Public Bank.** Would you support the creation of a Massachusetts public bank chartered to provide cost-effective financing for small businesses and municipalities, land trusts and cooperatives, and climate adaptation/remediation projects? **NO**

I understand the appeal of a public bank option. While I prefer revenue for banks to go back to the public benefit and appreciate the ability of the state to control rates, which would in theory help lower rates, in practice, I have deep concerns about the state as a bank. I have spent most of my career protecting consumers from the largest government run bank in the country – the federal student loan system. I also have defended consumers here in Massachusetts when they were sued by the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority – which has some of the most aggressive and predatory debt collection practices of any student lender. (See <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2024-12-16/a-state-agency-that-issues-student-loans-has-sued-thousands-of-borrowers>)

While well intentioned, the critical problem with state run banks is that there exists an inherent conflict of interest – the interest of the taxpayer is in direct conflict with the interest of the entity being financed should they experience financial trouble – which happens frequently with small businesses. Furthermore, I believe that a big problem with our current economy is our reliance on debt financing. The state should instead invest in its priorities with grants funded through a fair and progressive tax system.

## 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 Massachusetts now has a \$15 minimum wage, a living wage for a single adult without children is now [\\$27.89 per hour](#).

In recent decades, unions have been under attack nationally. 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. Strengthening the rights and power of labor is essential to an economy that works for all.

### Productivity has grown significantly since the 1970s, but it is not being reflected in higher wages.



<https://archive.massbudget.org/reports/swma/>

### The minimum wage in Massachusetts is well below a living wage. ([Source](#))

	1 Adult			2 adults (both working)		
	0 children	1 child	2 children	0 children	1 child	2 children
<b>Living Wage</b>	\$30.58	\$58.26	\$76.55	\$19.63	\$31.61	\$39.61
<b>Poverty Wage</b>	\$7.67	\$10.40	\$13.13	\$5.20	\$6.57	\$7.93
<b>Minimum Wage</b>	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00

1. Share your principles and proposals regarding creating good-paying jobs for all and reducing inequality in the Commonwealth.

Despite record inflation and record profits, wages have stagnated, forcing families to do more with less. If you work in the Commonwealth, you deserve to be safe, respected, and paid a living wage. I have spent my career fighting on behalf of workers and unions in the growing fight against corporate greed.

As senator, I will:

- Work to end abusive non-compete agreements that lock workers into low paying jobs and prevent them from achieving their full potential
- Support workers' right to unionize without retaliation and fight to strengthen the power of unions to ensure that workers can benefit from the value they create
- Increase the minimum wage to \$20 per hour and demand rights for all workers, including domestic workers, immigrants, and gig workers—no exceptions, no loopholes

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on creating good-paying jobs for all and reducing inequality (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

Under my leadership, my organization has led the charge nationally to end employers' use of training repayments agreement provisions (TRAPs) and other stay or pay contracts. Much like noncompete agreements, these are contracts that restrict worker mobility and keep workers in low paying, and sometimes unsafe, work conditions.

We have published the following:

- Report  
<https://protectborrowers.org/trapped-at-work-how-big-business-uses-student-debt-to-restrict-worker-mobility>
- Compendium of Partner Reports  
[https://protectborrowers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/stay-or-pay-compendium\\_12-2023\\_FINAL.pdf](https://protectborrowers.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/stay-or-pay-compendium_12-2023_FINAL.pdf)

We also created this state legislative toolkit which has led to legislation being passed in more than a dozen states and introduced in four more. Massachusetts has a bill that would ban these agreements in most circumstances, and I testified in support of this bill last July.

- Toolkit  
<https://protectborrowers.org/advocates-to-state-officials-act-now-to-protect-workers-from-employer-driven-debt-traps/>

- Testimony  
<https://protectborrowers.org/resource/testimony-of-persis-yu-before-the-massachusetts-joint-committee-on-the-judiciary/>

Finally, I have filed multiple class action lawsuits against employers who utilize predatory TRAPs, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt to employers being cancelled and returning money directly to workers.

3. **Livable Wages.** Although Massachusetts now has a \$15 minimum wage, that is still not a living wage in much of Massachusetts, and \$15 has lost a lot of value due to high inflation. Do you support the following steps...?
  - a. Raising the minimum wage to \$20 per hour? **YES**
  - b. Eliminating subminimum wages? **YES**
  - c. Ensuring that the minimum wage law applies to municipal workers? **YES**
  - d. Indexing the minimum wage to inflation? **YES**
4. **Wage Theft.** Do you support holding businesses responsible for the wage violations of their subcontractors when the work they do is substantially connected to the company's operations? **YES**
5. **Paid Leave for All Workers.** In 2018, MA passed the strongest paid family and medical leave law in the country. However, the law did not include municipal workers or graduate student workers. Would you support extending the law to make sure that all workers have access to these vital benefits? **YES**
6. **Paid Time Off.** The US is the only advanced industrial country where workers are not guaranteed paid time off. Would you support legislation to require employers to offer full-time employees at least two weeks of paid time off each year, which they can use for any reason with no loss of pay? **YES**
7. **Right to Strike.** Would you support legislation to legalize the right to strike for public employees (with the exception of public safety personnel) after six months of failed negotiations with their employer? **YES**
8. **State House Unionization.** Would you support legislation to extend collective bargaining rights to State House staff? **YES**

## C. Education

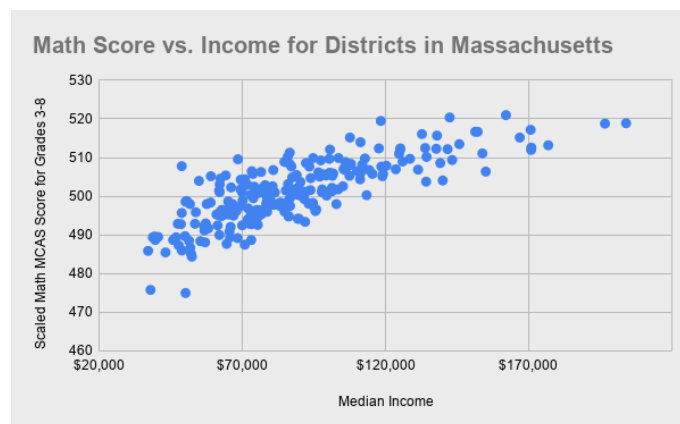
Massachusetts parents and caregivers face the [highest child care and early education costs of any state in the US](#). The average annual cost of infant care in Massachusetts is more than half of what a full-time minimum wage worker earns in a year. These costs are prohibitively expensive for low- and middle-income families, who are forced to choose between making ends meet and saving for the future on one hand, or affording child care on the other.

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 the pandemic and inflation.

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.

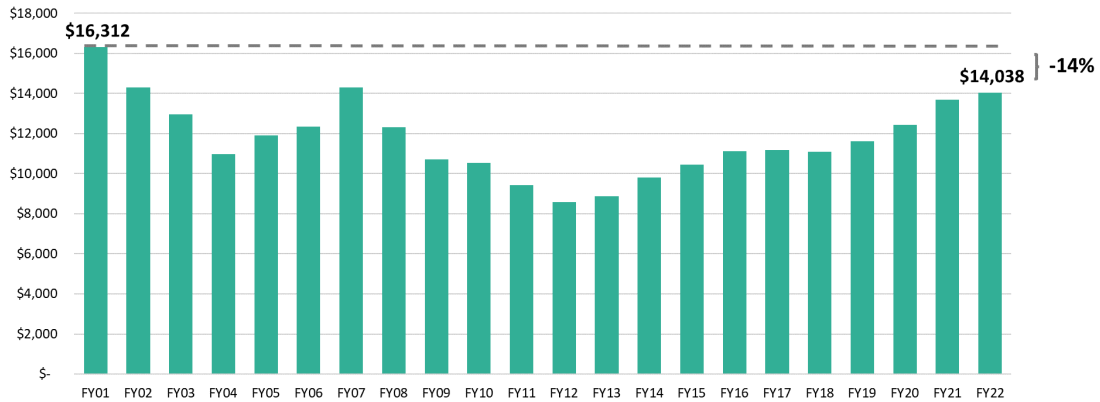
**Standardized test scores have a very strong correlation with the income of the school district. ([Source](#))**



**Massachusetts has been disinvesting from higher education and shifting the cost burden onto students. (Source)**

**Higher Education Funding Per Student Cut by 14 Percent Since FY 2001**

Massachusetts higher education spending, per resident student, FY 2001-FY2022 adjusted for inflation (2024\$)



1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding public education.

Education is vital to a well-functioning democracy. Every child deserves access to safe and quality education—regardless of their family’s income or zip code. I have fought tirelessly to protect teachers’ pocketbooks, representing the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) in lawsuits against the student loan servicer MOHELA for its abusive practices, which denied teachers access to vital programs like Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and against the Trump Administration when it blocked access to affordable repayment plans for tens of millions of borrowers

My priorities for improving public education include:

- Ensuring schools have robust staffing by teachers and paraprofessionals who are paid wages that allow them to live in the communities they serve and keep up with the rising cost of living;
- Increasing funding for public schools and ensuring a more equitable distribution of funds to districts, providing long overdue investments in buildings and infrastructure, reducing class sizes; and ensuring all students have access to the academic and extracurricular supports and programming necessary to thrive;
- Ensuring students have access to robust wrap-around services that provide basic necessities like food and cold weather clothing so that they can focus on learning, as well as mental health counseling and before and after school programming; and

- Giving schools the resources to protect students from attacks on LGBTQ+ youth, attempts to ban access to books or other materials, threats by ICE and other federal law enforcement activities, and other threats to equity in access and curriculum.
2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on public education.

I am the parent to two Boston Public School students. I have served on either the parent council/family council or school site council every year since my oldest was in K1 (he is now in the 7th grade), supporting the teachers and families in our school. I see first hand the struggles that our teachers face with a lack of funding, which will only get worse with the new layoffs, and that our families face with hunger and our immigration system.

I have also fought for the finances of teachers through my work on student debt, advocating for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Waiver, and representing AFT in multiple lawsuits against the federal government when it denied members access to affordable repayment plans and PSLF, and wrote rules threatening teachers who work in districts that support undocumented immigrants, and in a lawsuit against MOHELA whose abusive student loan servicing practices have hurt millions of teachers and other borrowers.

3. **Affordable Child Care.** Would you support legislation to make child care free for low-income families and ensure that no family has to pay more than 7% of their income on child care? **YES**
4. **Universal Pre-K.** Would you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system? **YES**
5. **Charter Schools.** Charter schools siphon millions of dollars for public education away from public schools and create a two-track system of public schools described by the national NAACP as “separate and unequal.” Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? **YES**
6. **K-12 Education Funding.** Our public schools are losing out on the full benefits of increased funding due to a glitch in how the Chapter 70 formula treats inflation. The combination of several years of high inflation and an inflation cap in education funding calculations has locked in lower levels of aid to districts. Do you support fixing this gap and ensuring that our school districts get the funding they deserve? **YES**
7. **Receivership.** The Lawrence 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**
8. **Guaranteed Education for Incarcerated Youth.** Would you support legislation to

mandate that at least 6 hours of credited daily education is available for all incarcerated, school-aged youth, including those with IEPs? **YES**

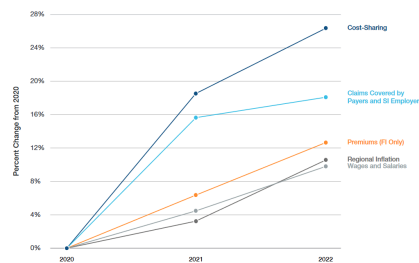
9. **Comprehensive Sex Education.** Do you support requiring public schools to provide age-appropriate, medically accurate information that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities and includes topics such as consent and the effective use of contraception? **YES**
10. **Inclusive Curricula.** Our educational curricula must speak to students' lived experiences and recognize and celebrate the diversity of our Commonwealth.
  - a. **Racially Inclusive Curricula.** Would you support legislation to ensure that instruction in K-12 education shall include the teaching of accurate histories, writings, and contributions of racial and ethnic groups that have been historically underrepresented or marginalized? **YES**
  - b. **LGBTQ-Inclusive Curricula.** Would you support legislation to ensure that Massachusetts public schools include sufficient instruction on the histories, roles, and contributions of LGBTQ individuals in the history of this country and the Commonwealth? **YES**
11. **Redistributing Institutional Wealth.** Would you support legislation that would levy a small excise tax on private college and university endowments above \$1B to fund free public higher education for all in-state students? **YES**
12. **Debt-Free Higher Ed.** Would you support legislation to guarantee Massachusetts residents can graduate Massachusetts' public colleges and trade schools completely free of student loan debt? **YES**
13. **Supporting Public Higher Ed Faculty.** Would you support ensuring that adjunct faculty and part-time staff are eligible for state health care and retirement benefits? **YES**
14. **Student Protest & Academic Freedom.** Will you support the unequivocal rights of students and faculty to peaceful protest and freedom of expression in Massachusetts' public and private institutions of higher education? **YES**

## D. Health Care

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health insurance coverage, with [97% of the state](#) having health insurance. But until that is 100%, we haven't reached truly universal coverage or tackled critical barriers to accessing care. Disparities in insurance coverage and health care access continue to exist along income, racial, and education lines. Premiums continue to rise, and high deductibles mean that many do not get the health care they need—or suffer from long-lasting debt if they do. We still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, but without necessarily achieving better health outcomes.

### Cost-sharing has risen faster than claims paid by employers, and premiums are rising faster than inflation.

Private Commercial Insurance Affordability in Context, 2020-2022

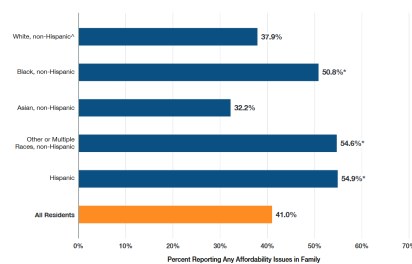


Member cost-sharing and premiums increased at a faster rate than regional inflation and wages and salaries from 2020 to 2022, driven in part by fluctuations in utilization during this time period.

Source: Payer reported data to CNA, Bureau of Labor Statistics data.  
 Note: Based on Massachusetts reported membership, which may include non-Massachusetts residents. Claims amounts were adjusted for pharmacy-related reported by payers. Reported cost-sharing, premiums, and claims amounts have not been adjusted to account for benefit carve-outs, which may vary by plan. Claims reported attributable to 2021 and 2022, with 2020 data available as of 12/31/2021. Data for 2022 based on 2022 annual data for 2022. Data for 2021 based on 2021 annual data for 2021. Data for 2020 based on 2020 annual data for 2020. See technical appendix.

### Almost half of Massachusetts residents are facing affordability issues with accessing health care.

Any Affordability Issues Among Residents and their Families, Overall and by Race/Ethnicity, 2021



Over half of Black and Hispanic residents reported experiencing health care affordability issues in the past 12 months.

Source: 2021 Massachusetts Health Insurance Survey.  
 Note: Only individuals listed as either an reporting any of the following issues: problems paying family medical bills in past 12 months, family medical bills at the time of survey, spending a high share of family income in past 12 months on out-of-pocket health care expenses, and unmet family health care needs due to the cost of care in past 12 months.  
 \*Reference group.  
 \*\*Difference from reference group is statistically significant at the 5% level.

1. Please share your values, principles, and proposals regarding health care access and equity.

Healthcare is a human right. High quality healthcare should be accessible in every neighborhood, without months-long wait times and surprise costs. Medical decisions should be made by doctors and patients and not driven by corporate profit.

As senator, I will:

- Ensure full coverage for all people by closing coverage gaps and simplifying enrollment in public insurance options
- Protect the rights of all genders to control their body, including a woman's right to choose and the universal right to gender-affirming care
- Expanding accessibility of routine care in your community through school-based clinics, mobile health clinics, and language-accessible care options
- Get corporate interests out of healthcare

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on health care (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).
3. **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**
4. **Medical Debt.** States like Connecticut and Arizona have taken action, in partnership with RIP Medical Debt, to eliminate medical debt for hundreds of thousands of working-class residents. Would you advocate for similar action in Massachusetts? **YES**
5. **Full Spectrum Pregnancy Care.** Would you support requiring health insurance plans to cover all pregnancy care (including prenatal care, childbirth, and postpartum care), without any kind of cost-sharing, building on the recent mandate to require coverage for abortion and abortion-related care? **YES**
6. **Abortion Access - 1.** Young people under sixteen seeking an abortion must obtain parental consent or judicial authorization. While most young people involve their parents, many cannot, causing delays to timely medical care and counseling. Scared teens may also turn to dangerous measures: going out of state or risking their lives and health with illegal or self-induced abortion. Would you support repealing this restriction on young people's access to abortion? **YES**
7. **Abortion Access - 2.** Despite recent overdue updates to abortion care protections in Massachusetts, dozens of patients have to travel out of state every year for necessary care. Would you support expanding abortion access after 24 weeks of pregnancy when in the best professional judgement of a licensed physician? **YES**
8. **Anti-Abortion Centers.** In Massachusetts, anti-abortion centers (also known as crisis pregnancy centers), which have a politically-motivated agenda to dissuade and delay patients from accessing abortion care, outnumber abortion clinics by more than 2 to 1. These centers scare and shame pregnant people considering abortion care and often

oppose birth control and emergency contraception. Would you commit to opposing any Massachusetts government support and funding for such centers? **YES**

9. **Overdose Prevention Centers.** An essential part of addressing the opioid crisis, overdose prevention centers allow medical professionals to respond to overdoses and engage participants in medical and behavioral health services. Would you support the legalization of overdose prevention centers? **YES**
10. **Vaccination.** Would you support legislation to eliminate non-medical exemptions to the routine vaccines for children required for school entry, as our neighbors in Maine, Connecticut, and New York have already done? **YES**

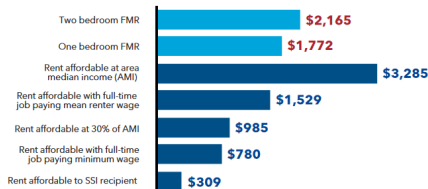
## E. Housing

Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. The [US News & World Report's annual state rankings](#) put Massachusetts at #40 in housing affordability (and #47 in cost of living). To rent the average 2-bedroom apartment in Massachusetts requires an income equal to [\\$41.64 per hour](#), more than twice the minimum wage. A minimum-wage worker in Massachusetts would need to [work 91 hours each week](#) to afford a modest 1-bedroom rental home at fair market rent.

Home ownership has become increasingly out of reach, as the state's median home price is [approximately \\$600,000](#). In more than 20 communities, the median home price recently [passed \\$1 million](#). Meanwhile, we have some of the [most restrictive zoning laws](#) in the country, making it difficult to build more housing to meet the needs of a growing population.

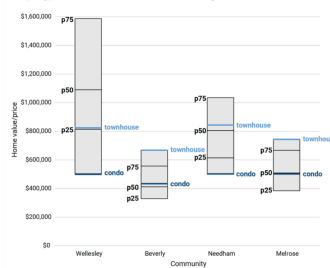
The high cost of housing has led to displacement, and in a growing number of municipalities, the local workforce can no longer afford to live there.

**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 Crum, Mattos, Schatz and Schuster (2020). Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings

1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding affordable housing and housing affordability in the Commonwealth.

Every family in Massachusetts deserves safe and affordable housing. And yet, families across the Commonwealth are still grappling with the harm caused by segregation and the outsized influence of corporate landlords and investors who artificially inflate both the housing market and rental prices.

As senator, I will:

- Ban the use of algorithms that artificially inflate the price of rent and reduce the supply of housing
- Fight to stabilize rental prices through rent control policies
- Work to right-size our zoning laws in order to ensure adequate and accessible housing for all residents
- Support the development of multi-family housing through greater investment in infrastructure and transportation

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on housing (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

During the Great Recession, I sued Bank of America when it wrongfully tried to foreclose on my client.

I led my organization to release this report earlier this year on “rent now pay later” loans which are short-term, high-cost loans that are little more than repackaged payday loans. The report exposed predatory creditors capitalizing on sky-high rents by driving families into debt.

<https://protectborrowers.org/resource/rent-now-pay-later-report/>

3. **Emergency Shelter.** How would you evaluate Governor Healey’s response to the emergency shelter crisis?

Healey’s approach to the emergency shelter crisis of restricting access to shelter is antithetical to the Commonwealth’s right to shelter law and hurts vulnerable families. We should be addressing the shelter crisis by addressing the root causes of homelessness and not by simply turning people in need out.

4. **Welcoming New Neighbors.** Would you support efforts to locate both long-term housing and short-term shelter in your district? **YES**

5. **Everyone Needs ID.** Would you support easing access to Mass IDs for people experiencing homelessness by waiving the \$25 fee for IDs and easing the verification requirements for youth and adults who are unhoused and seeking IDs? **YES**

6. **Local Option Real Estate Transfer Fee.** Would you support enabling all cities and towns the flexibility to design and pass real estate transfer fees that will be effective in their municipalities to raise money for affordable housing production? **YES**

7. **Green and Affordable Communities.** Would you support doubling the current Deeds Excise Tax (from \$4.56 per \$1,000 to \$9.12 per \$1,000), upon the sale of real property in Massachusetts, to create a new funding stream to be split evenly between affordable housing and climate resiliency? **YES**
8. **Rent Control.** Massachusetts residents face some of the highest and fastest-growing rents in the country.
  - a. Would you support lifting the statewide ban on rent control and enabling cities and towns to pass rent stabilization ordinances to limit annual rent increases? **YES**
  - b. Do you support the proposed 2026 statewide ballot initiative to limit annual rent increases? **YES**
9. **Tenant Opportunity to Purchase.** Would you support providing tenants of small, medium, and large multifamily properties with the right of first refusal when the owner plans to put a building on the market? **YES**
10. **Right to Counsel.** Would you support legislation to provide legal representation for low-income tenants in eviction proceedings? **YES**
11. **HDIP Reform.** The Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) is a multimillion-dollar annual state tax credit program subsidizing market-rate housing in Gateway Cities. Would you support reforming this program to support both market-rate and affordable housing development? **YES**
12. **Social Housing.** Social housing is publicly financed, mixed-income housing, owned by a local or regional housing authority. Would you support efforts to increase state funding for social housing initiatives? **YES**
13. **Zoning Reform.** Would you support zoning reforms to increase housing production and create more affordable and environmentally sustainable communities such as...
  - a. Requiring multi-family zoning and removing costly parking mandates around public transportation and city/town centers statewide? **YES**
  - b. Enabling communities to adopt inclusionary zoning ordinances (i.e., requirements that a certain percentage of new units in a development be affordable) by simple majority vote? **YES**
14. **MBTA Communities Law Enforcement.** Would you support measures to strengthen the law with stricter consequences for municipalities that refuse to comply, including voiding non-compliant zoning? **YES**

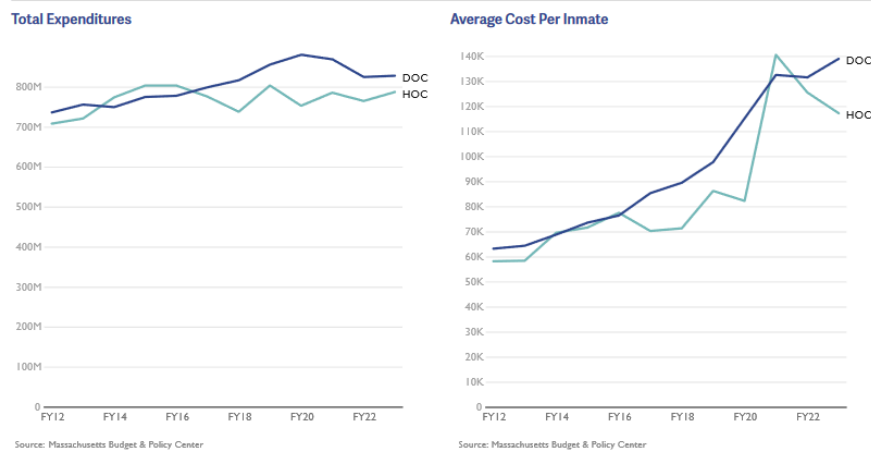
## F. Community Safety

Mass incarceration in Massachusetts has proven socially and economically destructive, breaking apart communities across the state. Even though Massachusetts has one of the lowest incarceration rates of the United States, we have some of the [starkest racial disparities in incarceration](#), a result of overpolicing and systemic biases.

Although incarceration rates in Massachusetts have gone down over the past few years as a result of policies from the 2018 criminal justice reform omnibus bills, spending on the Department of Correction has [risen](#). The average cost per year to house an individual in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections is [more than](#) \$100,000, 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.

**The correctional population in Massachusetts has declined, yet the state continues to increase the Department of Corrections budget.**

**Figure 14: Total expenditures for correctional institutions and average cost per inmate, inflation-adjusted to 2023 dollars**



**Although MA's incarceration rate is lower than the national rate, racial disparities are even more stark. ([Source](#))**

Statistics (2022)	MA	US Total
Imprisonment rate (per 100K residents)	94	355
Black : White Disparity	7 : 1	4.8 : 1
Latinx : White Disparity	4 : 1	1.3 : 1

1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding community safety, police accountability, and criminal legal reform.

People deserve to walk their streets and send their kids to school without fear of violence. Ensuring trust in law enforcement is essential to keeping communities safe. Law enforcement officers are vital public servants who should be held to the highest standards of professionalism. But Massachusetts must do more to address the underlying causes of crime and violence: economic insecurity, mental health, and substance abuse.

As senator, I will:

- Take a comprehensive approach to preventing gun violence and ensuring that Massachusetts remains one of the safest states in the nation
- Reform our criminal justice system to rebuild trust between law enforcement and communities while strengthening protections to ensure that law enforcement who violate civil rights are held accountable
- Expand access to vital life-saving services and infrastructure, such as substance abuse prevention and mental health services, while supporting families with comprehensive after-school programming and better economic opportunities

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on community safety, police accountability, and criminal legal reform (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

- As a legal aid attorney in Rochester, NY, I represented workers denied employment because of their criminal background checks, suing their prospective employers and the background checking companies.
- In 2012, I wrote a report on problems with criminal background check companies: <https://filearchive.nclc.org/pr-reports/broken-records-report.pdf>
- I represented women incarcerated at Middlesex minimum security prison who were being pursued by debt collectors.
- I participate in a coalition to address college access and student debt issues for incarcerated borrowers which is led by the Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network.
- I have written extensively and led my organization in advocating for incarcerated student loan borrowers, including suing the U.S. Department of Education for data and policies related to incarcerated borrowers. That body of work can be found here: <https://protectborrowers.org/what-we-do/federal-student-loans/incarcerated-borrower-relief/>

3. **Police Accountability.** 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? **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? **YES**
4. **Sentencing Reform.** The 2018 criminal justice reform bill was an important first step in reducing mass incarceration. However, in our “liberal” state, incarceration rates remain much higher than they are in other countries, and sentencing laws can be even more punitive than those in states viewed as conservative. Do you support the following reforms?
  - a. Eliminating mandatory minimums for all drug offenses? **YES**
  - b. Raising the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21, in line with research that shows that young offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to reoffend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood? **YES**
  - c. Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth close in age? Massachusetts is one of only three states that criminalizes consensual sexual activity between two adolescents. **YES**
  - d. Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application? **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? **YES**
5. **DOC Oversight -- I.** Would you support legislation to establish an inspector general for the Department of Correction? **YES**
6. **DOC Oversight -- II.** Massachusetts legislators have the statutory right to make unannounced visits to correctional facilities run by the state. Would you commit to visiting, whether announced or scheduled, Department of Corrections facilities as a state legislator? **YES**
7. **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? **YES**
8. **Prison Moratorium.** Would you support a moratorium on the construction of new prisons and jails in the Commonwealth? **YES**

9. **Keeping Families Connected.** Would you support eliminating the arbitrary, unnecessary restrictions on visitation rights in prisons and jails? **YES**
10. **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? **YES**
  - b. Requiring the immediate sealing of a criminal offense if the charge did not end in a conviction? **YES**
11. **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? **YES**
  - b. Increasing funding for reentry-related programming? **YES**
12. **Gun Violence Prevention.** Will you vote YES to protect the 2024 gun safety bill on the ballot in November 2026? **YES**

## G. A Humane Immigration System

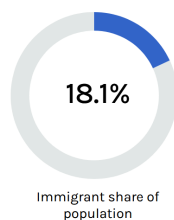
Immigrants make up [18%](#) of Massachusetts's population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. We too often see both Democrats and Republicans fear-monger about immigration and the border, championing policies that criminalize rather than welcome.

Since Trump took office in January, ICE has escalated its activities in Massachusetts, terrorizing immigrant communities. ICE arrests have gone up by more than [250%](#) since last year, driven by their targeting of individuals without criminal records. ICE has brutalized children, torn families apart, and engaged in rampant racial profiling.

Our immigrant communities are helping to keep our communities healthy, they are innovating and educating, and they are helping us build a better future for all of us.

**Immigrants are a major part of MA's economic prosperity. ([Source](#))**

### OVERVIEW



**1,270,500**

Number of immigrant residents

**\$20.4B**

Immigrant tax contributions

**\$51.8B**

Immigrant spending power

**2023**

Data year

1. Please share your principles and proposals regarding welcoming and protecting our immigrant communities.

Our communities and country were built by immigrants and we are all better because of their contributions. Unfortunately, aggressive attacks by the Trump Administration have threatened the lives and livelihoods of our neighbors. Massachusetts must be a champion for immigrant safety, dignity, and opportunity.

As senator, I will:

- Fight for the fundamental right to due process by ensuring language access and competent legal defense for immigrants targeted by the Trump Administration
  - Ensure strict firewalls between state services and federal agencies so no immigrant needs to fear for their safety when accessing public benefits
  - Aggressively pursue violations of wage-theft and worker exploitation, and protect whistleblowers who raise the alarm about employers violating the law
2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on welcoming and protecting our immigrant communities (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).
  3. **Protecting Our Immigrant Neighbors.** The entanglement of state and local law

enforcement with ICE's federal immigration enforcement makes everyone less safe. To end such entanglement, would you support the following measures....?

- a. Preventing police and court officials from inquiring about immigration status? **YES**
  - b. Prohibiting any new 287(g) agreements, i.e., agreements in which state and local law enforcement are deputized to act as ICE agents? **YES**
  - c. Calling on Gov. Healey to end the Department of Correction's 287(g) agreement with ICE, the only such contract in New England and the only such contract in a state with a Democratic governing trifecta? **YES**
  - d. Prohibiting local law enforcement from assisting ICE such as by allowing ICE to use facilities, properties, and equipment or providing information to ICE such as relating to upcoming court appearances? **YES**
4. **Language Access.** Would you support building the capacity of key public-facing state agencies to meet the language access needs of an increasingly diverse population by standardizing and enforcing language access protocols and practices? **YES**
  5. **Immigrant Legal Aid.** In 2025, the MA Legislature created a new fund to provide cost-free legal services to immigrants at risk of deportation. Would you support increasing the funding for the program and codifying the fund into law? **YES**
  6. **Community Trust and Accountability.** Would you support legislation to ban former ICE or Border Patrol agents from serving as police officers, teachers, or other public employees in Massachusetts?

I agree in principle. It's critically important that communities feel represented and served by law enforcement, public safety, and other public employees and ICE and Border Patrol have clearly violated that trust. However, I would want to review the legislative language to ensure there aren't inadvertently other impacts in terms of potential hiring discrimination and to be clear about which exact positions would be banned.

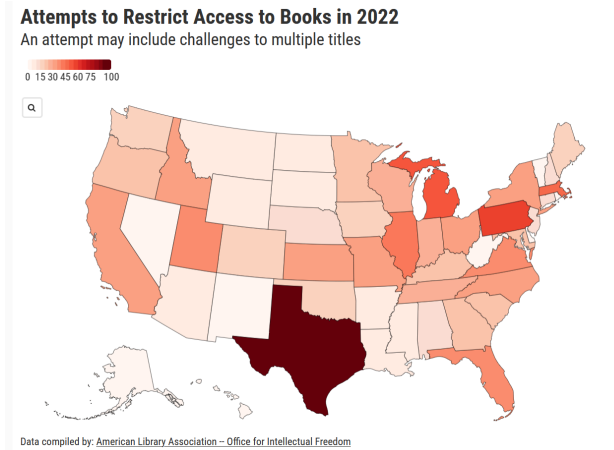
## H. A Welcoming Society

Our commonwealth is at its strongest when we recognize and celebrate the diversity of our population.

Massachusetts has often been a leader on LGBTQ rights, being the first state to legalize same-sex marriage and having passed a strong trans anti-discrimination law (with additional protections for health care passed more recently). However, efforts to ban LGBTQ-friendly books are not just a "red state" problem but unfortunately far too common here at home.

Although Massachusetts likes to view itself as a leader in social progress, racial discrimination has been prevalent in our history and in our present, and a legacy of oppression and expropriation of indigenous communities remains unaddressed in policy and iconography.

**In 2022, there were 45 attempts to restrict access to books in MA, with 57 titles challenged. ([Source](#))**



1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to building a welcoming society.

A real democracy welcomes every voice and expands freedom for all. Access to a job, education, and a safe and healthy environment should never be determined by a person's skin color or zip code. Moreover, everyone deserves to live openly and freely. But staggering wealth disparities and systemic racism are driving unequal outcomes for Black and brown families across the greater Boston area and the rights, safety, and dignity of queer and trans kids are under threat.

Across the board, Massachusetts must address systemic inequities in order to build a truly fair and inclusive economy.

As senator, I will:

- Protect efforts to advance racial equity from the Trump Administration's attack on DEI
- Improve access to health care in communities of color and tackle disparities in health outcomes—particularly maternal and mental health
- Strengthen protections to ensure that law enforcement who violate civil rights are held accountable
- Establish clear protections in housing, employment, healthcare, education, and public accommodations—and real enforcement when rights are violated
- Enact strong anti-bullying enforcement; inclusive curricula; name/pronoun respect; access to facilities that match students' gender identity; staff training so every classroom is a safe classroom; confidential, trauma-informed protocols for student support; and prohibit policies that out students to unsupportive environments
- Fight for streamlined ID changes for minors with parental/guardian support, protections for trans youth in foster care and shelters, and safe access to sports consistent with medical and civil-rights guidance

Finally, our communities and country were built by immigrants and we are all better because of their contributions. Unfortunately, aggressive attacks by the Trump

Administration have threatened the lives and livelihoods of our neighbors. Massachusetts must be a champion for immigrant safety, dignity, and opportunity.

As senator, I will:

- Fight for the fundamental right to due process by ensuring language access and competent legal defense for immigrants targeted by the Trump Administration
- Ensure strict firewalls between state services and federal agencies so no immigrant needs to fear for their safety when accessing public benefits
- Aggressively pursue violations of wage-theft and worker exploitation, and protect whistleblowers who raise the alarm about employers violating the law

2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to make MA a more welcoming place for all.

I have a proven track record of standing up for social, racial, and economic justice both in my community and nationally through my work as a lawyer and advocate. I also have a long history fighting for LGBTQ+ rights: in 2005, I was one of six community organizers who created LGBTQ Allyship (now known as Queer Power Alliance), an organization founded to address issues intersections of race, class, and sexual orientation.

In 2015, I partnered with the ACLU Racial Justice Unit to submit a Freedom of Information Act request on May 7, 2015, to the U.S. Department of Education reflecting concerns that the department's student debt collection practices disproportionately harm students of color. When the department did not provide the information, we sued the government over its failure to disclose the information.

I worked hand in hand with labor and civil rights groups to demand President Biden deliver student debt relief to millions of borrowers across the country. This is critical because student debt is an issue that disproportionately harms Black students, in particular Black women.

In the fight for student debt cancellation, our campaign brought in labor and civil rights groups, along with organizations representing students and borrowers—emphasizing that the issue affected people across the country, and creating strong partnerships that continue to advocate for working people. I routinely spoke publicly about the negative effect of student debt on communities of color, including in an op-ed to CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/22/opinions/student-loan-debt-biden-yu>); and on multiple podcasts (see <https://convergencemag.com/podcast/the-over-trillion-dollar-elephant-in-the-room-student-debt-with-persis-yu/> and <https://www.aclu.org/podcast/student-debt-is-a-racial-justice-issue>).

3. **Right to Read.** Right-wing efforts to ban books from school or public libraries disproportionately target books about LGBTQ people and communities of color. Would you support legislation to prevent book removal due to personal or political views in public and school libraries, require public libraries to adopt the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, and protect librarians from retaliation? **YES**
4. **Data Privacy.** In recent years, we have seen the dangers of unregulated data markets: right-wing groups tracking women seeking abortion care, domestic abusers tracking partners/exes, ICE agents tracking immigrants, and much more.
  - a. Do you support passing legislation to ban companies from selling our sensitive data, such as biometric and location information? **YES**
  - b. Do you support applying a private right of action to privacy laws, to ensure consumers have access to the civil court system when companies violate the law? **YES**
5. **Indigenous People's Day.** Would you support legislation to replace Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples in state statute as the recognized holiday on the second Monday of October? **YES**
6. **School Mascots.** Would you support legislation to prohibit the use of Native American mascots in Massachusetts public schools? **YES**

## I. 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, 2018, and 2022 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](#).

### MA has the least competitive elections in the country. ([Source](#))

State Legislative Competitiveness Index in Massachusetts, 2010-2024					
Year	Open seats	Incs. in contested primaries	Major party competition	Competitiveness Index	Rank
2010	17.0%	8.4%	48.0%	24.5	39 / 44
2012	5.0%	10.0%	33.0%	16.0	44 / 44
2014	11.0%	9.6%	38.5%	19.7	39 / 44
2016	6.5%	10.7%	23.0%	13.4	44 / 44
2018	12.0%	11.4%	30.0%	17.8	44 / 44
2020	7.5%	12.4%	21.0%	13.6	44 / 44
2022	12.0%	11.9%	30.0%	18.0	44 / 44
2024	9.5%	9.9%	20.0%	13.1	44 / 44

**Lower-income, ethnically diverse municipalities have lower voter turnout than whiter, more affluent communities, leading to reduced voice in state politics.**

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Turnout (Nov 2022)</u>
Lawrence	22.8%
Springfield	24.9%
Lowell	29.7%
Chelsea	31.7%
New Bedford	33.0%
Fall River	33.0%
Brockton	33.1%
Southbridge	34.3%
Holyoke	34.4%
Lynn	35.0%

[Source: MassLive](#)

1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to good government and strong democracy.

Our democracy is stronger when voters are informed and engaged, and our elected leaders are supported by a true majority. The Massachusetts legislature is ranked the least effective and least transparent in the country. In order to effectively fight authoritarianism, we need to shore up our democracy at home.

As senator, I will:

- Work to bring ranked choice voting to communities across Massachusetts to end the problem of vote splitting, and ensure that our elected officials truly reflect the vibrancy and diversity of our community and our elections better represent the true wishes of the citizens
  - Fight for transparency and stipend reform in the legislature so that we can hold our elected officials accountable for their votes
  - Protect the right of all people in the Commonwealth to vote by fighting for same-day voter registration, multi-lingual ballots, and aggressive enforcement against voting rights violations
2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform, legislative rules reform, and access to voting.
    - I was a volunteer organizer with the Ranked Choice Boston campaign <https://rankedchoiceboston.org/partners/our-team/>
    - I have also sued every Presidential administration since 2012 under the Freedom of Information Act
  3. **Accessibility.** Central to good government is accessibility and responsiveness. Would you commit to the following?
    - a. Sending out a newsletter that includes explanations of recent votes at least once per month? **YES**
    - b. Holding office hours on weeknights or weekends at least once per month? **YES**
    - c. Holding town halls in your district at least twice per year? **YES**
  4. **Public Records Law.** Massachusetts is the only state where the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Judiciary claim full exemptions from the public records laws. Do you support the ballot initiative to eliminate these exemptions? **YES**
  5. **Legislative Accountability.** Massachusetts's system of 'leadership stipends' is an outlier among the 50 states. Do you support the ballot initiative to reform this system

to create a fairer pay structure and hold committees to higher standards of transparency and productivity? **YES**

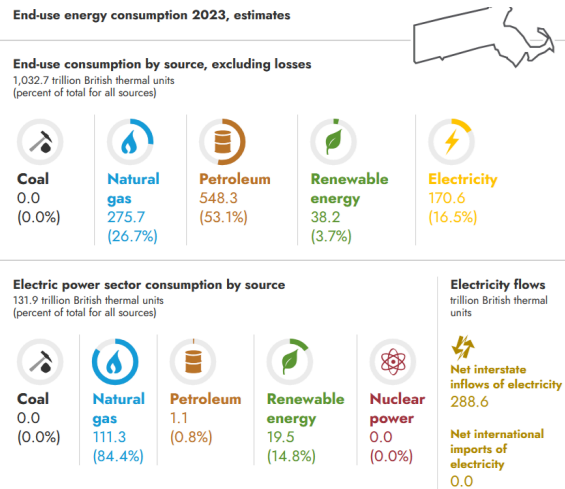
6. **Legislative Research Bureau.** The Massachusetts legislature is the only legislature in the nation without a professional, non-partisan research bureau. Would you support the creation of such an office? **YES**
7. **Expanding Access to Public Meetings.** Would you support updating Open Meeting Law so that people can choose to participate remotely in public meetings on a permanent basis and providing the necessary funds to municipalities to implement this? **YES**
8. **Same Day Registration.** Massachusetts lags behind other states in making voting accessible for all. Do you support eliminating Massachusetts's arbitrary and exclusionary 10-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**
9. **Inactive Voter Lists.** Massachusetts is the *only* state in the country where voters are placed on the Inactive Voter List—one step before being removed from the voter rolls—if they fail to return our annual municipal census. Do you support removing this barrier to participation? **YES**
10. **Ranked Choice Voting.** Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to adopt ranked choice voting in local elections? **YES**
11. **Universal Voting Rights.** 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**

## J. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

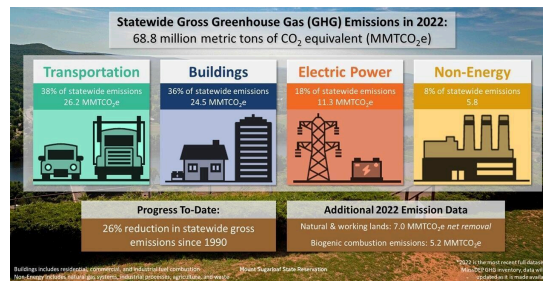
As a coastal state, Massachusetts will be hit particularly hard by climate change, but we are not responding with the necessary urgency. Massachusetts has ambitious and necessary greenhouse gas reduction goals, but we are [not on track](#) to meet them. Our state remains overly dependent on fossil fuels like oil and gas despite the pollution and myriad public health harms they produce and the ample [data](#) showing that we must leave fossil fuels in the ground. As we now face a federal government hostile to renewable and climate action, the responsibility lies with state government to take leadership in accelerating a green energy 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: it would need [more than \\$24 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.**



**Transportation is currently the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in MA.**



1. Please explain your principles and proposals relative to sustainable infrastructure and environmental protection.

I am running to make Massachusetts safe for our kids and families. A safe community means clean water to drink, reliable transportation to get to school or work, and affordable healthcare when you get sick.

Clean air and safe drinking water should not be luxuries. Massachusetts must expand its investment in climate-smart infrastructure so every neighborhood can breathe easy. We must also hold polluters accountable for their role in climate change, and ensure those penalties benefit the communities hardest hit by our climate crisis.

Moreover, mobility is a civil right. Decades of neglect have left Massachusetts' infrastructure in bad shape. The MBTA is unreliable, too many roads and bridges are long overdue for repair, and traffic congestion is the 4th worst in the country. Too many neighbors lose jobs, time, and opportunities because safe and reliable transportation is out of reach. Where you live or what you earn should never decide whether you are able to get to work, school, or the care you need.

As senator, I will:

- Crack down on companies that engage in illegal dumping and hazardous pollution
  - Improve the resilience of our communities by bolstering pipes, storm drains, and other infrastructure that puts our homes and streets at risk during severe weather events
  - Increase clean energy by expanding eligibility for front-end rebates for homeowners who make energy improvements, electrifying buildings and schools, and expanding Massachusetts' conservation programs
  - Treat public transportation as a public good by investing in critical infrastructure, like increasing access and frequency of transit in underserved corridors, expanding first and last mile connections
  - Ensure pricing equity through the commonwealth with free busses, expansions of subway lines, and expanding zone 1A pricing to all of Boston
  - Relieve congestion and improve air quality through expanded bike paths, bus lanes, and other strategies that move people, not traffic
2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to protect the environment and expand access to public transportation.
  3. **Fossil Fuel Infrastructure.** Do you oppose the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure in the state? **YES**
  4. **Make Polluters Pay.** Do you support holding the corporations who are most responsible for causing global climate change financially accountable to pay for

damages caused by climate driven extreme weather and the infrastructure improvements needed for resilience? **YES**

5. **Expanding Solar Coverage.** Would you support legislation to create permanent incentives for siting solar projects where they have the least environmental impact, i.e., on buildings and disturbed land? **YES**
6. **Banning Predatory Industry Practices.** Third-party electricity suppliers notoriously give confusing or misleading offers and often target low-income and older adults. Would you support banning third-party electricity suppliers that sell directly to residents? **YES**
7. **Utility Accountability.** Would you support legislation that restricts investor-owned utilities' profits, including but not limited their ability to recover lobbying, advertisement, trade association dues, and investor relations expenses on utility bills? **YES**
8. **Data Centers.** Data centers across Massachusetts and the country have been driving heavier energy and water usage, leading to higher costs for everyday customers. Would you support the following measures...?
  - a. Requiring primary-use data centers to pay for the cost of utility infrastructure upgrades, procure renewable back-up energy sources, and provide quarterly water and energy usage data? **YES**
  - b. Imposing a moratorium on new large-load data centers while a commission is convened to define appropriate community and environmental regulations? **YES**
  - c. Repealing tax exemptions for data centers? **YES**
9. **Plastic Bag Ban.:** Would you support a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags? **YES**
10. **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 requiring the MBTA to operate an all-electric system by 2035? **YES**
11. **Free Public Transit.** Do you support making public transit in the Commonwealth fare-free? **YES**

### **III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

***Limit answer to 150 words or fewer.***

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.

The Norfolk and Suffolk district deserves a bold, strategic leader who will ensure working people can secure a thriving, joyful future for their families and the next generation. We need a legislature and a state government that will fight back against the Trump Administration, meaningfully lower costs, and finally deliver for working families in Massachusetts.

Given that 90 percent of people's everyday lives are affected by state and local government, the state legislature should be an engine for effective, practical policies that improve people's lives. We need leaders with real policy expertise who also understand why too many current policies are failing Massachusetts families. I've built my career designing and advancing solutions that make a real and meaningful impact on working families, including delivering billions of dollars of debt relief to millions of student loan borrowers across the country, and lowering everyday costs for millions more.