

PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

2016 Primary Race for the 26th Middlesex Legislative District

Endorsement Questionnaire

Candidate Response

Mike Connolly, mikeconnolly.org



PRIMARY ELECTION: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2016

26th MIDDLESEX DISTRICT consisting of Cambridge: Ward 1, Ward 2: Precinct 1, Ward 3, Ward 6: Precinct 1; Somerville: Ward 1, Ward 2: Precinct 1

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I. About You

Motivations and Priorities

1. Why are you running for office? And what will your top 3 priorities be if elected? Q.I:1

I am running for State Representative because I believe we need passionate new leaders in the House to address the concerns of our communities and advance a progressive agenda, here in Cambridge and Somerville, and across the Commonwealth. That's why I am challenging incumbent State Rep. Tim Toomey, who scored 65% on the Progressive Mass scorecard in the previous session. The 26th Middlesex District of Cambridge and Somerville is easily among the most progressive districts in the Commonwealth, so this race is a real opportunity for us to work together to elect a progressive champion who will work with others to help move the House to the Left.

My top three priorities include:

- 1) Raising additional revenue to invest in our future. At present, the state budget is some \$3.3 billion less than it was circa the year 2000. That adds up to a loss of tens of billions of dollars over the past fifteen years. We should look to target \$4 billion in additional annual revenue, at least, as soon as possible. This will enable us to fund investments in public transit, public education, and other vital services and programs;
- 2) Affordable housing. We need a comprehensive housing plan, including a program to protect socio-economic diversity in rapidly gentrifying areas while also creating more varied and affordable housing options, connected to transit, across our entire Commonwealth;
- 3) Achieving our sustainability goals with a "net zero" carbon emissions plan to make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to rely exclusively on renewable energy. We can further the efforts we have made in Cambridge and Somerville to target net zero buildings, and we must look to curb emissions from transportation, too.

Background and Experience

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity? Q.I:2

My commitment to our progressive agenda stems from my own background. I was raised in public housing by a single mother who struggled with her mental health. I also spent time in foster care and benefited from a Head Start program and other social services as a young child. With the help of these programs, caring community members, and an extended family, I had the support to overcome adversity and beat the odds. I went on to attend Duke University on a football scholarship and earned my degree in computer science. After that, I attended Boston College Law School, served as a managing editor for a progressive law journal, became a licensed attorney, and worked for a global technology company.

As I reflected on these opportunities, I started to think more deeply about why many of my peers ended up in the prison system, out of work, on the streets, or victims of the heroin and opioid epidemics.

And as I contemplated the future of our Cambridge and Somerville neighborhoods, I also wondered why state government has been so slow to make broader investments in affordable housing, public transportation, early education, and social services — investments that would help keep our community affordable and accessible to people from all walks of life — and help make my story less of an exception.

When I moved to Cambridge with my wife Kacy five years ago, I saw opportunities to get involved and make a difference. I took on leadership roles and found a passion for bringing people together to promote positive change in our community.

In 2011-12, I advocated for campaign finance reform and legislative accountability, organizing a team of volunteers, engaging thousands of Cambridge and Somerville voters and winning the support of Noam Chomsky and Lawrence Lessig while highlighting the need for restored funding for our clean elections law.

In 2013, I organized a grassroots campaign to win support for a "net zero" carbon emissions plan that has since become a model for climate protection for other municipalities. I also joined with local leaders to call on MIT to build more affordable housing for its graduate students and postdocs.



In 2014-15, I worked as a legislative aide in Cambridge City Hall, where I conducted research, organized committee meetings, responded to constituent requests, and drafted legislation for affordable housing, public open space, community/bike paths, renewable energy, and clean elections.

Most recently, I chaired a public forum on transit and traffic issues with some of the state's leading advocates for public transportation, and I also helped organize support for zoning approval of Cambridge's first medical marijuana dispensary.

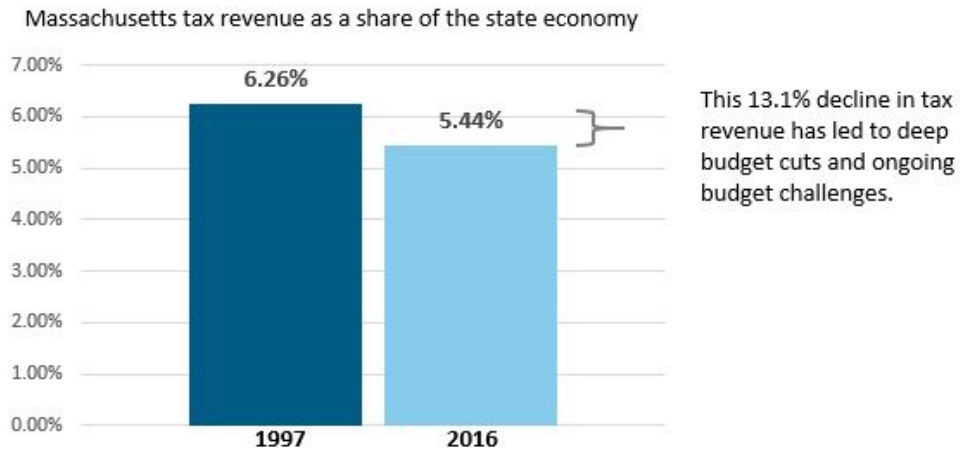
Over the years, I have served as a leader and as a volunteer with community groups and nonprofit organizations, and I have helped elect progressives to the Cambridge City Council, the Somerville Board of Alderman, and to the state legislature. I have also been actively involved with Progressive Massachusetts since around the time the organization was founded in 2011.

I have seen the positive impact that we can have when we work together to advance big ideas and new voices from the grassroots. Now, I'm asking for your support so that we can bring people together to make state government more responsive and more accountable to the needs of our communities, and more reflective of our progressive values.

II. The Issues

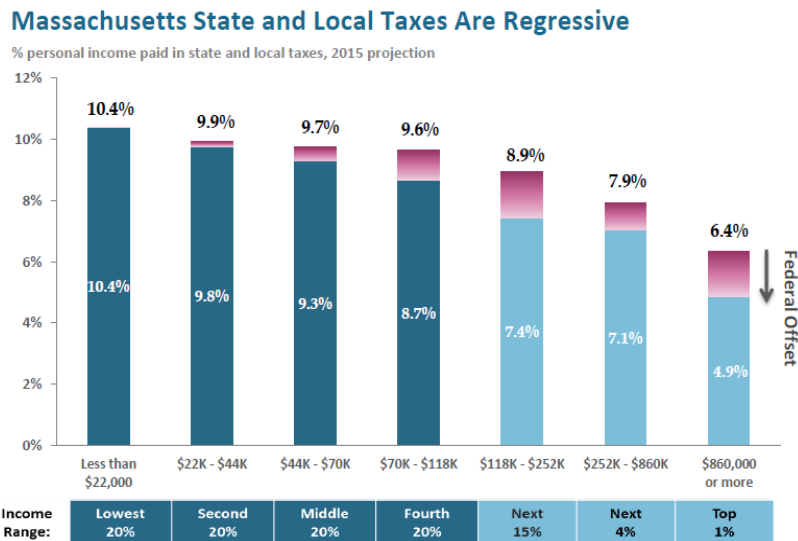
A. Revenue and Taxation

Despite the label of “Taxachusetts,” Massachusetts actually ranks 22nd among states in terms of state and local taxes as a share of total personal income and below the national average. Between 1977 and 2012, Massachusetts reduced state taxes by more than all but one other state. Because of income tax cuts enacted between 1998 and 2002, Massachusetts is taking in over \$3 billion less in tax revenue each year. Such cuts to the state income tax have meant increasing reliance on fees, as well as sales, gas, and property taxes, exacerbating the overall regressivity of our revenue. Regressive taxation strains low- and middle-income families, and reduced revenue.



Section A, Figure 1 - Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.

Section A, Figure 2 - Massachusetts state and local taxes are regressive.



Statement/Experience

1. What principles do you bring to considerations of state revenue and tax reform (individual and corporate)? *How should we raise more revenue to adequately fund our communities for the future?* Q.A:1
2. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you've personally done to advance your principles on revenue and taxation (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.). Q.A:2

Principles of social and economic justice are what guide my considerations of state revenue and tax reform.

As State Senator Dan Wolf has said, we are "the richest state in the richest country in the history of the world," and yet, here in our district, there are areas where poverty has been on the rise, and across the Commonwealth, the gap between rich and poor is yawning ever wider. Unfortunately, our state is as unequal now as it was just before the Great Depression – an intolerable reality.

For many years, Democrats have enjoyed a supermajority in both branches of our state legislature, so it is up to us, as committed progressives, to work together make notions of social and economic justice a reality for all in our Commonwealth.

Thanks to committed progressive advocates and organizers, and growing movements for social justice, we have much to be hopeful about – and now, we need some new, progressive voices in the House to offer an alternative to the "no new revenue" position of Speaker DeLeo and Governor Baker.

Related Experience, Q.A:2

For the past several years, I have advocated for progressive reforms to individual and corporate tax rates, here in my community and at the state-level, as an activist, advocate, and legislative aide.

I was also active in the Occupy Boston protests that helped bring issues of income inequality to the forefront, and I have worked with other members of Progressive Massachusetts to participate in policy conferences aimed at outlining legislative solutions, while also volunteering to support the campaigns of progressive champions like Elizabeth Warren, Don Berwick, and Bernie Sanders.

I have also been active in my support of the Fair Share Amendment and the Raise Up campaigns, along with the Fight for \$15, and I have met with the incumbent to advocate for increases to the minimum wage and earned sick time.

Most recently, I organized a forum addressing transit and traffic concerns in my community, where a major theme of the afternoon was the need to raise additional revenue to support maintenance and expansion of the MBTA.

Progressive Taxation

3. Currently, Progressive Massachusetts is working on a constitutional amendment to increase the income tax on income over \$1 million by 4%. Do you support or oppose this effort (the Fair Share Amendment)? Q.A:3

Support. Yes, I support the Fair Share Amendment, and I stood up for the Fair Share campaign at a meeting of the Joint Committee on Revenue earlier this year.

That said, the millionaire's tax is projected to yield on the order of \$1.9B in additional revenue annually, if it is approved by the voters some 27 months from now.

That means the Fair Share Amendment will only get us part of the way toward mitigating all of the revenue that has been lost since the 2000-era tax cuts, so we must look to enact additional measures to raise revenue in a progressive fashion right away.

Sales Tax Holiday

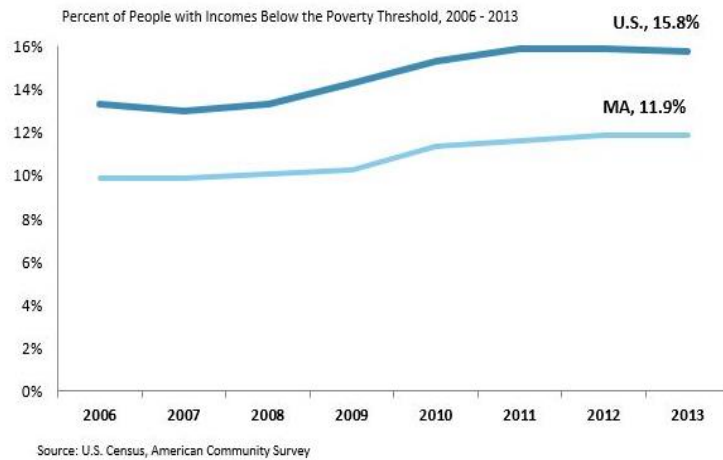
4. It has been demonstrated over and over that the annual sales tax holiday does not serve its intended purpose of increasing sales, but rather just shifts sales to the weekend of the holiday. Will you support or oppose efforts to extend the sales tax holiday? Q.A:4

Oppose.

B. Job Growth and the Economy

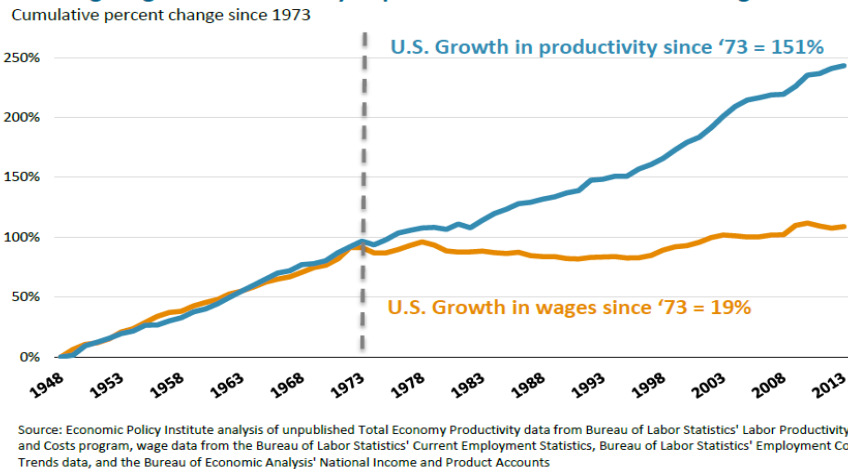
The Massachusetts economy has continued to grow and recover from the Great Recession, but the gains have not been shared equally. Poverty levels continue to increase, while the minimum wage loses value every year. Massachusetts now ranks as one of the top ten most unequal states according to various measures of income inequality.

MA and U.S. Poverty Rates Remain Elevated Despite Years of Recovery



Section B, Figure 3

Growing Wage and Productivity Gap is Our Central Economic Challenge



Section B, Figure 4 - Productivity has grown significantly since the 1970s, but it is not being reflected in higher wages.

Statement/Experience

1. Share your personal values and principles on job growth and the economy. *How can we improve the economy and economic security for all people? How do we grow the number of good paying jobs in the Commonwealth? How do you view wealth and income inequality, and what would you do about it, if anything?* Q.B:1



2. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on job growth and the economy (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.). Q.B:2

There are many steps we can take to improve the economy and economic security for all people – a central goal of our progressive platform.

Economic opportunity starts with education. We need to invest in universal early-education and affordable child care. We must also protect public education from further charter expansion, and we must also make deep investments in public higher education, including tuition-free college, so that all of our children have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

We must invest in workforce development and lifelong learning programs, and we should also look to support local, independent, and start-up businesses and nonprofits.

We must also invest in maintenance, expansion, and upgrades to the MBTA and our overall transit network so people can access employment and educational opportunities.

We need a \$15 minimum wage, indexed to inflation, and we also need to move forward with a system of single-payer healthcare that will reduce costs to employers and employees alike.

We need to do more to ensure that people who have been incarcerated can join the workforce, and we must do more to defend public sector jobs and support the interests of organized labor."

Related Experience, Q.B:2

I have been active in the Fight for \$15, here in Cambridge and also on Beacon Hill, and I have also been active in my support of the Fair Share Amendment, Pay Equity, and Earned Sick Time.

I have walked the picket line in solidarity with Verizon workers, both in 2011, and again this year.

In addition, I have worked to help elect candidates to the state legislature who have been endorsed by Progressive Massachusetts, and I was also active in the effort to elect Elizabeth Warren.

Minimum Wage

3. Do you support or oppose raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour? Q.B:3

Support. Nobody working 40 hours per week should be living in poverty.

Tipped Minimum Wage

4. Do you support or oppose making the tipped minimum wage equal to that of the regular minimum wage? Q.B:4

Support. It is not uncommon during certain shifts for a tipped worker not to make the regular minimum wage. While the employer is supposed to make up the difference, we need to recognize this does not always happen, and the worker is left exploited. We should work to close the wage gap in the service industry.

Indexed Minimum Wage

5. Do you support or oppose indexing the minimum wage to inflation? Q.B:5

Support.

And please note, incumbent Rep. Toomey voted against indexing the minimum wage to inflation in the previous session. Rep. Toomey's vote against indexing the minimum wage to inflation puts him at odds with our Raise Up coalition.

The legislature should move to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, and index it to inflation. It is imperative that we take these steps to eradicate poverty wages in our Commonwealth, and doing so will allow us more time to focus on other important income-related issues.



Paid Family Medical Leave

6. Do you support or oppose efforts to mandate access for up to 12 weeks of Paid Family Medical Leave? Q.B:6

Support. Parents should not have to choose between raising a family and having a secure job.

Corporate Tax Incentives

7. Do you support or oppose legislation to impose greater accountability on corporate tax incentives (such as through automatic five-year sunsets or revocation of incentives that do not meet promised job, wage, and benefit standards?) Q.B:7

Support. I also oppose the tax breaks that are being provided to General Electric.

Corporate Tax Incentives and Good Jobs

8. Do you support or oppose legislation to require any corporation that receives tax incentives to meet wage and benefit standards befitting of a "good job"? Q.B:8

Support. If business benefit from the Commonwealth's tax incentives, basic standards need to be met. It's a question of reciprocal fairness.

For the record, incumbent Rep. Toomey voted to "extend corporate tax credit 5 years," a vote that was deemed to be odds with the Democratic Party platform. Vote was on an amendment to the FY04 Budget, Outside Section 165, changing the limit on corporate tax credits from 14 years to 19 years. The vote was criticized because the platform called for these kinds of tax incentives to be accompanied by "commitments to good corporate citizenship and enforceable terms assuring continued investment in Massachusetts."

Equal Pay

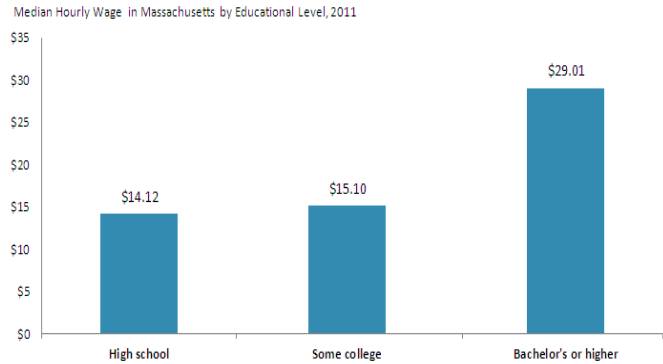
9. Do you support or oppose legislation to further the principle of equal pay for equal work? Q.B:9

Support.

C. Education and Workforce Development

Public education has always been a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. The mission of public schools is to serve all students, including English Language Learners and those with special needs. However, powerful corporate interests are working to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups are investing 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. Various forms of privatization are being proposed and implemented, including charter schools and “turnaround” schemes that put private management groups in charge of struggling public schools. Costly, mandated standardized test results are used to justify these privatization schemes. Finally, the soaring price of higher education over the last several decades has made access to this opportunity increasingly out of reach, at the very moment when higher education makes a greater difference to one’s economic future.

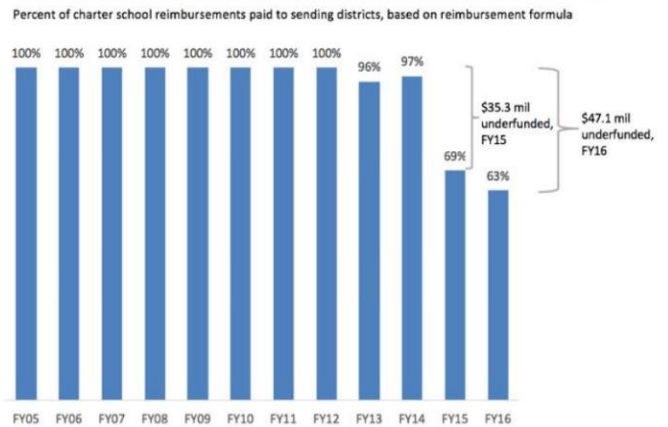
Section C, Figure 5 - Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Population Survey data

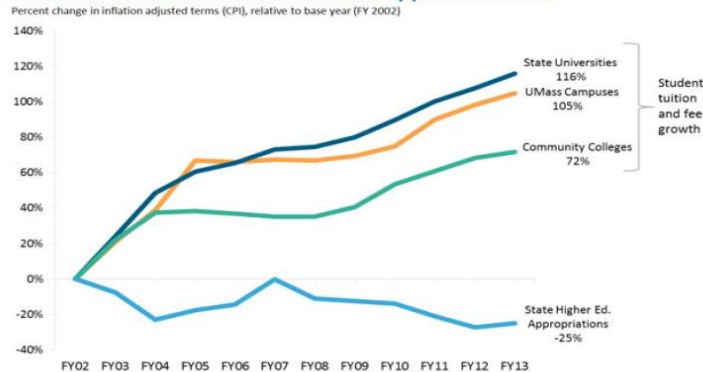
Section C, Figure 6 - The state hasn't been living up to its responsibility to fully fund our public schools.

The State Has Not Fully Funded Charter Reimbursements in Recent Years



Section C, Figure 7 - Massachusetts has been disinvesting from higher education and shifting the cost burden onto students.

Tuition & Fees Doubled While State Support Declined



Source: MA Dept. of Higher Ed. Resident Tuition and Fee (Total) Rates

Statement/Experience

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding public education and workforce training. *What value does public education and workforce development have in improving our economy as well as in addressing matters of economic justice? What measures should the Commonwealth take on these issues?* Q.C:1
2. Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on public education and workforce development? Q.C:2

As someone who was raised in public housing and benefited from a Head Start program and public schools as a child, and who then went on to graduate from Duke University and Boston College Law School, I understand the importance of early education, public education, and higher education. That is why I will work tirelessly for universal early-education, and I will continue to fight to keep the cap on charter schools. In addition, I will work with others to reinvest in our public universities and achieve free college education for all.

Massachusetts is the place where public education was born – nearly 400 years ago. Today, we need new, progressive leaders in the House to ensure that Massachusetts remains the leader in public education, which is vital to our goal of economic justice.

Related Experience, Q.C:2

I have been actively involved in the Save Our Public Schools movement, as well as effort to promote less testing and more learning.

As a legislative aide to the Cambridge City Council, I had the opportunity to tour Pre-K facilities in many communities, and since that time, I have been an outspoken advocate for universal early-education.

Achievement gaps

3. What would you do to address persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in education? Q.C:3

Racial and economic achievement gaps in education stem from a myriad of complex issues, including a long history of racial oppression and subjugation, and a fairly recent program of austerity-style budgets here in Massachusetts.

We need universal Pre-K, affordable childcare and afterschool programs. We should keep the cap on charter schools and move away from an overemphasis on standardized testing. We should advance a police of free college education, and we must also advance a progressive agenda more broadly to address other root causes of the racial and economic achievement gaps in education.

Universal Pre-K

4. Do you support or oppose creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system? Q.C:4

Support. Recent research highlights the importance in early education in cognitive development.

Standardized Testing

5. Do you support or oppose the use of high-stakes testing for such things as student promotion, high school graduation, teacher evaluation, and the evaluation of schools and districts? Q.C:5

Oppose. We spend too much time testing our students and not enough time and resources exploring adaptive learning methods. Our approach to education should never be one size fits all. Likewise our approach to assessment should blend quantitative and qualitative measures that don't cut into valuable teaching time.

Funding Structure

6. Do you support or oppose changes to the Chapter 70 Education formula, including the Foundation Budget, to incorporate proper state funding for ELL students, Special Education students,

transportation costs, charter school reimbursements to sending schools, and class size reduction?
Q.C:6

Support.

Examining how we fund programs for our most vulnerable students is necessary to ensure such students have access to these vital programs.

Charter School Cap

7. Do you support or oppose the 2016 ballot question that would lift the cap on charter schools? Q.C:7

Oppose. I have been outspoken in my opposition to Question 2.

Please note: Rep. Toomey voted to lift the cap on charters in the previous session, and earlier this year, he voted against a Cambridge City Council resolution to keep the cap.

Charter Accountability

8. Do you support or oppose legislation measures to bring greater accountability and transparency to charter schools, such as by requiring the backfilling of students throughout the school year and by requiring charter schools to adhere to the same disciplinary procedures and public disclosure standards as public schools? Q.C:8

Support.

Higher Ed Access

9. Do you support or oppose legislation to grant in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students? Q.C:9

Support.

Universal Higher Education

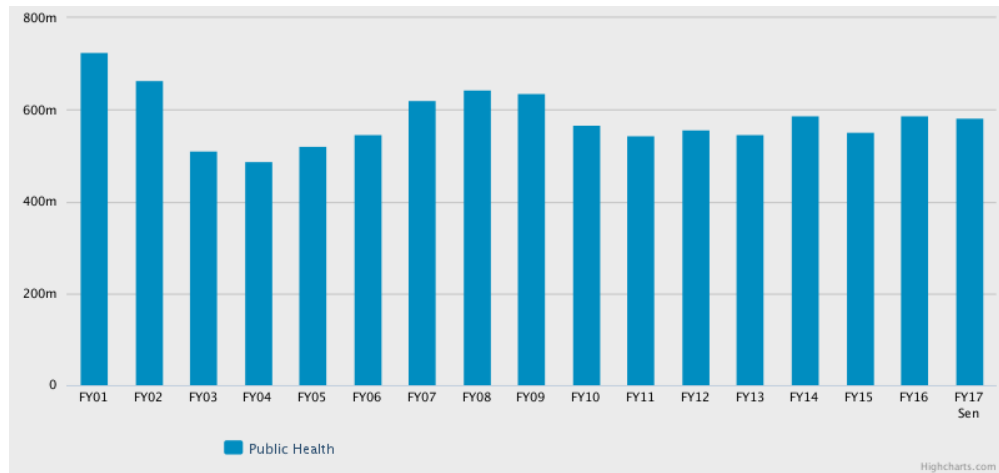
10. Do you support or oppose the goal of providing free, publicly funded higher education for every student who wants it? Q.C:10

Support.

D. Health Care

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health insurance coverage, with 96% of the state having health insurance. But there is still work to do. Significant disparities in health insurance coverage and health care access continue to exist along income, racial, and education lines. Premiums continue to rise, and medical debt remains a persistent problem. We still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, but without necessarily achieving better health outcomes.

Section D, Figure 8 - Public health funding has decreased 19% since 2001.



Statement/Experience

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding health care insurance, delivery and outcomes. Q.D:1
2. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on health care (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.). Q.D:2

I believe healthcare is a human right, and as such, we must recognize the fact that the cost of healthcare is out of control here in Massachusetts and across the country.

The answer is a single-payer healthcare system. Single-payer has been part of Massachusetts Democratic party platform for over a decade, and I believe we need new, progressive leaders in the House to help make single-payer a reality.

I am proud to have earned the endorsement of Mass-Care, the state’s leading advocacy organization for single-payer, and if elected, I will work with others make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to move to a single-payer system, which will help us eliminate gaps in coverage and achieve better delivery and outcomes.

I am also critical of the influence of lobbyists on health care policy, and I think it is doubtful that the global payment model will be able to limit the escalating cost of healthcare in the absence of a single-payer system.

Related Experience, Q.D:2

In 2009, I worked tirelessly to organize support for the public option as part of grassroots efforts to influence the final language of the Affordable Care Act. When the public option was not included in the final version of the legislation, it inspired me to become more politically active with organizations like Jobs With Justice and Rootstrikers, as well as Progressive Massachusetts. Since then, I have worked to support progressive champions for single-payer such as Don Berwick in his 2014 gubernatorial campaign and Sen. Bernie Sanders in 2016 presidential campaign.



Single Payer

3. Would you support legislation to enact a single payer health care system in Massachusetts?
Q.D:3

Support. My campaign has been endorsed by Mass-Care, the state's leading advocacy organization for single payer. A single-payer system is the only reliable way to manage costs and close gaps in coverage, especially in mental healthcare. We need new, progressive leaders in the House to make single-payer a reality for our Commonwealth.

Reproductive Rights

4. Would you support or oppose legislation to support women accessing abortion care without dangerous delay, isolation, and obstruction? Q.D:4

Support. Presently, one of the greatest barriers to safe and legal abortion is a parental consent law for minors; I look forward to working with other Pro-Choice champions to protect and expand safe and legal access to abortion.

I am proud to say that my campaign has been endorsed by NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts. Also note, incumbent Rep. Toomey has been endorsed by Mass. Citizens for Life and Democrats for Life as recently as 2014, and Rep. Toomey earned a "mixed" rating in the 2015 Planned Parenthood legislative scorecard, the lowest rating awarded to any House member from Cambridge or Somerville.

E. Housing

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. Currently, there is a waiting list of up to ten years for a rental voucher, and the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment requires a wage 40% higher than the average renter wage. Half of families in Greater Boston alone pay over 30% of their income in housing and utilities costs—and over 25% of households pay *more than half* their income to housing. 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.

Funding for housing vouchers has fallen-- costs for shelter has increased

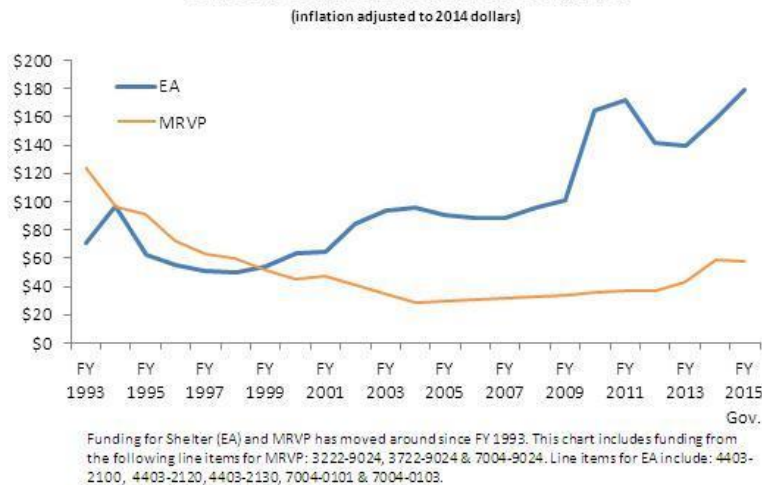


Figure 9

Statement/Experience

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding affordable housing. *How would you ensure that there is suitable housing for all who need it, within reasonable distance of job opportunities? How would you address the need to link housing, jobs, and transportation? How would you tackle homelessness?* Q.E:1
2. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on housing (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.). Q.E:2

Cambridge has effectively been in a state of affordable housing emergency for the past seventeen years, and in Somerville, the situation is equally palpable.

We need a comprehensive housing plan and an affordable housing program to address the housing crisis in communities across our Commonwealth. Unfortunately, the legislature has not treated the housing emergency with the urgency or the depth of attention that will be required to maintain the socio-economic diversity of our communities and our Commonwealth.

We should recognize the complicated nature of the housing emergency. Here in the urban core, we have experienced a tremendous boom in new housing – but the problem is that almost all of this new housing comes in the form of tiny, luxury apartments, not suitable for families or for anyone who is not very wealthy.

On the other hand, once you get beyond the urban core, what you find is that it is very difficult to build new, multifamily housing, even around transit nodes.

Meanwhile, funding for public housing at both the state and federal levels has been eviscerated – here in Cambridge, we have been forced to accept loans from Wall Street banks just to maintain our public

housing as part of the R.A.D. program — loans that must be repaid by our local housing authority, along with significant fees. This is yet another reason why we must raise new revenue.

As a product of public housing, I will advocate for increased funding, including funding to house the homeless. Comprehensive planning and public investment and implementation are all crucial to meeting our housing needs and linking people to jobs and transit.

Related Experience, Q.E:2

As legislative aide to the Cambridge City Council, I identified millions of dollars that the City “left on the table” as a result of a repeated failure to update our affordable housing linkage fees.

I then went on to produce a report that demonstrated how Cambridge was ahead of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s “stronger region” goals for new housing by the year 2030 — but how almost all of our new housing is coming in the form of tiny, luxury apartments. The report called for targeting a higher percentage of affordable housing in new developments.

I am also active in my support of local groups such as the Cambridge Residents Alliance and Union United; we are working with advocates, residents, and elected officials to stop displacement in our communities and expand affordable housing programs and options to a wider-range of residents.

Funding Housing Programs

3. (a) Do you support or oppose increasing state funding to housing programs, and (b) how would you work to see increases (if relevant) realized? Q.E:3
 - a) Support.
 - b) To realize this goal, we need a comprehensive effort to raise revenue, and we need a comprehensive housing program, as discussed above.

Because the Fair Share Amendment is aimed at boosting revenue for transportation and education, we should look to implement a system of progressive taxation to fund overall housing programs, and we should also implement transfer taxes on speculators and big developers (while looking to protect the interests renters and those who are “house rich and cash poor”).

Affordable Housing

4. Do you support or oppose efforts to weaken affordable housing goals under chapter 40b, such as by lowering the affordable housing percent in a community to below 10% or counting market-rate housing as “affordable”? Q.E:4

Oppose. We are in a housing emergency that requires our immediate and thoughtful attention; I oppose any effort to weaken affordable housing goals under chapter 40b.

Zoning Reform

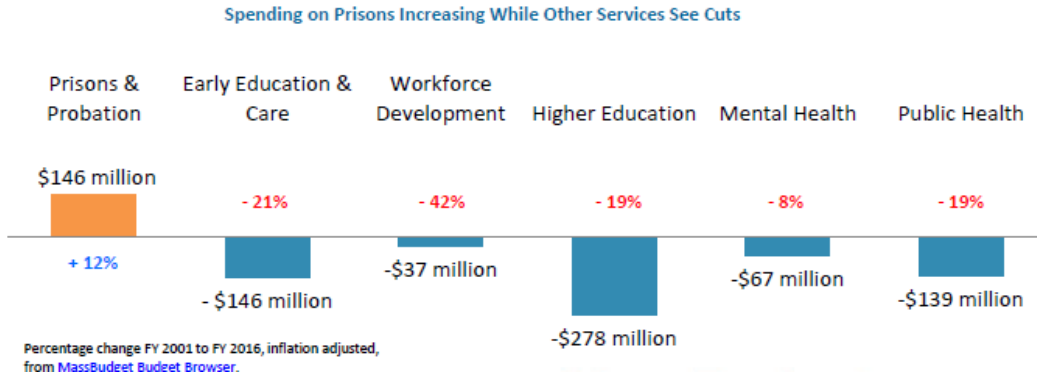
5. Would you support or oppose legislation to upgrade Massachusetts’ zoning laws to encourage more affordable housing and transit-oriented, walkable development and to allow municipalities to adopt inclusionary zoning practices? Q.E:5

Support.

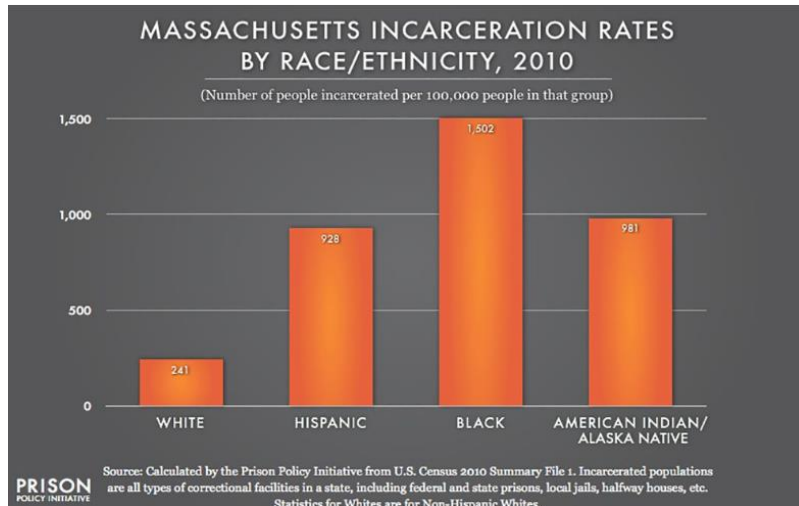
F. Racial and Social Justice

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. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all” into crisis. We support a judicial system that does not disproportionately target communities of color and the poor, that does not criminalize public health issues such as addiction, that reorients away from ineffective and costly ‘tough on crime’ policies. A comprehensive approach to reform must be taken in all aspects of the criminal justice system.

Section F, Figure 10 - Spending on prisons has increased while other services have been cut.



Section F, Figure 11 - Significant racial disparities exist in incarceration in Massachusetts.



Statement/Experience

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding Racial and Social Justice. Q.F:1
2. Please indicate work you personally have done to combat racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, transphobia, and other attempts to marginalize disadvantaged classes. Q.F:2

One of our Commonwealth’s greatest strengths is its diversity, but much more has to be done to create a truly inclusive society. My commitment to social justice comes from my own personal background, and I believe we must work together with greater urgency to achieve racial and social justice.

Related Experience, Q.F:2

As a law student, I worked as a staff writer and managing editor of an academic legal journal dedicated to confronting issues of racial and social injustice, and I also volunteered with the Committee for Public Counsel Services as part of an appellate advocacy program.

In recent years, I have acknowledged my white privilege and have been active in the Black Lives Matter movement in Cambridge; I have participated in Race Talks at the YWCA; I have laid down in the street with others to protest state-sponsored violence against people of color, and I have spoken out against white supremacy and Islamophobia.

In addition, I worked with other advocates, as a legislative aide, to help ensure that Cambridge is upholding the principles of the TRUST Act. I have also been critical of aggressive US foreign policy, and I am proud to say that my campaign has been endorsed by Massachusetts Peace Action.

Mandatory Minimum Sentencing

3. Do you support or oppose legislation to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences related to drug offenses? Q.F:3

Support.

Please note: Rep. Toomey voted to override Governor Patrick's veto of the "three strikes" crime bill and his proposed re-introduction of judicial discretion in certain limited situations where a person has been convicted three times of an enumerated set of violent felonies. Roll Call # 315 H 3818. See [2011-12 Progressive Mass. scorecard](#).

Rep. Toomey also voted for final passage of the "three strikes" minimum mandatory sentencing bill. Roll Call # 343 H 3818. See 2011-12 Progressive Mass. scorecard.

Rep. Toomey cast a key vote "to engross a bill denying parole to habitual offenders. Roll Call # 180 H 3811." See 2011-12 Progressive Mass. scorecard.

And Rep. Toomey voted in favor of Juvenile Mandatory Sentencing, "legislation requires that juveniles convicted of first-degree murder serve a longer mandatory prison sentence – 20 to 30 years – before becoming eligible to be considered for parole." Source [Progressive Mass 2013-14 scorecard](#).

Safe Driving Act

4. Do you support or oppose the Safe Driving Act, which would remove immigration status as a barrier to applying for a license or learner's permit? Q.F:4

Support.

Bail Reform

5. Do you support or oppose legislation to reform the pretrial process (bail reform)? Q.F:5

Support.

Marijuana Legalization

6. Do you support or oppose the 2016 ballot initiative to legalize recreational marijuana and regulate it like alcohol? Q.F:6

Support. I have been outspoken in my support of marijuana legalization and access to medical marijuana.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

7. Do you support or oppose legislation to defuel the school school-to-prison pipeline, such as by stopping zero tolerance disciplinary policies? Q.F:7

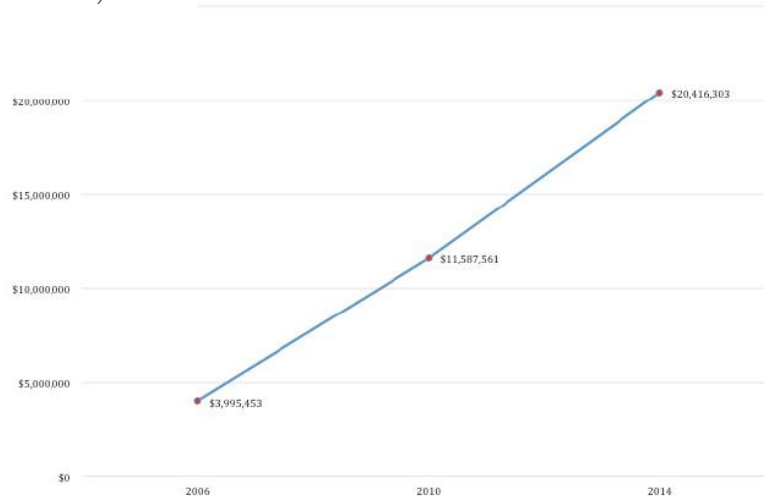
Support. We should not criminalize our youth. These issues should be dealt with by teachers and guidance counselors in the school, not by police officers and the criminal justice system.

G. Good Government and Good Citizenship

The influence of big money in politics is detrimental to democracy. Independent expenditures in MA elections have grown by a factor of five over the past decade. A centralized power structure on Beacon Hill, is undemocratic, and makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine the system. Key to any vision of good government is citizen engagement. Voter turnout in midterm elections, and especially local elections, remains low. The Election Modernization Act of 2014 helped eliminate Massachusetts’s embarrassing status as one of the ten worst states in terms of voting rights, but there is still much work to be done.

Section G, Figure 12 - Independent expenditures in MA elections have risen rapidly. (Source: Common Cause)

MA Independent Expenditure Totals



Statement/Experience

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding Good Governance Reform. Q.G:1
2. Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform, legislative rules reform, and access to voting. Q.G:2

Unfortunately, money continues to dominate our political process. We need to implement campaign finance reforms, and we need to elect new, progressive leaders to the state legislature to promote accountability and revive our system of representative democracy.

Related Experience, Q.G:2

I have been an advocate for campaign finance reform for at least the past five years — I helped organize a two-day summit at Suffolk University in 2012 to address the corrupting influence of money in politics — and later that year, I challenged incumbent Rep. Toomey, in part because of his vote to kill a Clean Elections Law that had the support of some 72% of the voters in our district.

As a legislative aide to the Cambridge City Council, I also worked to support proposals for publicly funded election, and my efforts to tackle the issues political corruption and campaign finance reform have earned praise from Harvard Law professor and activist Lawrence Lessig.

Power and the Legislature

3. If elected, would you support or oppose efforts to dilute the amount of power held by leadership in your respective branch of government? For example, would you support a rule change allowing committees to appoint their own chair, instead of leadership? Q.G:3

Support. For the record, Rep. Toomey voted against retaining term limits for the position of Speaker of the House, "one of the few checks on the vast power of the position. With this vote, there is now no term limit for the Speaker of the House..." Source: [Progressive Mass. scorecard, 1/29/15](#).

Also note, Rep. Toomey voted to repeal the term limits that existed for the Speaker of the House during the tenure of Speaker Finneran in the previous decade.

Public Campaign Financing

4. **Public campaign financing.** Do you support or oppose legislation to create a robust public financing system for state elections? Q.G:4

Support. We should disarm the influence special interests and corporate lobbyists have on our electoral process. Privately funded elections are one of the reasons why our democracy is presently anemic with only a handful of races challenging incumbents this year.

For the record, Rep. Toomey voted to defund and nullify the Clean Elections Law in 2001, a move that the Boston Phoenix actually called "a grotesque manipulation of the democratic process." The Clean Elections ballot initiative was supported by 72% of the voters in our district just a few years earlier.

Election Day Voter Registration

5. **Election day voter registration.** Do you support or oppose Election Day Registration? Q.G:5

Support. We should join states like New Hampshire in adopting policies that encourage participation in our electoral process. We should work to lift as many barriers as possible, including deadlines to register to vote.

Automatic Voter Registration

6. **Automatic voter registration.** Do you support or oppose automatic voter registration?

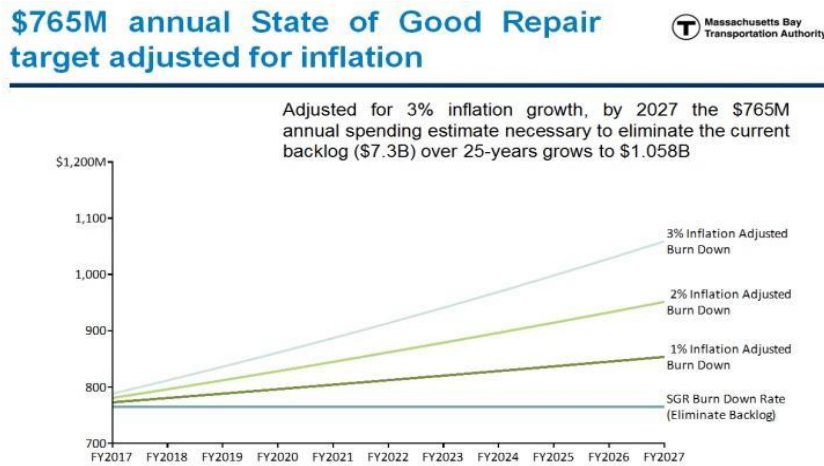
Support.

H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

Massachusetts will be hit particularly hard by climate change. In order to avoid catastrophic climate change, global carbon emissions need to be reduced by 70% by 2050 and brought to 0 by 2080. Massachusetts has been a leader in increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon production and must continue this leadership role in the United States. This 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 incentivizing reduced carbon usage and assisting in coordination between agencies and moving forward local government understanding of looming climate threats.

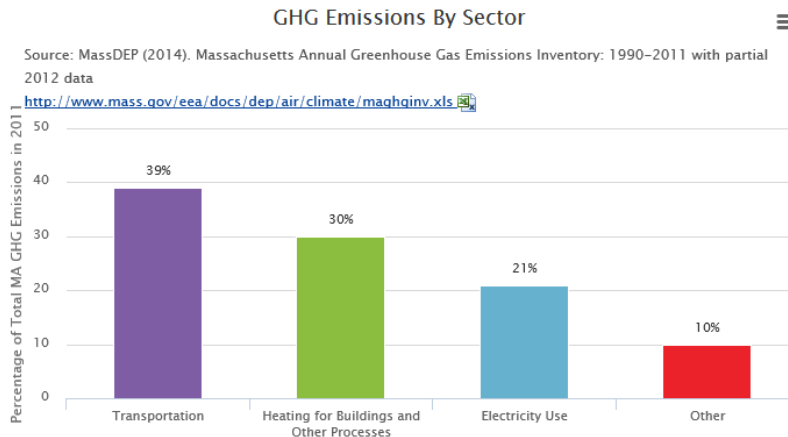
Public transit must play a role in decarbonizing our transportation system, as well as advancing complementary goals of equity and inclusion. However, Massachusetts politicians have lost their understanding of public transit as a public good that benefits all residents and businesses in Massachusetts, 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 \$5.5 billion, with over \$7 billion in deferred maintenance costs. Regional Transit Authorities that serve communities, including Gateway Cities across the state, face enormous capital needs as well.

Figure 13 - The cost of keeping transit in good repair grows as we continue to defer maintenance.



massDOT

Figure 14 - Transportation is currently the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in MA, although heating and electricity are also major



Statement/Experience

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection. Q.H:1
2. Please indicate work you personally have done to protect the environment and expand access to public transportation. Q.H:2

We've been abusing the environment for too long, and we are now facing dangerous climate change, pollution, habitat destruction, and persistent biotoxins. We are falling short of the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act, and we must prepare for sea level rise.

As a committed climate activist, I recognize that we must stop burning fossil fuels. We should further the efforts we have made in Cambridge and Somerville to target net zero buildings, and we must look to curb emissions from transportation, too.

Related Experience, Q.H:2

I have been a leader in the Net Zero Cambridge movement – organizing a coalition of residents and advocates to reach an agreement that set our Net Zero Task Force into motion, after negotiating directly with the City Administration on details and timelines for the project that is now targeting net zero carbon emissions in the built environment.

In addition, I am: 1) a Member of the Board, Green Cambridge, helping to grow our city's largest sustainability organization; 2) an ally of Mothers Out Front; 3) an advocate for public open space.

I also advocate for public transportation; earlier this year, I organized and chaired a successful forum on transit issues that featured presentations from State Senator Pat Jehlen, Cambridge Mayor E. Denise Simmons, and some of the state's leading advocates for investments in transportation; I have also been a regular participant in public meetings and hearings regarding the Green Line Extension, the Somerville Community Path, and the Ground McGrath Highway project, and the Grand Junction Multi-Use Path project.

Global Warming Solutions Act

3. Earlier this year, the Massachusetts SJC ruled that the state has not met the emissions reductions requirements of the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act. What steps would you support to meet and go beyond the targets set by this act? Q.H:3

At present, we are not meeting the mandates of the Global Warming Solutions Act, but in reality, we must actually outperform those mandates – by achieving net zero carbon emissions on a statewide basis.

To do this, we should:

- 1) "go bigger" on offshore wind, targeting 2 GW minimum, per the recent University of Delaware study;
- 2) put a price on carbon;
- 3) look to eliminate solar net metering caps and establish declining block grants for SRECs;
- 4) ramp up the RPS, to 2%/year now, then 5%, 10%, and so on, until we get to 100% renewable electricity;
- 5) fix natural gas pipeline leaks, and put preventive leak detection technology in place;
- 6) electrify transportation and invest in public transit;
- 7) increase energy efficiency efforts;
- 8) start restoring the natural environment to absorb more carbon emissions;
- 9) invest in climate resilience and protect vulnerable populations;
- 10) create durable jobs in renewable energy, eco-restoration, public transit and related fields.

Funding Climate Change Adaptation

4. Will you support or oppose increasing funding and collaboration between state and local governments on resiliency and climate adaptation efforts to help mitigate the consequences of climate change? Q.H:4

Support. Of course I would encourage all levels of government to work together to combat climate change, which is the greatest existential threat to our society.

Solar Energy

5. Do you support or oppose efforts to increase equitable access to solar power by pushing to remove caps on solar generation and restore compensation for low-income and community solar? Q.H:5

Support. In the current session, the House has taken some steps forward — and some steps backward — on renewable energy policy. But the climate emergency is so severe and so urgent that we can no longer settle for the typical rate of progress in the political arena. We need new, progressive leadership to achieve net zero carbon emissions on a statewide basis. Entirely eliminating the net metering cap is an important step; increased funding, tax credits, and zero-interest loans to further promote solar must follow.

Carbon Fees

6. Do you support or oppose legislation to put a fee on carbon emissions? Q.H:6

Support. I support putting a tax on carbon as a means to reduce emissions and motivate the switch to cleaner energy. As we put a price on carbon, we must also be mindful of the fact that our system of taxation is already quite regressive, so we should look to implement carbon pricing in ways that are progressive, including the possibility of a revenue-neutral tax on carbon.

Gas Pipelines

7. Do you support or oppose the expansion of gas pipelines in the state? Q.H:7

Oppose. We should focus on clean and sustainable energy sources that don't involve extracting and transporting fossil fuels. I stand in solidarity with (and in awe of) all of the brave activists who are performing civil disobedience to stop these pipelines.

MBTA Fiscal Challenges

8. Do you believe that the fiscal problems facing the MBTA can be solved by reform alone, or is new revenue require? Which reforms? Which additional revenue sources? Q.H:8

New revenue is required. Ultimately, we need to adopt a system of progressive taxation to fund all of our priorities, including transportation.

While I am always willing to consider practical reforms, I understand the major problem facing the MBTA is a lack of funding and support from the state legislature. Unfortunately, the House has failed to address the \$7 Billion state-of-good-repair backlog for the MBTA system, and our failure to invest in public transit is compromising our sustainability goals. Meanwhile, the Green Line Extension — the signature infrastructure project in our district — remains in a state of uncertainty, some 26-years after the state was ordered to complete the project pursuant to the Clean Air Act.

For the record, Rep. Toomey did not join with progressives in support Gov. Patrick's plan to raise an additional \$2B annually for transit and education in 2013. Instead, Rep. Toomey supported "engrossment of a revenue bill that provided inadequate new revenue for transportation and provided no new revenue for education" despite the fact that many progressives were working to advance Gov. Patrick's more ambitious proposal. Roll Call #69, Bill H3382, from the Progressive Mass. scorecard, 4/8/2013.



MBTA Fare Hikes

9. Do you support or oppose capping MBTA fare hikes at 5% (or less) for every two-year period?
Q.H:9

Support. These fare hikes are especially burdensome on low income residents. Fares shouldn't increase faster than the rate of inflation, if at all. The most vulnerable should not be footing the bill for public transit. We must advance a comprehensive program to build and operate a world-class network of public transit, offering improvements, upgrades, and expansion to constituencies across the Commonwealth.

III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Limit answer to 250 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.

Mike Connolly, 26th Middlesex, Q.III

As someone who has been active in Progressive Massachusetts from the early days of the organization, I respectfully ask for the Progressive Mass. endorsement because the 26th Middlesex District of Cambridge and Somerville deserves a total progressive champion — someone who will be an outspoken advocate, a committed organizer, and a reliable vote for our progressive platform.