

Christina Minicucci

14th Essex

State Representative

Endorsement Questionnaire

Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District: 14th Essex

Party: Democratic

Website: www.christina4rep.com

Twitter: [@christina4rep](https://twitter.com/christina4rep)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/christina4rep/>



Primary: September 4

Election: November 6

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Introduction: Progressive Mass

About

Progressive Massachusetts is a statewide, grassroots organization committed to working toward shared prosperity, racial and social justice, good government and strong democracy, and sustainable infrastructure and environmental protection. It was founded 5 years ago by local organizers from the Patrick and Obama campaigns in order to continue to move forward progressive values and issues in Massachusetts.

Advancing a progressive agenda in Massachusetts requires electing legislators who share--and will fight for--our values, and then holding them accountable.

Membership

One of the benefits of being a dues-paying member of Progressive Massachusetts is that you get to participate in our endorsement votes for key elections, helping to shape the future direction of progressive policymaking in the state. **Not yet a member? Join!** ProgressiveMass.com/member

How Endorsements Work

Progressive Massachusetts sends candidates this detailed policy questionnaire, revised periodically by the Elections & Endorsements Committee (EEC). The EEC may choose to make a recommendation in a given race, but the ultimate decision lies with you--the members. In each race, you can choose to vote for a **candidate**, vote “**no endorsement**,” or **abstain**. Candidates who receive at least 60% of all ballots submitted in their respective race will be endorsed by Progressive Massachusetts. If no candidate in a race reaches the 60% threshold, we will not endorse. Regardless of whether or not we endorse, all questionnaires will be made available on our website as a public service.

Sources

Each section features a chart or graph that illustrates one facet of the issue under discussion and is not intended to be comprehensive. All images and data are from Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (massbudget.org).

I. About the Candidate

Christina Minicucci

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

Christina Minicucci: In the election, I acknowledged that I had become somewhat complacent. I realized that I had two choices: hide away for four years, or double down and get more involved. I had always been involved as a community volunteer, but this time I decided I would put my spare time to use by helping two progressive female candidates running for local positions (they won!). Following the election, I was approached to serve on both our town's School Building Committee, and on our Master Plan Advisory Committee. When our current State Representative decided to seek higher office, I saw running for the Legislature as an opportunity to further live my values. If I wasn't willing to make this step, I wouldn't have the right to complain if I didn't like the outcome. For me, my top three priorities are education (esp special education), housing that is affordable for all, and job creation. I call these the triad of success. Without education - which can mean properly funding K-12 public schools, affordable and free pre-K and higher ed opportunities, or practical job skills training - our community members will not have the skills they need to access jobs. We need to train and retain our residents to build love for and accountability to their City or Town. With training, they can continue to live and work here. Stable jobs with a competitive living wage, allow residents to provide a safe home for their families where they can thrive and provide for their children. Expanding housing opportunities that are affordable to the people working in the community - no matter what stage of life they are living, completes the triad. Children can be successful if they know where they will sleep and eat each night and communities are richer when we provide our seniors and disabled residents a place and purpose within our cities and towns. Our community needs to support its residents in all these areas, and I believe that I can help at the state level by pushing forward initiatives to ensure schools are properly funded, to support housing initiatives and to fight for economic development dollars for the four communities of the 14th Essex.

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

Christina Minicucci: When you look at my resume, you will not see the profile of a storied politician. Instead you will find that I am a student, with an undergraduate degree in Spanish (with a concentration in Latin American Studies), an MBA in Entrepreneurship, and a certificate from the AMDP program at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. You will find a lifetime of commitment to my community; no matter where life has taken me, I've always found a way to give back. From being a mentor for Big Brother/Big Sister and a volunteer at Head Start throughout high school, to volunteering in college and beyond as a sexual assault hotline advocate - answering phone calls, and advocating for survivors in person at hospital visits and at court appearances, to leading a peer education troupe to high schools in Midcoast Maine teaching about consent, and sexual harassment and assault prevention, to sitting on grant committees for the United Way, and providing consulting expertise to Lawrence Community Works as they expand affordable housing opportunities. Today, I coach kids sports (softball and cross country), hold a leadership position in our co-ed Scout Troop, volunteer extensively in our public schools serving as volunteer coordinator for our library, and sit on both the North Andover School Building Committee and Master Plan Advisory Committee. I find gaps in my

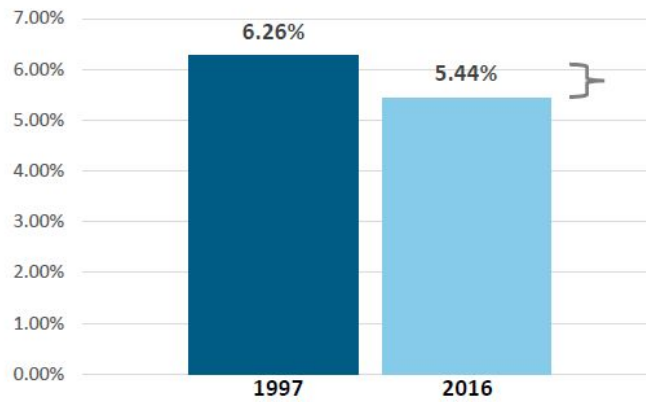
community, and I seek to fill them. You will also see I am a woman who has spent my career as a leader in a man's world. As a project manager in real estate development and construction, I know how to build and analyze budgets, I understand that every idea comes with a price tag, and that the old adage "time is money" isn't just a cliché. I am a hard worker, and have a knack for bringing stakeholders together to find creative solutions to complex problems, seek efficiency, and find the right people to get the job done. Although politics has not been my chosen field, making my community a better place has. I know that my story is unusual, but my skill set as an advocate, a good listener, and a creative problem solver, makes me the perfect candidate for this position.

A. REVENUE AND TAXATION

Despite the label of “Taxachusetts,” Massachusetts 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 losing over \$3 billion 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 the system. Regressive taxation strains low- and middle-income families, and reduced revenue collection curtails our ability to invest in vital infrastructure. It also restricts legislators’ ability to pass new and visionary legislation, as there is a continual shortage of funds for existing priorities.

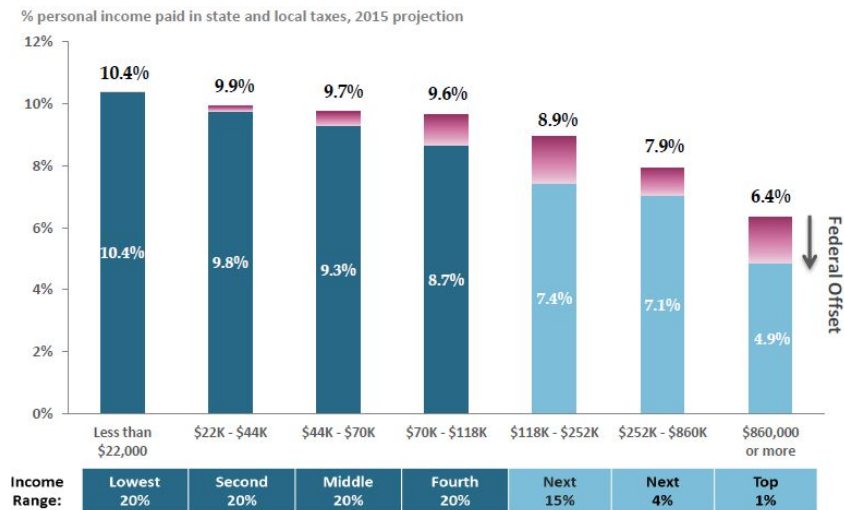
Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.

Massachusetts tax revenue as a share of the state economy



This 13.1% decline in tax revenue has led to deep budget cuts and ongoing budget challenges.

Massachusetts state and local taxes are regressive.



* Percentages shown inside bar are net effective tax levels after factoring in federal offset. Percentages above bars show tax levels before federal offset.

Source: Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy.

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?*

Christina Minicucci: Our current tax structure is complex and while we technically have a flat tax rate, it unfairly places the burden on lower income individuals through property taxes and sales tax to make up the shortfall. The proposed Fair Share Amendment is a good start to help with with regressive slant of our regressive tax structure to ensure that those that make more, pay a greater share. I would also like to see real estate fees adjusted so that we can return to matching local CPC dollars with state funds - this was the initial promise the state made to communities, and raising this fee would also free up millions of dollars in state tax revenue that is used to backfill the existing match (which is less than half of what was initially matched).

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. *Progressive Taxation. Currently, Progressive Massachusetts is working on a constitutional amendment to increase the income tax on income over \$1 million by 4% (Fair Share Amendment, sometimes referred to as the "Millionaire's Tax"), which will be on the 2018 ballot. Do you support this ballot question?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. *Sales Tax Holiday. 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. Would you oppose efforts to extend the sales tax holiday?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. *Corporate Tax Breaks & Disclosure. Do you support the state's collecting and publicly disclosing the information about the benefits actually provided by corporations receiving tax credits?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. *Corporate Tax Breaks & Wages. Do you support requiring any company receiving tax credits from the state to pay a living wage and provide good benefits to all its employees?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

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. According to various measures of income inequality, Massachusetts now ranks as one of the top ten most [unequal states](#). We are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which strain wages. Most MA workers do not have access to paid medical leave, and only a small fraction have access to paid family leave--gaps that force people to choose between their (or their family's) health and their job.

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

A Large Gap Has Opened Between Wage and Productivity Growth Since 1973

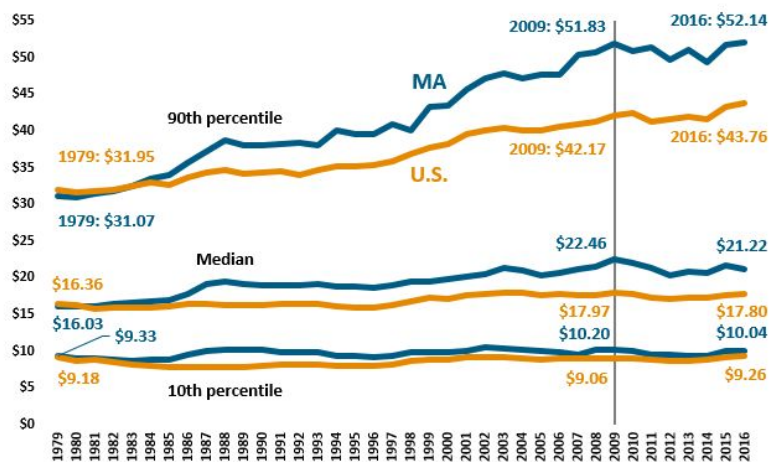
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of unpublished Total Economy Productivity data from Bureau of Labor Statistics' Labor Productivity and Costs program, wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Cost Trends data, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Product Accounts
 Note: Wages are the inflation-adjusted average hourly compensation of private-sector production/nonsupervisory workers.

Wages For Most MA Workers Have Stagnated Since Great Recession

Real Value of Hourly Wage for Selected Wage-Earning Groups in MA and U.S., 1979-2016 (2016\$)



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Population Survey data (deflated using CPI-U-RS).

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?

Christina Minicucci: Long-term economic security requires a multi-pronged approach, but in my mind, free access to quality educational opportunities is at the heart of it. Fully funding public education from Pre-K straight through high school and beyond ensures equity between communities. Educational opportunities that reach beyond traditional schooling such as funding our technical schools and community colleges, job skills training, English Language Learning, and economic empowerment training, will help open doors and ensure economic security for all residents. These opportunities should look the same for everyone, not just those who can afford it or have the experience to ask for it. Raising the minimum wage, and ensuring quality working conditions for all residents will also help close the income gap. Massachusetts is hub of science, medicine and technology. While this helps those with higher levels of education, it doesn't always provide a wide variation of jobs. One area in which I see great potential is with green jobs. I support climate mitigation measures that would encourage setting aggressive emission limits over the next 20-30 years. Prioritizing the fixing of leaking gas lines, innovating in solar and wind energy technology, and investing in clean energy projects and public transportation would open the door for more jobs in innovation and technology, as well as manufacturing, construction, installation, and public sector jobs.

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.).*

3. Increasing Wages.

a. Minimum wage. *Do you support raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

b. Tipped Minimum Wage. *And making the tipped minimum wage equal to that of the regular minimum wage?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

c. Indexing the Minimum Wage. *And indexing the minimum wage to inflation?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

d. Teen Minimum Wage. *And reject efforts to create a subminimum wage for teen workers?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. Paid Leave. *Do you support requiring access to up to 16 weeks of paid family leave and 26 weeks of paid medical leave?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. Unions -- Part I. *If workers in Massachusetts make the decision to unionize, would you be willing to publicly support a union-organizing drive and discourage management from fighting their decision?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. **Unions -- Part II.** *Since 2010 election, a number of states have rolled back the collective bargaining rights of public workers as part of a well-funded, nationwide assault on unions led by wealthy, conservative donors. Would you oppose any effort to roll back the collective bargaining rights of state or municipal employees?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

7. **Wage Theft.** *Do you support legislation to hold businesses responsible for the wage violations of their subcontractors when the work they do is substantially connected to the company's operations?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

8. **Mandatory Arbitration.** *Would you support legislation to prohibit the use of mandatory arbitration provisions in employment contracts, i.e., requirements that an employee forfeit the right to sue the employer for discrimination, nonpayment of wages or other illegal conduct?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

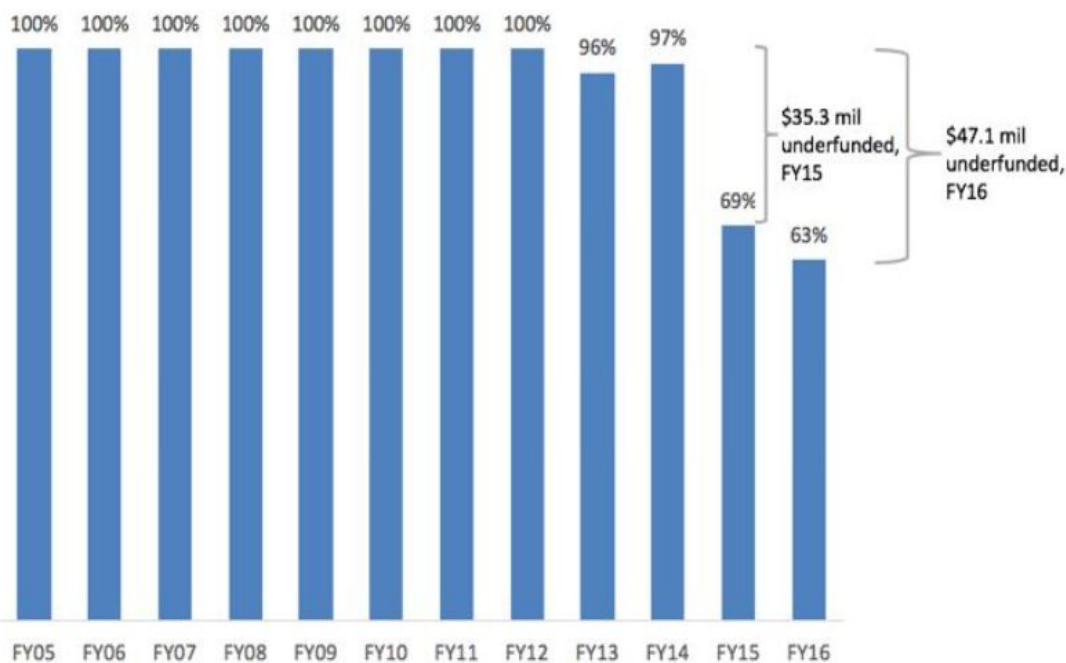
C. EDUCATION

The promise of public education has always been as 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.

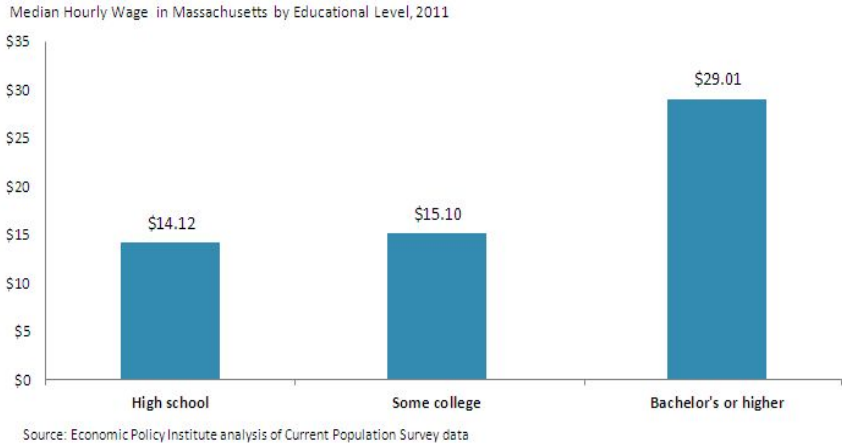
The state hasn’t been living up to its responsibility to fully fund our public schools.

The State Has Not Fully Funded Charter Reimbursements in Recent Years

Percent of charter school reimbursements paid to sending districts, based on reimbursement formula

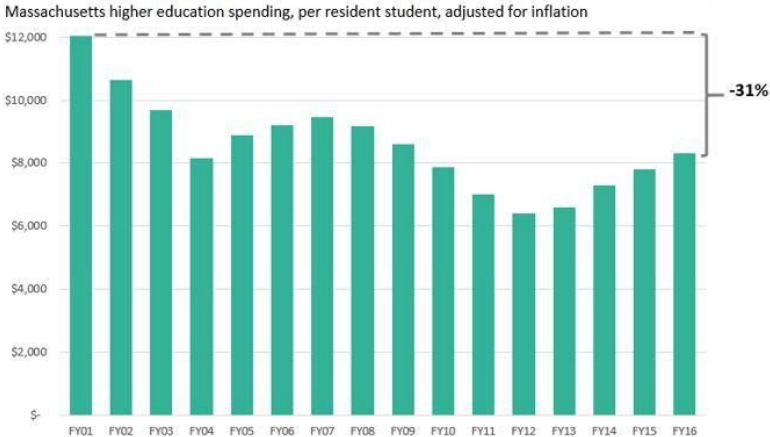


Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.



Massachusetts has been disinvesting from higher education and shifting the cost burden onto students.

Per Student, Higher Ed. Cut by 31 Percent Since FY 2001



1. *Please share your personal values and principles regarding public education. What value does public education have in improving our economy as well as in addressing matters of economic justice? How can we close persistent achievement gaps? What measures should the Commonwealth take on these issues?*

Christina Minicucci: Public education is the cornerstone of what makes Massachusetts a great place to live, work and raise a family. When children are provided with a high quality public education (including after school, before school, pre-K and higher ed) they are given the foundation for success. Children who make a connection with an adult at school, are accountable to their school community and grow to be adults who are committed community members. As a mother of three children, I am intimately aware of the shortcomings of our public education system. High stakes testing has taken a lot of the fun out of learning and forces our teachers to "teach to the test." The rigidity of the curriculum is especially troublesome in districts that are under-performing on these tests, since those are the districts who would likely best benefit by allowing teachers to do what they do best, and find creative ways to get through to students who are not achieving in a traditional manner. Living in North Andover, we are fortunate that we have the money and the leadership to have a strong school system. But even here, I see gaps. I see teachers spending huge dollars (of their own money) to buy supplies and materials to extend the curriculum. Our district only gives us one half time librarian to provide class time in the library every other week, requiring parent volunteers to cover alternate weeks to ensure our children have weekly access to books. But there is inequity within our town, right over our borders in Lawrence, with a system that is in the hands of a receiver, and a system in Methuen that went \$4M overbudget in FY2017 and is looking for a \$10M increase for FY2018. My priorities around education are to put a moratorium (minimum of 3 years) on high stakes testing to evaluate its efficacy, to update the Foundation Budget formula to ensure our public schools get the money they need to be successful, and to encourage tolerance and inclusion in all schools.

2. *Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on public education?*

Christina Minicucci: I have been an active member of North Andover's special ed parents group - NAPAC - since 2009. Approximately 4 years ago, we brought the Understanding Our Differences (UOD) program to North Andover. UOD engages students in a conversation about visible and invisible disabilities and teaches tolerance and inclusion. In our first year, we piloted the autism module of the program with just the fifth grade in only one of our five elementary schools. This year, we brought a total of six different modules to grades 3-5 at all five elementary schools. This program has been instrumental in teaching students, teachers, (and parents) inclusion and empathy. As a leader of one of the modules and a volunteer for the others, I see how the lightbulb goes off for many kids. We see how they use this information to be more inclusive on the playground, and we are slowly taking away the stigma by including students at the middle school and high school level who come and speak about their disabilities. It empowers the student speakers to find comfort in talking in front of a group about their different abilities and to be proud of them, not ashamed. It teaches the elementary students (from an early age) not to be afraid of people's differences, but instead to embrace them.

Additionally, I am our library volunteer coordinator with close to 100 volunteers on our roster to ensure that the doors of our library stay open every week so that our children have consistent access to books.

3. *Universal Pre-K. Would you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of*

Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system?

Christina Minicucci: Yes. Universal Pre-K will level the playing field for all students. Right now, parents who have the ability to pay, provide pre-K for their children. Those that do not have the means, do not. This leads to inequity at the K level and for many children, especially those who could benefit from a little extra support, this holds them back for many years. Universal Pre-K can help children start school on an equal footing.

4. **Standardized Testing.** *Do you 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?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. **Equitable Funding.** *Do you support changing 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?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. **Charter Schools.** *Last November, Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public schools.*

- a. *Would you support **keeping the cap on charter schools**?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

- b. *Would you support legislation to bring **greater accountability and transparency to charter schools**, such as by requiring them to adhere to the same disclosure and disciplinary standards as public school districts?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

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

Christina Minicucci: Yes. When I was in college, I joined a campus sexual assault prevention group. We educated all incoming students about what constitutes consent, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and provided them with a list of resources in the community. It was shocking how inconsistent their education was and the inherent danger of the mis-information they were carrying with them. It is disheartening, in many ways, that 25 years later, mis-information, and partial information, is still being taught in our public schools. As a mother of two boys and a girl (15, 12, and 9), my desire for factually correct and comprehensive sex education has really hit home. I hear people say that sex education does not belong in schools, or that their kids are too young. However, I know that for many of our youth, school may be the only place where they have access to this education. For others, it may be the only safe place for them to speak freely about sex and reproductive health. Factually accurate, comprehensive sex education

belongs in schools and is necessary for the health and wellbeing of our youth. I will continue to fight for access to quality reproductive health for all.

8. **Higher Education Access.** *Would you support legislation to grant in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

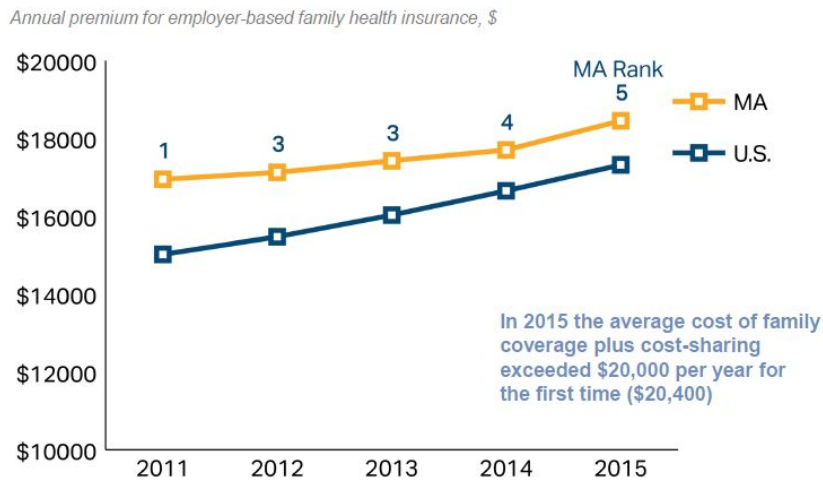
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** *Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

D. HEALTH CARE

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health insurance coverage, with 97% of the state having health insurance. We provided the blueprint for the national Affordable Care Act, with an insurance-based reform passed by the Democratic Legislature and signed by Republican Governor Romney. While the reforms of President Obama's Affordable Care Act are under assault by Republicans (who control the Executive and both legislative chambers), Massachusetts could lead in more progressive health care reforms. Even without the Republican dismantling of national reforms, there is still work to do right here in Massachusetts. MA's Democratic Legislature passed, and the Republican governor signed, the ACCESS bill in 2017--protecting the right to no-fee contraception, which is (federally) under threat: Where our federal advances are being rolled back, Massachusetts could--and should--push progressively forward. 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.

MA has among the highest health insurance premiums in the country.



Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Insurance Component

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding health care insurance, delivery, and outcomes.

Christina Minicucci: I believe that everyone is entitled to affordable health care. Employees who can get to a doctor and get treated early for illness, can be more productive. Additionally, preventive medicine saves lives, and in the end, saves money. It's the right thing to do. Despite Massachusetts being a leader in this arena, we still have a lot of work to do. Switching over to a single payer health care system will reduce the administration costs associated with health care, ultimately reducing the cost to the end user.

An area of particular interest to me is mental and behavioral health supports. As a society, we are quick to support people with chronic and terminal illness, and physical disabilities. We invest in research to cure cancer or diabetes, invest in housing and therapies for people with physical disabilities, and support people as they rehabilitate after heart surgeries or knee replacements. This is not the case with mental health. The statistics are staggering, showing that suicide is rising at a rate of 30% per year. Untreated mental illness is a death sentence for many of our citizens and it's time that we treat it as a public health issue, not something we cast aside. Anyone who has tried to navigate the mental health system knows that it is incredibly frustrating. Wait times for quality in-network providers can be weeks - which is too long for someone experiencing an acute episode. When a child or teen is experiencing suicidal thoughts, they are sent to the emergency room where they could wait 24-48 hours to gain access to a limited number of beds. This system unfairly burdens those who cannot pay. Further hindering equitable access to quality care, is the difficulty faced by providers who struggle to get approved by insurance companies or do not receive adequate reimbursement for their work. Our system is broken and we need to make fixing health care (specifically mental health care) a priority.

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?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. **Reproductive Rights.** *Would you support legislation to guarantee women access to abortion care without dangerous delay, isolation, and obstruction?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. **Dental Care.** *Do you support the authorization of dental therapists in Massachusetts, similar to a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, in order to expand access to dental care?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

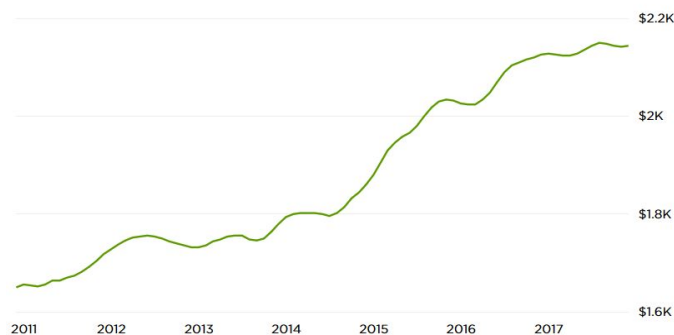
6. **Prescription Drug Pricing.** *Would you support a drug transparency law, like the one recently passed in California, that requires pharmaceutical companies to publicly justify steep price increases?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

E. HOUSING

Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. Although Massachusetts ranked #1 last year in the [US News & World Report's state ranking](#), we were #45 in cost of living and #44 in housing affordability. A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [80 hours a week](#) to afford a modest one bedroom rental home at market rate (and almost 100 hours a week in Metro Boston). 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. The Commonwealth is at risk of losing [14,231 subsidized units](#) by December 31, 2019, as subsidies expire and owners convert properties into market-rate condominiums. 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. There is a waiting list of up to ten years for a rental voucher. 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.

Median rents have gone up by more than 30% since 2011.



(source: [zillow.com](#))

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?

Christina Minicucci: Our housing inventory across the state, and in our district, is low. Finding safe, stable housing that is affordable - not just for people living below the poverty line but also for those making up to 125-150% of median income - is becoming a near impossibility. When weighing the additional costs of school loans, car payments and maintenance, and other debt, many people have to choose between affording a home (even a rental) and feeding their family. While 40B has served as a stop gap, allowing for a slow increase in inventory, it has not changed public perception of housing, or erased the exclusionary zoning bylaws still on the books. Complete overhaul of the way we look at housing, and zone for it, will alleviate some of the strain. Investing in public transportation, focusing housing and job centers near those nodes of public transportation, density bonuses, creative financing alternatives, and providing more opportunity for alternative (smaller) housing types will begin to chip away at the crisis. Homelessness is an issue that stretches way beyond lack of housing inventory. Affordable inventory will provide options, but that is only a piece of the puzzle. Paying people a living wage, providing free, public education from pre-K through higher ed, and economic empowerment

(learning how to manage and save money, connect people with services that can help fill the gaps, provide them with basic skills to help them find jobs in the community), will help curb the rise of homelessness.

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

Christina Minicucci: Over the past year, I have been a member of North Andover's Master Plan Committee. As a member of that board, we were charged with working with outside consultants to reassess the direction our town is headed over the next 5, 10, and 15 years. There were a total of seven areas of review, but the three of most concern for us were land use, transportation and housing. Here in the suburbs, there are a lot of people who want to see the housing crisis resolved, they just don't want it to happen in our town. My primary focus on the committee was to fight against prevailing opinions, do community outreach to our local groups and opinion leaders, and educate our residents about the real impacts of high density, multifamily housing units, accessory dwelling units, and compact homes. It is lost on many people how important it is to provide homes for people in all stages of life so that they can start here, raise a family here, and age in place. Included in the discussion was how clustering dense housing around transportation centers achieves the additional benefits of preserving open space, reducing the reliance on cars, and allowing commercial centers to grow and flourish. I'm proud to say that in our final version of the plan, all of these recommendations have been included. Contemporaneously to the master plan development process, the planning board is completing an overhaul of the Zoning By-Laws to ensure that the housing recommendations of the Master Plan can become a reality.

3. **Funding.** Do you support increasing funding for

a. *The creation of new units of affordable housing, especially low-income units?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

b. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

c. *Matching funds for the Community Preservation Act (via fees from the Registry of Deeds)?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. **Housing Preservation.** Currently, certain property owners who guarantee affordable rents have been incentivized by subsidized mortgages via the 13A program. However, many of the contracts under 13A are set to expire in 2019. Do you support giving cities and towns the authority to require such apartments to remain affordable?

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. **Foreclosure Prevention.** Do you support a requirement that banks mediate in good faith with homeowners to seek alternatives before beginning foreclosure proceedings?

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. **Tenant Protections.** *Would you support legislation, such as the Jim Brooks Stabilization Act, that requires landlords to provide a reason when seeking to evict a tenant, like failure to pay rent, damaging property, or breaking a lease; informs tenants of their rights under state law; and increases data collection on eviction?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

7. **Zoning Reform.** *Would you support legislation to upgrade Massachusetts's zoning laws to encourage more affordable housing and transit-oriented, walkable development and to promote inclusionary zoning practices?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

8. **Combating Speculation.** *Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

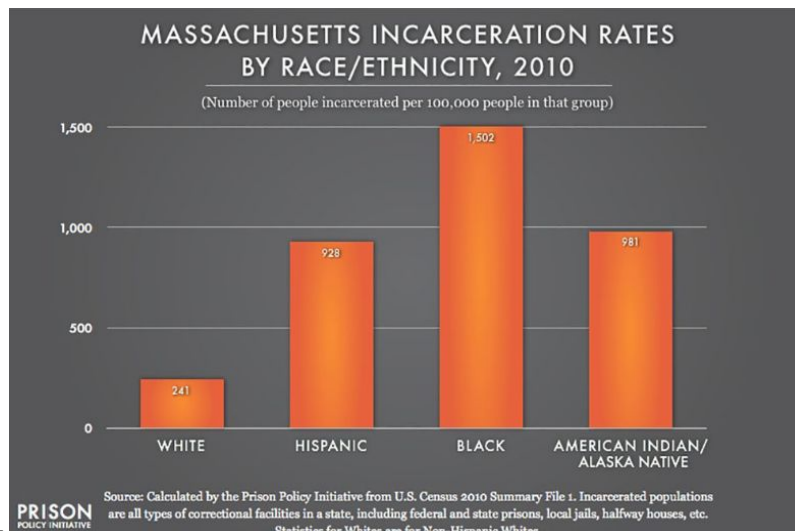
F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

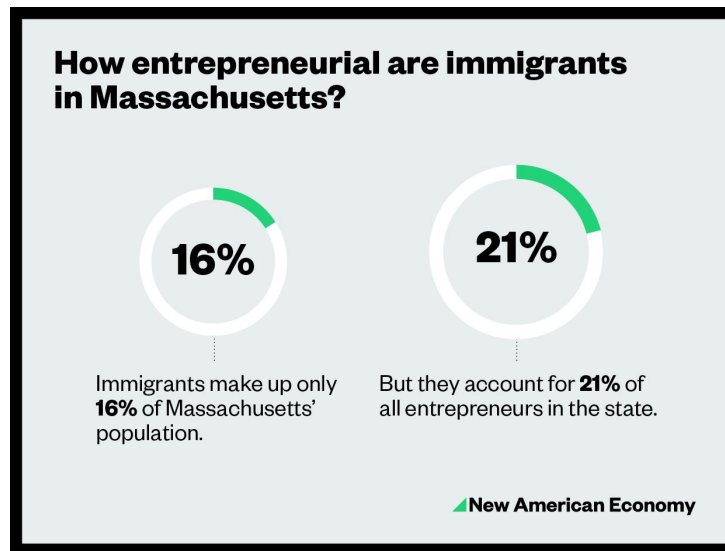
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all” 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.

Spending on prisons has increased while other services have been cut.



Significant racial disparities exist in incarceration in Massachusetts





1. *Please share your personal values and principles regarding Racial and Social Justice.*

Christina Minicucci: Massachusetts may be a leader in racial and social justice, but in reality, we still have a lot of work to do. As a parent and a volunteer in all of the schools across the district, I am acutely aware of the inequity between public schools, even within the same town. The average family profile (marital status of parents; average family income; rent vs. own; education level of parents; race; religion) changes dramatically from school to school. Since the gaps left by lack of school funding are filled by parents - either through volunteer hours or monetary donations - the schools with a higher percentage of wealthy families can provide their students with more enrichment opportunities. Many people in our community do not acknowledge their own privilege or understand how privilege, or lack of privilege, impacts those around them. On a larger scale, many of our students don't know where their next meal will come from or where they will be sleeping. Some of our community members struggle with addiction and cannot find the support they need, or when they do, the support is short-lived and the cycle continues. Others end up engaged in criminal behavior out of desperation, or to protect or feed their families, or because they have not been given a place within the community and the punishments tend to be more harsh based on race, gender and socio-economic status. As a community, we need to protect the most vulnerable. Across the Commonwealth, but especially here in the 14th Essex, we need to keep local law enforcement out of immigration disputes, and focus on taking care of our residents, preventing crime, and making our community a place where people can feel safe, no matter their race or immigration status.

2. *Please indicate work you personally have done to combat racism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and other attempts to marginalize disadvantaged groups.*

Christina Minicucci: First and foremost, when see injustice, I say something - every day, in every instance. I have three children who are always listening, and the best way to end injustice is to teach them, through my words and actions, to always do the same. I personally have dedicated a big portion of my life fighting the patriarchy by rallying, speaking, inspiring, and supporting girls and women; proving time and time again that women are as strong, as smart, and as capable as men (if not more). As far back as college, I received a grant from the State of Maine to provide training to high school peer educators, naval officers and the police to educate about consent, and prevent sexual assault and harassment in schools and on the job. After college, I was one of three Spanish speaking hotline

advocates in a community with a large Mexican immigrant population. Understanding religious, cultural, and housing instability issues were as important as language when helping a woman survive a sexual assault. More recently, I participated in the Cultural Inclusion Pilot Program, a group that trained people of color, specifically Latinos, to become board members for local non-profits. At the time, most boards were made up nearly entirely of white men (and some white women), despite the fact that the population they were serving was nearly all Dominican and Puerto Rican. This program helped break the barriers to entry for members of the Latino community. Many years later and the face of these boards has changed to more closely mirror the makeup of the community they serve. Within my town, I volunteer in schools with the greatest needs, not just those that my children attend. My goal is to provide enrichment opportunities (like a small group advanced math class), and to try to close the equity gap between schools. I have also been an active member of our local Special Ed Parent Advisory Committee (NAPAC) since 2009 and am one of the parent leaders of the Understanding Our Differences program to our elementary students, teaching 3rd-5th graders about differing abilities and how to be inclusive.

3. **Trans Accommodations.** *In 2016, Massachusetts passed legislation to prevent discrimination against transgender individuals in public accommodations. Conservatives are seeking to repeal the bill on the 2018 ballot. Will you advocate for the protection of this legislation?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. **LGBTQ Youth.** *Our neighboring states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Vermont ban the use of harmful conversion therapy practices for minors. Do you support banning the use of conversion therapy in Massachusetts?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. **Mandatory Minimums.** *The landmark criminal justice reform bill passed earlier this year eliminated or reduced a number of mandatory minimums for drug-related offenses; however, it left in place, or expanded, those related to opioids. The opioid crisis in Massachusetts is severe, but it will not be solved by doubling down on criminalization. Do you support eliminating mandatory minimums for opioid drug offenses?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. **Juvenile Justice -- Part I.** *Ample research shows that teenage offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to re-offend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood. Teenagers in a juvenile system have access to greater educational and counseling services, and they're much less likely to face sexual assault than at an adult facility. Do you support raising the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

7. **Juvenile Justice -- Part II.** *Under Massachusetts law, if a high school senior and a high school sophomore have sex – with mutual consent – the senior could be punished by incarceration and then forced to register as a sex offender. In recent years, states have been passing so-called "Romeo and Juliet" laws out of a recognition that such cases only get prosecuted when a parent disapproves of their*

child's relationship. Do you support the elimination of the charge of statutory rape for consensual sex between youths who are close in age (See H.3065 for reference)?

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

8. **Solitary Confinement.** *Do you support limiting the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days, and eliminating the use of solitary confinement for at-risk populations, including pregnant women, LGBTQ people, those with mental illness, and those under age 21 or over age 65?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

9. **Police Accountability.** *Do you support the establishment of an independent review board for police shootings in the Commonwealth?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

10. **Militarization of Police.** *Under the federal 1033 program, the US Department of Defense can transfer excess military equipment to local police departments. Such equipment makes police forces look like occupying armies and exacerbates the impact of overpolicing in communities of color. Meanwhile, communities are often left in the dark about the equipment that local police departments are acquiring. Would you support, at minimum, a requirement that local elected officials vote on any such transfer before it can take place?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

11. **Safe Communities Act.** *Do you support the Safe Communities Act, which prohibits the use of state resources for mass deportations or deportation raids, limits local and state police collaboration with federal immigration agents, and prohibits state support for a Muslim registry?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

12. **Safe Driving Act.** *Would you support the Safe Driving Act, which would remove immigration status as a barrier to applying for a license or learner's permit?*

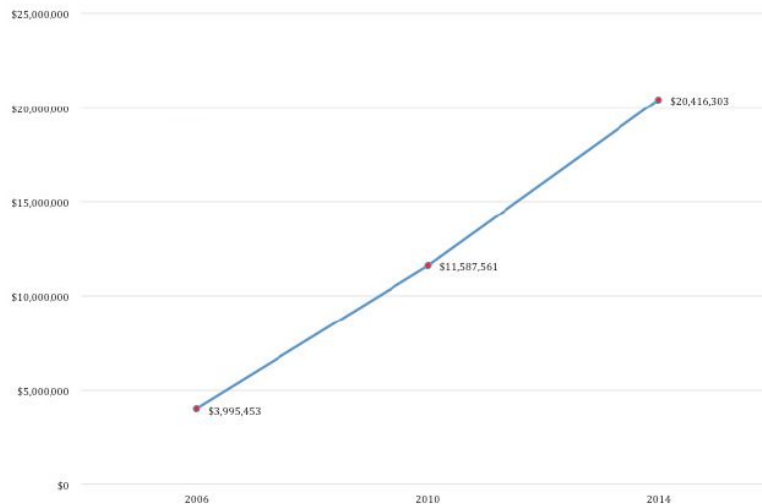
Christina Minicucci: Yes.

G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

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. A strong democracy requires an engaged electorate, but voter turnout in midterm elections, and especially local elections, remains low. Myths about voter fraud are peddled in order to justify voter suppression. 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.

Independent expenditures in MA elections have risen rapidly. (Source: [Common Cause](#))

Figure 1: MA Independent Expenditure Totals



1. *Please share your personal values and principles regarding Good Government and Strong Democracy.*

Christina Minicucci: Part of my interest in stepping outside my chosen career (and my comfort zone) and run for office, is that I am tired of politics as usual. While I have been satisfied with my representatives, there is not much about them that looks like me. It is not often that a mom, who works at a small family business, and volunteers her free time in the community, chooses to jump into politics. The more I learn about campaigning, the more clear it becomes. Running for office is hard, and it’s a job for those who have the privilege - the money, the connections, the time - to take this step. I will always fight for any legislation that will lower barriers to entry to ensure greater diversity in candidates so our community gets the representation they deserve. Additionally, I support making voting accessible to more people - transportation, parking, amending the time and day of voting to accommodate ALL voters, not just those who work a traditional day job, and the ability of voters to register on voting day. I

will not support voter ID requirements and believe in preventing voter suppression at all costs. Voting is a right that we enjoy as Americans, it is our job to ensure that everyone has equal access to that right, to increase participation, and to elect the representation that best suits the needs of the community, not representation won by money and resources.

2. ***Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform, legislative rules reform, and access to voting.***
3. ***Power and the Legislature.*** *If elected, would you support 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?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. ***Transparency.*** *Massachusetts is one of only two states where the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Judiciary claim full exemption from the public records laws. Do you support ending that exemption?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. ***Public campaign financing.*** *Would you support legislation to create a robust public financing system for state elections?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. ***Candidate Diversity.*** *The cost of child care can prove prohibitive to working mothers or fathers seeking to run for office. Would you support legislation to explicitly allow working parents running for office to use campaign funds to pay for childcare while the candidate is "performing work or attending events directly related to the candidate's campaign"?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

7. ***Voting.*** *Which of the following policies to increase voter participation do you support?*

- a. *Election day voter registration*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

- b. *Automatic voter registration*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

- c. *Expansion of early voting to "off-year" elections*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

- d. *No-fault absentee voting*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

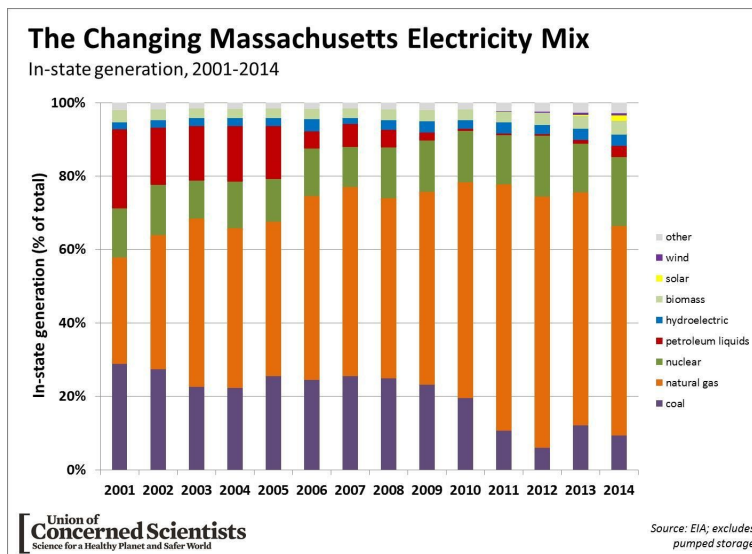
H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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. In 2016, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the state has failed to meet its legal obligation to set and enforce annual limits on greenhouse gas emissions as outlined in the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act. Setting and reaching these goals 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.

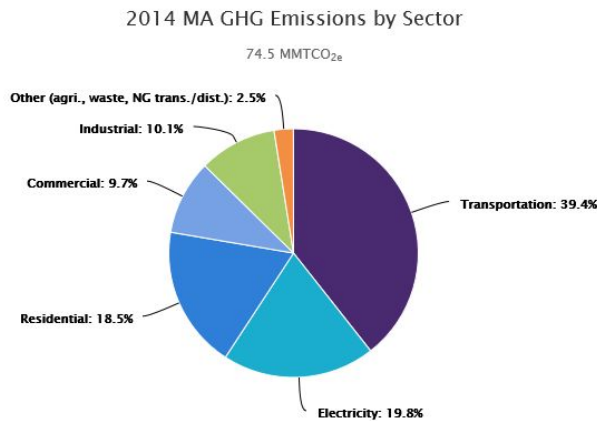
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and environment for the most vulnerable residents. However, this nominal commitment to “Environmental Justice” has been more rhetorical than real.

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.

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



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



(Source: <http://www.mass.gov>)

1. *Please share your personal values and principles regarding Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection.*

Christina Minicucci: Climate change is happening at an alarming rate, and we can no longer afford to slowly creep towards the elimination of fossil fuels. Increasing clean energy at a rate of 1% per year is not sufficient. Setting a goal of 50% renewables by 2030 will force the Commonwealth to become more innovative and prioritize scalable models of sustainability that will be affordable for all. Additionally, by ramping up clean energy requirements, energy companies will be forced to invest in infrastructure that is equipped to handle alternative energy sources. As fossil fuel generation retires, the energy needs of our residents will persist. In order to meet our state's energy needs, we must make a commitment to exploring wind and expanding access to solar (providing incentives like SRECs and lifting net metering caps) as renewable and clean energy sources for the future. The natural consequence of this long-term commitment to environmental protection, would be the creation of jobs in the renewable energy sector such as research and development, installation of new equipment, infrastructure improvements, and regulation – just to name a few. Additionally, as a hub of science and technology, Massachusetts has the innovation infrastructure to find ways to make wind, solar and other still undiscovered clean energy more affordable to all.

Abandoning fossil fuels is one piece of the sustainability puzzle. Building well-planned, quality developments located on public transportation lines, rail trails, or in close proximity to employment hubs, helps us move closer to a goal of 100% clean and renewable energy. Connectivity of communities through bike paths, commuter bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transportation will move us towards meeting sustainability goals, and to increase the health and wellness of our residents. Finally, while we may set demanding environmental protection goals for the Commonwealth, it is important that residents are not negatively impacted and that policies do not cause an unnecessary financial burden. Protection of the environment is critical to the health and safety of all of our residents, not only those who can afford to make change or those who have the resources to demand regulation and compliance. It must be easy, accessible and equitable.

2. *Please indicate work you personally have done to protect the environment and expand access to public transportation.*

Christina Minicucci: I am a child of “Think Globally, Act Locally” and have always spent time on a hyper local level to do my part to support sustainability. From helping to start the high school recycling

club, to working to support local farms through working at a CSA, to backyard composting or installing solar panels on my house, I have always believed in starting at the most basic level to save the earth. Getting more involved in the legislature would give me the opportunity to take it up a notch. Additionally, I organize a team each Earth Day to clean around Lake Cochichewick, which is North Andover's source of drinking water. I also have volunteered with the Clean River Project, which works to clean litter (as well as tires, needles, etc) from the Merrimack River.

3. **Waste Reduction.** *Would you support a statewide ban on single-use shopping bags and a requirement that alternatives be more sustainable?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

4. **Solar energy.** *Do you support increasing equitable access to solar power by removing caps on solar generation and restoring compensation for low-income and community solar?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

5. **Renewable Energy.** *Do you support a target of at least 50% clean energy by 2030 for Massachusetts, as adopted in California and New York? (Hawaii is committed to 100% renewables by 2045). To accomplish this, would you support an increase in the Renewable Energy Production Standard (the green energy mandate on utilities) by at least 3% each year?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

6. **Environmental Justice.** *Successive and bipartisan gubernatorial administrations have made verbal commitments to environmental justice (EJ) and Governor Deval Patrick issued an Executive Order on Environmental Justice in 2014 which has not been implemented.*

a. Would you support implementation of the 2014 EO?

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

b. and support efforts to codify environmental justice into law?

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

7. **Gas pipelines.** *Do you oppose the expansion of gas pipelines in the state?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

a. Do you support putting a fee on carbon emissions?

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

*b. Do you support using some of the revenue from such a fee to invest in **green infrastructure**?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

9. **Public Utilities.** *Would you support legislation to allow municipalities to purchase their electric distribution utility (the poles and wires that transmit power) and operate a municipal or cooperative electric utility?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

10. **Public Transit.** *Do you support finding progressive revenue sources to fund the maintenance, expansion, and improvement of the MBTA and the RTAs?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.

11. **Regional Transportation Funding.** *Would you support legislation to allow municipalities to place a question on the ballot to raise revenue for local and regional transportation projects?*

Christina Minicucci: Yes.