

Eric Nakajima

3rd Hampshire

State Representative

Endorsement Questionnaire

Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District: 3rd Hampshire

Party: Democratic

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Primary: September 4

Election: November 6

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Election: November 6	0
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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

Eric Nakajima

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

Eric Nakajima: I am running for office because I believe we need to make substantially greater progress in advancing civil rights, economic opportunity and environmental/climate justice in Massachusetts. We need to pass the Fair Share Amendment, \$15 dollar per hour minimum wage, and paid family and medical leave on the November ballot. My top priorities if elected are:

1. To fully fund our public schools, including expanding preschool (I think it needs to be universal as soon as possible), reform of public school funding (Ch.70, charter reimbursement or separate funding), and support for our public higher education system with sufficient operating support and the goal of debt free college.
2. Modernizing and remaking our public infrastructure to improve mobility and green our infrastructure at all levels. We need a transit and rail system to green our system and provide reliable access across the state and to jobs and housing (including high speed rail and local transit, electric fleets and charging stations). We also need to substantially accelerate deployment of clean energy and energy efficiency, especially for low and moderate income households and communities.
3. We need to modernize how we provide health and retirement security - we need universal, single-payer healthcare and we need a new defined benefit retirement system that is accessible to people outside of the employer-based system.

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

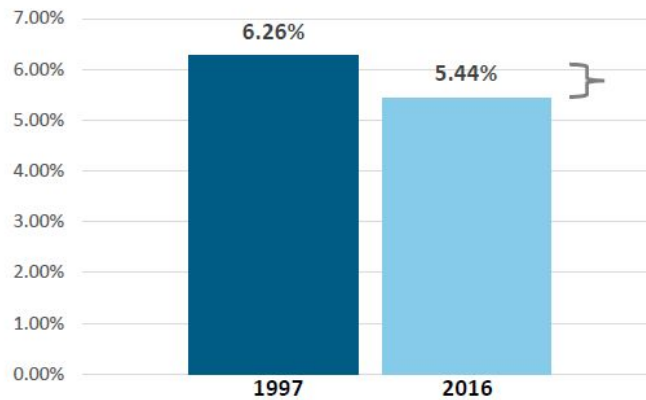
Eric Nakajima: I have significant experience as a policymaker and advocate both in my district and on Beacon Hill. I currently serve as Chair of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee (I was elected to the committee October 2016). I served in Governor Patrick's administration for both terms in his office of Housing and Economic Development. I served as Assistant Secretary for Innovation Policy and led or collaborated on efforts across topics including affordable housing, community revitalization, the innovation economy, and improving access to education and careers. I've worked extensively in our Gateway Cities, on new workforce training programs designed to expand employment opportunities, particularly for minorities and low-income individuals, and community-based entrepreneurship. I have practical experience developing new programs, initiatives and legislation working with legislators, municipalities, Labor, community groups and educators. As a college student, I served as student trustee at UMass Amherst and advocated for improved financial aid and investment in public higher education. I've maintained a commitment to improving access to public education ever since.

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.

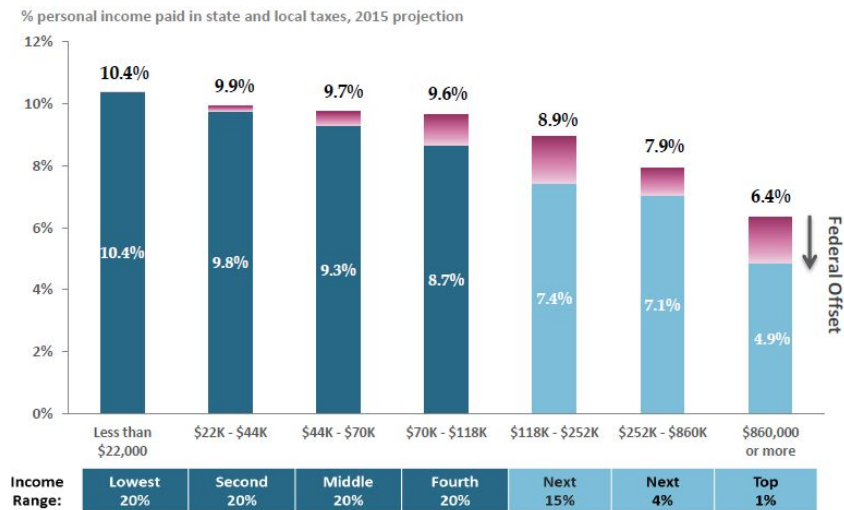
Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: I believe very strongly that we do need additional revenue to properly fund our current and future needs as a Commonwealth -- there is no question about it. I believe that our system of taxation should be progressive, which means low- and moderate-income households should not bear the brunt of taxes. There should be exemptions for core household goods and rebates or exemptions based on income, including expansion of the earned income tax credit. Large corporations, businesses, and individuals or entities with capital gains should be taxed at a higher rate than families. I support the millionaires tax, or Fair Share Amendment, precisely because it would put into our state's constitution the principle of progressivity and raise funds we need.

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.).*

Eric Nakajima: As a student trustee at UMass Amherst, I advocated for tax increases to fund necessary services. In 2016 and onwards, I've campaigned for Fair Share Amendment and gathered signatures to put it on the ballot. When I worked for Governor Patrick, I provided support for his 'growth package' that included tax increases and expanded exemptions to reduce the tax burden on low income and working households.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes. When I worked for Governor Patrick, I actively participated in expanding the use of clawbacks and disclosure of tax incentive deals/recipients.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

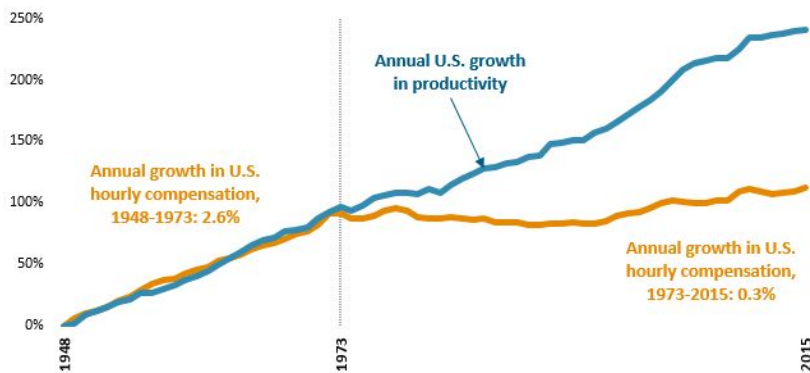
B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

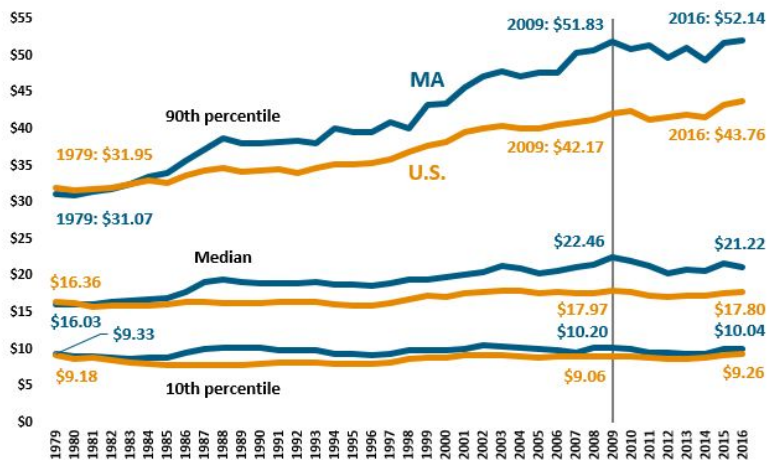
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?

Eric Nakajima: Economic and income inequality is, along with climate change, the most urgent challenge we confront as a Commonwealth. Clearly, the state's innovation economy is booming -- life sciences, clean technology, digital technologies and other smart technologies -- but the distribution of those jobs is concentrated in Greater Boston and concentrated among a highly educated, mostly white population. We need to expand opportunity for everyone to get jobs in the state's innovation economy, and we need to substantially invest in the competitiveness of regions and communities across the state. As a starting principle on reducing income inequality, we need to raise the minimum wage to a living wage, ensure access to healthcare (I support single-payer), and remake our retirement security system to create a workable system of defined benefit or annuity retirements. We also need to expand preschool, invest in public education, and create debt-free college at our community college and public university system. Without that starting point (where individuals aren't saddled by debt or gnawed by insecurity), we can't truly get anywhere. Beyond that, we need to reinvest in regions outside of Boston. Massachusetts continues to have a robust manufacturing industry across the state that can (and in some cases does) offer supply-chain products to the state's leading companies. We should invest in workforce training and education that enables workers to go into manufacturing jobs, healthcare jobs and IT jobs at the full spectrum of skill levels. Finally, we should be supporting organizing efforts to help workers advocate for their own interests, collectively bargain, and improve working conditions and pay in service industries that dominate our economy.

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.).*

Eric Nakajima: As a researcher at the UMass Donahue Institute and as Assistant Secretary (and other positions) in Governor Patrick's administration, my entire focus was on supporting the expansion of the economy across the state in ways that could benefit people of all backgrounds. I worked on the state's Gateway Cities program and accompanying legislation; developed and chaired the state's Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative -- that focused on training and education, especially for new workers in the field; developed entrepreneurship programs focused on Gateway Cities and emphasizing woman and minority entrepreneurs; and developed regional-innovation-based economic development strategies for the state that emphasized rebalancing wealth in the state to places outside of Boston (or communities in Boston that aren't part of the boom). One of the last major things I did in the Patrick Administration was lead the state's investment in the Roxbury Innovation Center, and the state's investment in a new culinary school at Holyoke Community College in its downtown.

3. Increasing Wages.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Nakajima: Yes.

You can't be against a living wage and in favor of reducing income inequality. If you want to reduce income inequality - raise wages.

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

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes. I have and will stand with unions on picket lines and organizing campaigns.

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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes. Public unions are already under assault, with the coming Janus decision, we have to stand ready to support public workers at every step.

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?

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

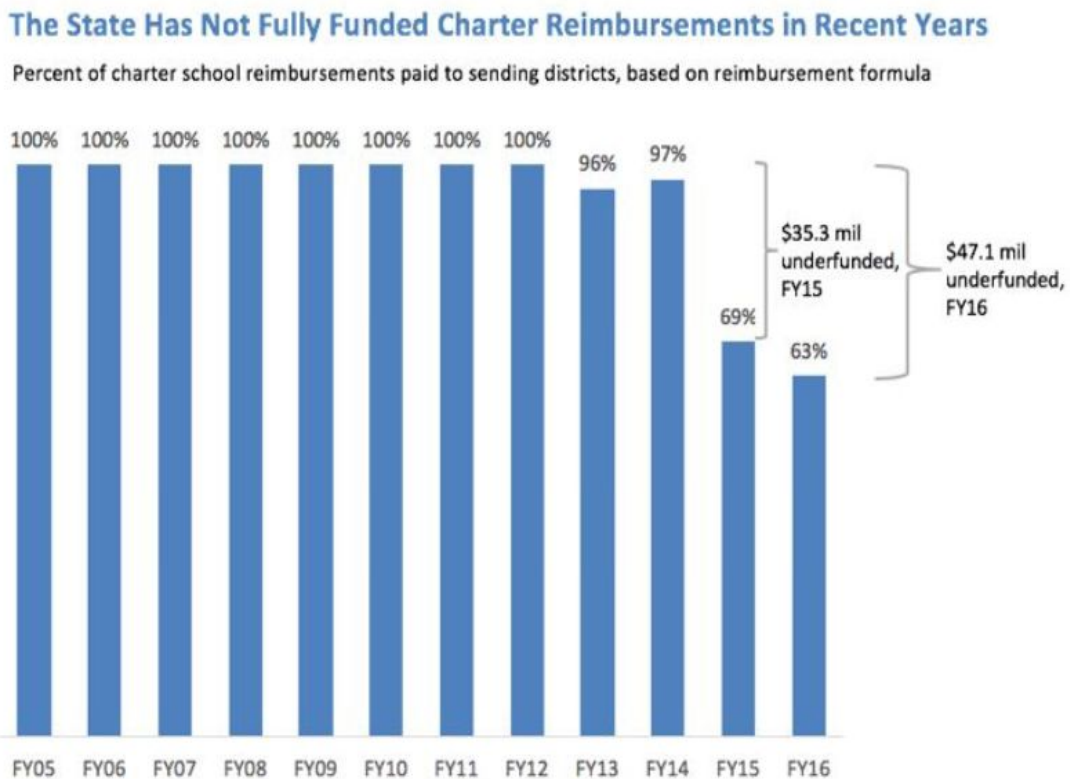
9. *Economic Democracy.* Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?

Eric Nakajima: Yes. Our area -- Pioneer Valley -- is a leader in cooperative businesses, and they work! We should support the development of more of them.

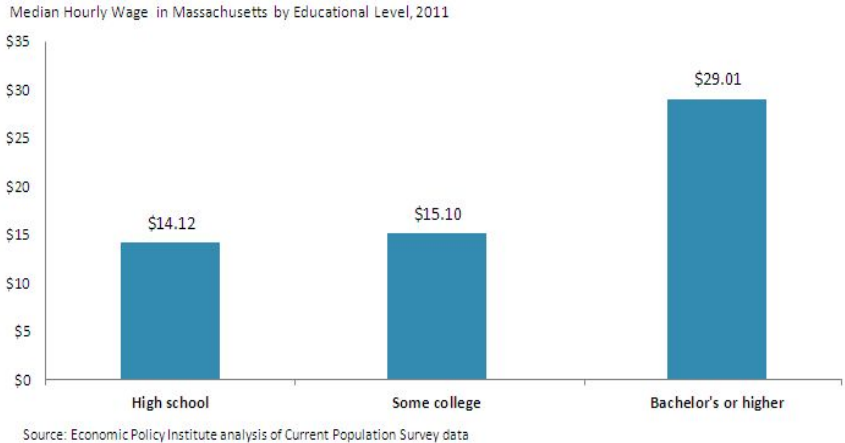
C. EDUCATION

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.

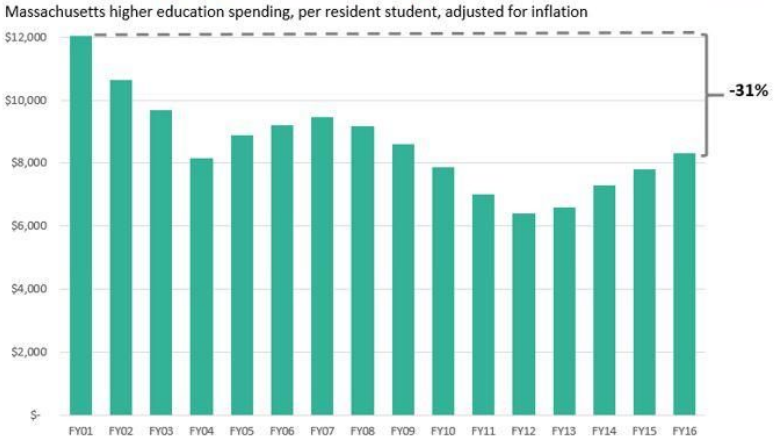


Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.



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?*

Eric Nakajima: Our schools -- preschool through public higher education -- are the very foundation of our communities, democracy, and equal opportunity for all. I come from a family of public school teachers -- union members all -- who devoted their careers to educating their neighbors. I believe that Massachusetts should fund universal preschool, fully fund our public schools, and develop a world-class public community college and university system that allows debt-free life-long learning. I do not think that charter schools are consistent with this vision, and think that the way charter schools are funded in Massachusetts is an assault on our schools and municipal budgets. I do not believe that charter schools should be funded by local school districts/towns and do not support their expansion. Standardized testing has overtaken the teaching of subjects (electives, arts) that ensure equality of opportunity for all students -- students that cannot afford enrichment activities after school or in the summers must get those opportunities at school. College costs are entirely out of whack -- students saddled with debt start out their lives behind the wealthy in every decision they make. It is unreasonable and unfair -- it is public policy that reinforces income inequality instead of solving it.

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

Eric Nakajima: I have been an advocate for our schools since college. I was a UMass Amherst trustee and organizer on Beacon Hill to expand student aid and investment in public higher education. I've carried through that advocacy as a UMass alum. In the Patrick Administration, I worked with the legislature to pass programs investing in our community colleges and workforce programs that extend educational opportunity to unemployed, dislocated, and other people to train for new jobs in manufacturing, culinary arts, and IT. As a member of the Amherst School Committee and chair of the regional school committee, I've personally advocated for the state's Chapter 70 foundation budget review reforms, for expanded regional transportation aid and against expansion of a local charter school. In 2016, I campaigned throughout my town against Question 2.

3. *Universal Pre-K. Would you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes. This is an urgent need and should be part of funding from the Fair Share Amendment.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes. I'm in favor of portfolio assessment of students for graduation. I think evaluating teachers based on tests (or schools/districts) is deeply flawed and problematic.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes. This is a major priority of mine.

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**?

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes. I think it is outrageous that schools that claim to be public can avoid the kind of transparency that's required of public schools.

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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

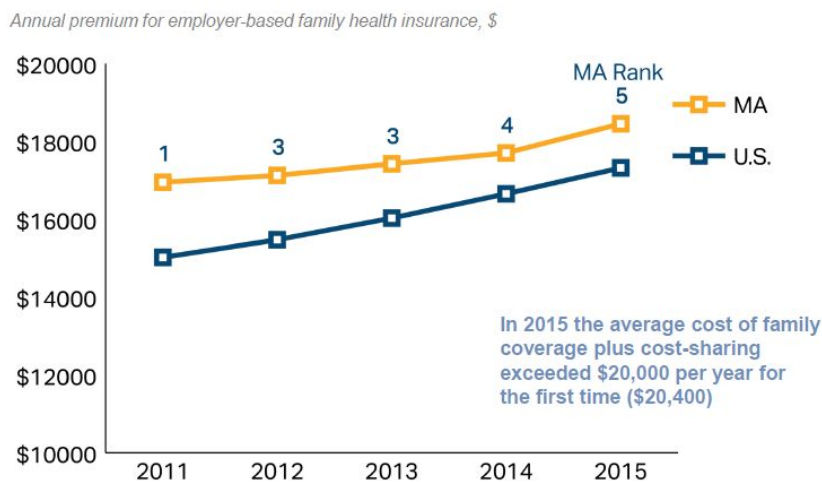
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?

Eric Nakajima: 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.*

Eric Nakajima: I believe that health care should be available to all based on need and not income or employment - and that access has to be more than nominal, utilization of health care services should be encouraged. That means low deductibles and co-pays, low premiums, and widely available doctors and specialists. Health care providers should encourage preventative care and testing/screenings that encourage healthy behavior and treat conditions early. The right way to do this is to create a single-payer or medicare-for-all system. In our region, access to doctors and treatment is a major issue not only based on cost but also, literally, the availability of doctors and facilities in rural areas. We

should expand support for community-based health care centers, and we should provide incentives as necessary for doctors to work in rural settings and other areas that lack general practitioners, OBGYNs, and other specialists.

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

Eric Nakajima: I've been a supporter of universal healthcare for years -- but mostly as a email writer, petition signer and voter.

3. **Single Payer.** *Would you support legislation to enact a single payer health care system in Massachusetts?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes. This continues to be an issue in Massachusetts and across the country. I am disturbed to hear of Trump's efforts to cut back health care funding for women. The state should backfill any funds lost from the federal government.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

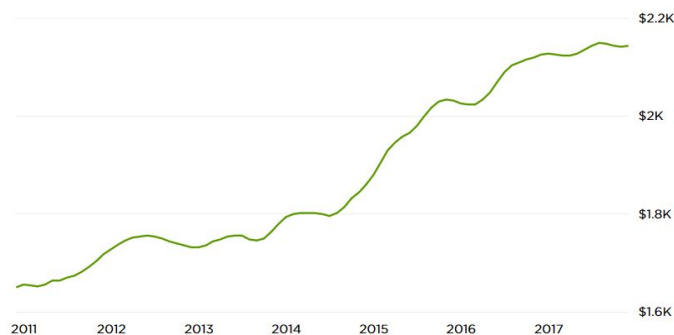
6. **Prescription Drug Pricing.** *Would you support a drug transparency law, like the one recently passed in California, that requires pharmaceutical companies to publicly justify steep price increases?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: The availability of affordable, safe, and clean housing is the foundation of a civilized society -- every bit as much as education, food, or healthcare. We need to expand the construction of affordable housing (80% of Area Median Income or lower -- often much lower) and workforce housing (80 to 120% of AMI) throughout the Commonwealth. We need to modernize our outdated land use or zoning act, and allow for accessory apartments, cluster development, mitigation, and incentivize municipal housing development plans including zones for multi-family construction with limited review. We also need to invest more in affordable and workforce housing through direct support (bond or tax-credit), and we should, wherever possible, focus growth in transit-oriented developments with either bus or rail (and associated bike paths/lanes). In the Patrick Administration, we did some of this work on the Orange and Blue Lines outside of Boston, as well as in cities like Lowell, Haverhill, and Worcester. There is much, much more to be done.

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

housing (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).

Eric Nakajima: I've done all of the above (legislation, community work, and published writings). In Amherst, I served on the Affordable Housing Committee for the town in advance of new affordable housing developments in town ten years ago. I also wrote a study for CHAPA (Citizens Housing and Planning Association) evaluating the impact of 40B developments on municipalities. I also did a workshop for CHAPA on the use of DIF (district improvement financing -- TIF elsewhere in the country) for community development. In the Patrick Administration, I helped author the state's Housing Development Incentive Program legislation and partnered with DHCD on numerous projects with municipalities to integrate community and economic development goals with expanded housing. In Holyoke, I led state participation in the Holyoke Innovation District, which integrated housing development, new infrastructure, a new train station stop and business development with community organizations and residents. I am passionately committed to affordable housing, community revitalization and integrated strategies that improve places and resident's opportunities and engagement.

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

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

b. The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes. I am strongly in favor of this and regret Steve Kulik's retirement - he has been a real leader and I hope to step up and help on this if elected.

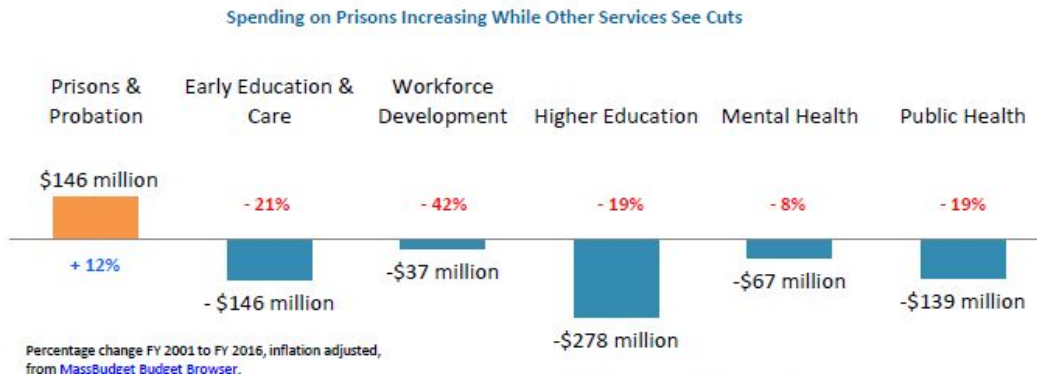
8. **Combating Speculation.** *Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

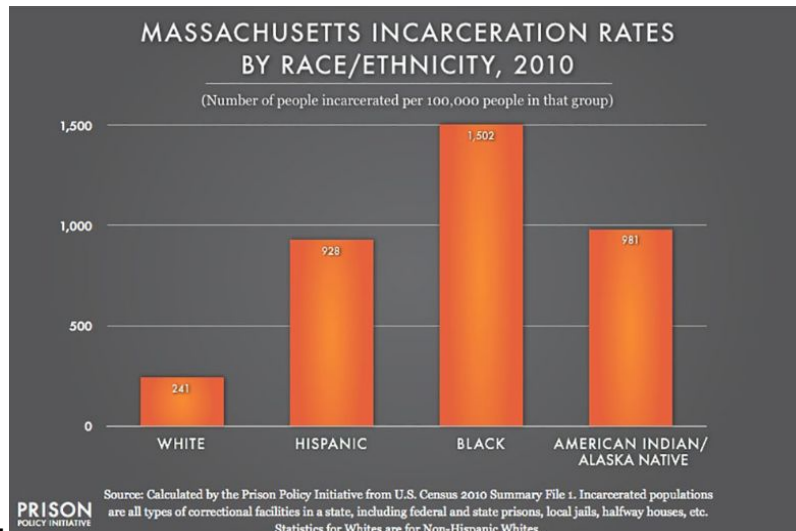
F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

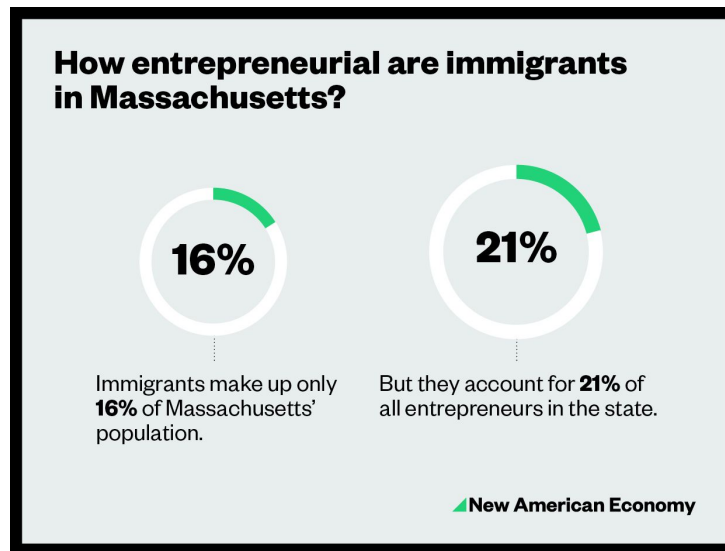
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

Eric Nakajima: As a bi-racial son of an immigrant, I feel directly and keenly our nation's struggle to fully accept all of our neighbors and value the freedom, safety, and dignity of each one of us. All of us should be treated equally under the law and the law should ensure that no one is discriminated against or faces hardships because of who they are. What does that mean in practice? Undoing institutional racism and bias in education, hiring, public services, and commerce. In the age of Trump, this requires us to both defend ourselves and our neighbors against state sanctioned intrusions, and it means ensuring that our state extends protections, as with the Safe Communities Act.

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

Eric Nakajima: I've spent my entire life concerned with confronting or undoing racism. I was an activist on racial and social justice issue in high school and college. In college, I led a group that administered student space in our campus center -- I ejected an organization from the building for physically threatening a LGBTQ organization. In the 1990s, I was a part of the Western Mass Rainbow Coalition, opposing Clinton's Crime Bill and Welfare Reform among other things. In the Patrick Administration, I worked to include marginalized groups in state-local planning efforts and worked to ensure that programs reached and involved minorities. On the Amherst School Committee and regional committee, I continue to advocate for a racial and social equity agenda that was developed by the community. That agenda will be fully integrated into the school district's strategic plan.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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)?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes. I strongly oppose the militarization of local police.

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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes. This is a must. There is an urgency to passing this now -- this session.

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?

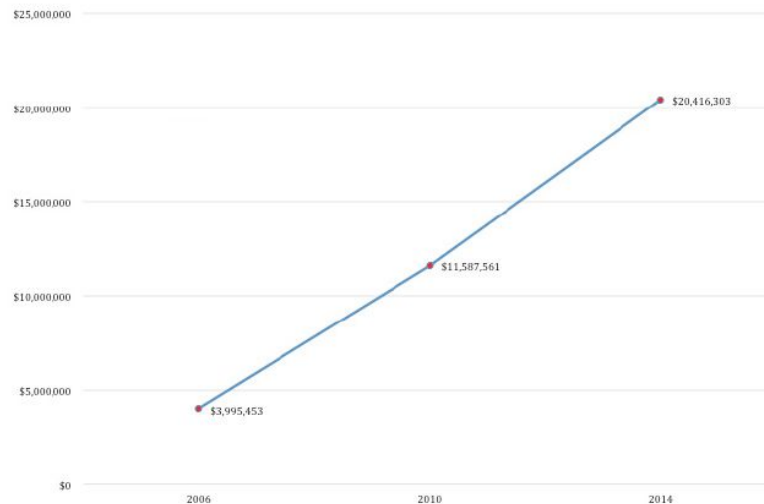
Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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.*

Eric Nakajima: The ability for everyone to participate fairly and equally in our democracy is a cornerstone of our very society. We must eliminate barriers to voting and guard against any efforts to eliminate the franchise. This means same day registration and voting and automatic voter registration for minors. We should also encourage local voting for all residents and instant runoff voting. I believe we should overturn Citizens United and put federal restrictions on corporate spending in elections and, in general, we should be moving to publicly financed elections. I also agree that we need transparency in government and should continue to modernize and open up our public records laws.

2. *Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform,*

legislative rules reform, and access to voting.

Eric Nakajima: I have supported clean elections and voter reforms as a petition signer and voter.

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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: 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"?*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

a. *Election day voter registration*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

b. *Automatic voter registration*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

d. *No-fault absentee voting*

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

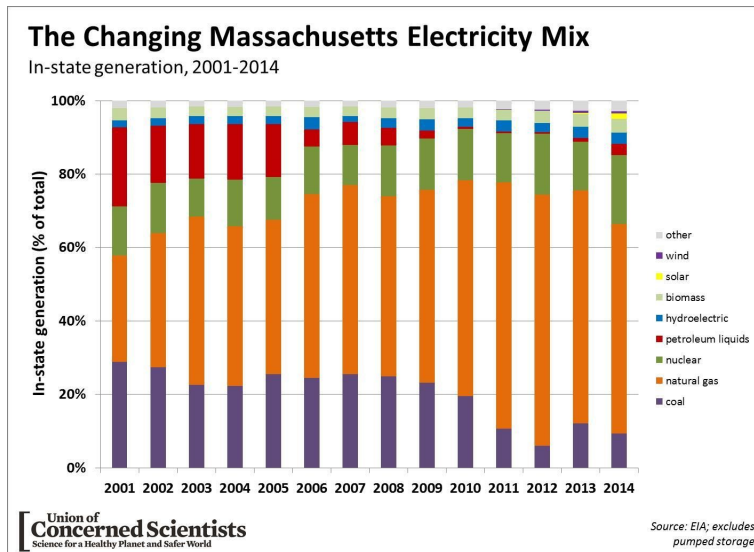
H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

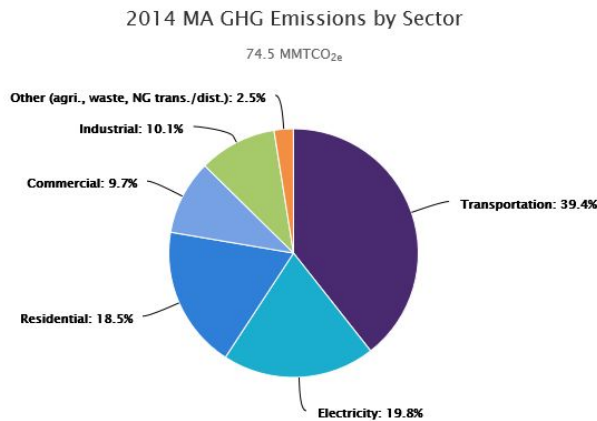
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and 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.*

Eric Nakajima: Protecting our environment and combating climate change are -- along with economic inequality -- the most urgent issues we face. I believe we need to revolutionize how we invest in and think about modernizing our state's public works, transportation, and energy infrastructure. We need to accelerate our progress toward being a carbon free state by 2050, and we should do so by addressing climate justice -- investing in low-income and working-class communities. We are also underfunding our Mass Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). Our air, water, and open spaces are precious -- but also essential to our viability. We must support regulation, acquisition of open space, and modernization of waste water systems and and natural systems -- such as wetlands -- that will improve resilience.

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

Eric Nakajima: I have advocated locally for full funding of the PVRTA. I've worked in the past with Mike Dukakis on expanding intercity and regional rail, including the North-South Rail Link and Boston-Springfield Rail. In the Patrick Administration I contributed to work on the South Coast rail, the Knowledge Corridor Rail in western Massachusetts. And, I served on an interagency group on climate adaptation, the Toxic Use Reduction Institute (TURI) board, and was a designated member on the Mass Clean Energy Center Board of Directors.

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

Eric Nakajima: 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?*

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: 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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes. And this requires real leadership in our area with the loss of Steve Kulik and Stan Rosenberg.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes. I strongly support not only a carbon pricing bill, but also the creation of a green infrastructure fund.

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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

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

Eric Nakajima: Yes. We cannot say we're in favor of equity and starve our public transit.

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?

Eric Nakajima: Yes.

III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Limit answer to 150 words or fewer.

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

Eric Nakajima: The Third Hampshire District is one of the bluest, most progressive seats in Massachusetts and quite possibly, America. We need a state representative who will use this seat as the basis for outspoken and creative advocacy with progressive leaders and Democrats across the state. I am committed to social justice, economic justice, and environmental justice and hope to bring my years of experience on Beacon Hill and commitment to this agenda to everything that I do.