

Jon Santiago

9th Suffolk

State Representative

Endorsement Questionnaire

Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District: 9th Suffolk

Party: Democratic

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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

Jon Santiago

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

Jon Santiago: I'm running for office because I believe our community deserves more and can do better. I have the skills, experience, and energy to lead the district into a new era and will prioritize issues that have not been adequately addressed - the worsening opioid crisis, a lack of affordable housing, and a rising wave of socioeconomic inequity. The district needs a representative who will lead on these issues, bring a sense of urgency, and someone who is not afraid to challenge the establishment.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

Jon Santiago: I have spent my life in services to others and view this run for office has an extension of that service. Whether as a Peace Corps Volunteer, captain in the Army Reserve, or ER physician, I have made it my life's goal to serve marginalized communities. My personal and professional experiences have given me the insight, organizational skills, and leadership training to serve and advocate for my community on the issues that matter most to them.

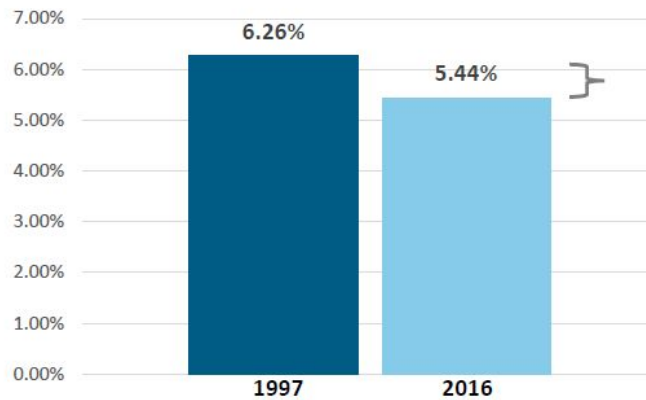
Furthermore, ER physicians are trained to take decisive action on urgent matters – a characteristic often absent in the legislature. We cannot afford to be satisfied with a legislature offering tepid solutions when bold action is required. I'm prepared to serve because I have already been active addressing the community's most pressing needs and will continue to lead and take ownership.

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.

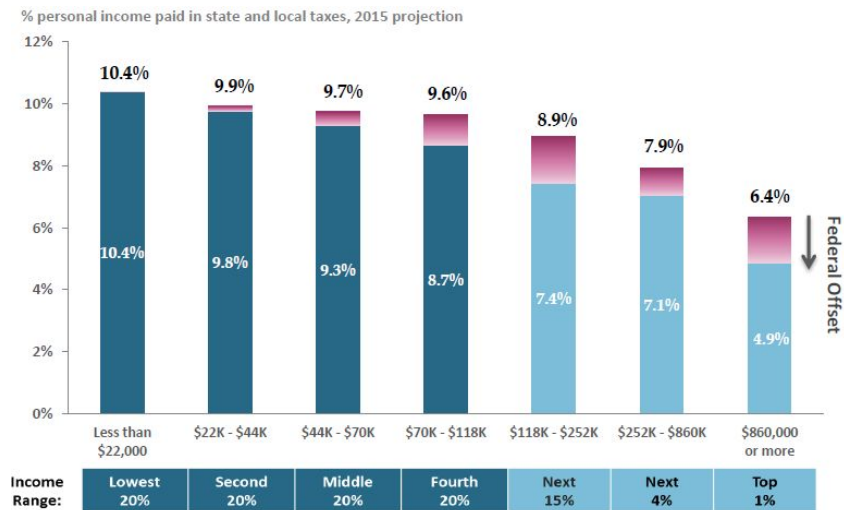
Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.

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?*

Jon Santiago: I believe in economic justice and equity. We must put an end to the failed policies of regressive taxation and income tax cuts favoring the wealthy. These policies are short-sighted at best and unjust at worst, particularly for lower-income and marginalized communities. If we seek to end such policies, we must elect officials who will LEAD and CHALLENGE colleagues and leadership that are satisfied with the status quo. We cannot tolerate passivity. I will be bold and prioritize the needs and desires of poor and middle-income families who have been shortchanged for decades by a legislature that has not prioritized their interests. I will fight for policies that increase taxes on income for the wealthy, oppose sales tax holidays, and fight against policies that prioritize corporations over people.

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.).*

Jon Santiago: I fully support Raise Up Massachusetts in their efforts to enact a Fair Share Amendment. I have collected signatures, attended meetings, and have talked to community groups of the importance and potential of such legislation.

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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

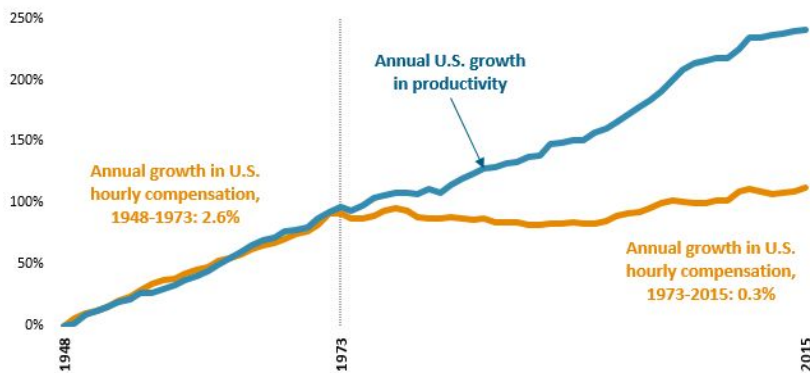
B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

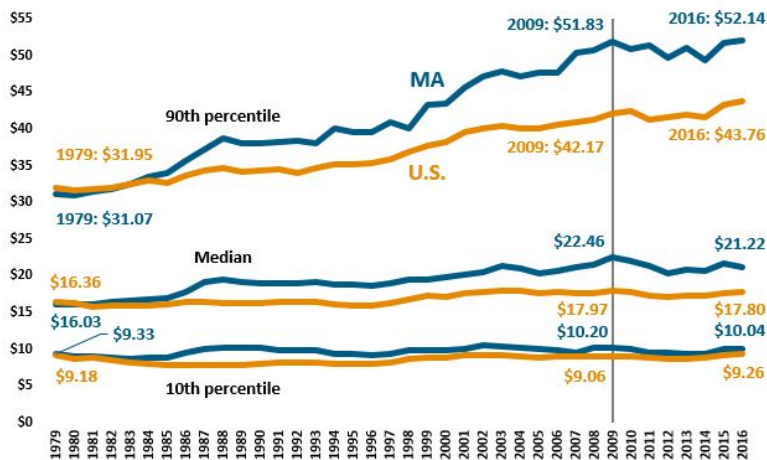
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?

Jon Santiago: The 9th Suffolk District is defined by some of the largest health and wealth disparity in the state, a microcosm of what is wrong in Boston, the Commonwealth, and the country. In order to combat this inequity, I believe we must protect and create good-paying jobs by supporting organized labor, fight for a more progressive tax system, increase wages, and advocate for policies such as earned sick time and paid family medical leave.

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.).*

Jon Santiago: I fully support Raise Up Massachusetts in their efforts to enact a \$15 minimum wage and paid family medical leave. I have collected signatures, attended meetings, and have talked to community groups of the importance and potential of such legislation. Additionally, I am a union member of CIR/SEIU and have been union representative for my emergency room colleagues.

3. Increasing Wages.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

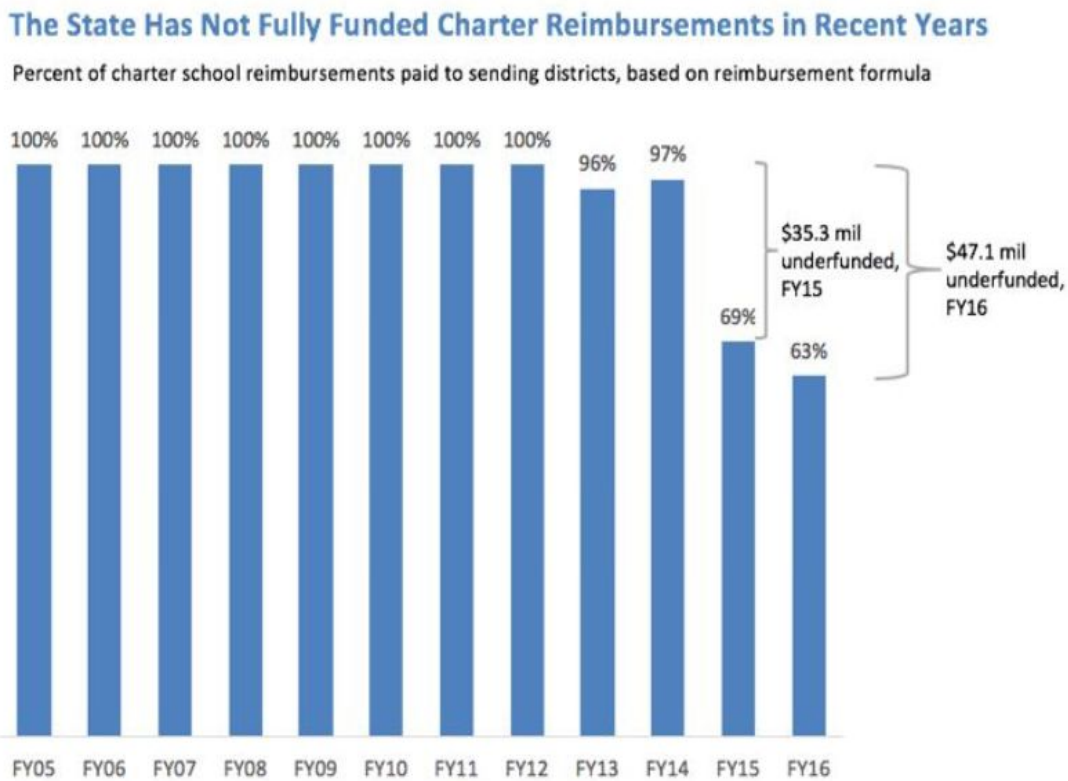
9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

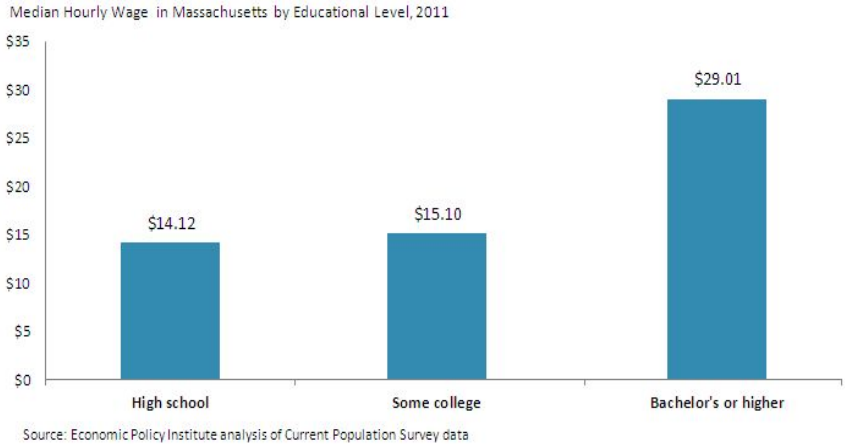
C. EDUCATION

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.

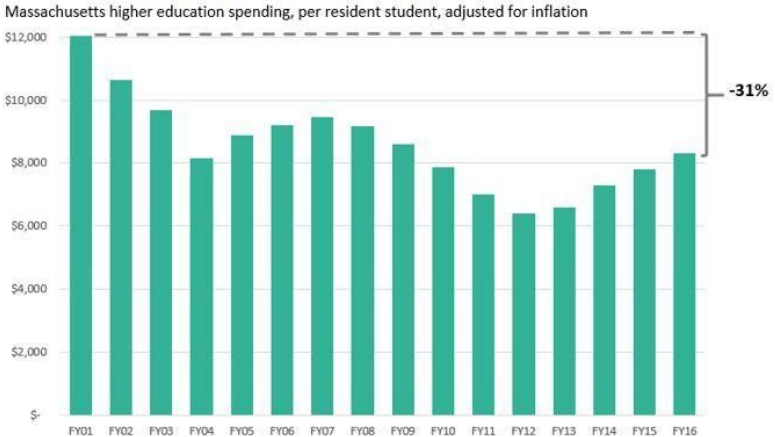


Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.



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



Note: FY 2007 total is adjusted downwards to account for the fact that significant funding during this year was for capital investments that supported activity during other fiscal years.

1. ***Please 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?***

Jon Santiago: Public education must be equitable and accessible. As someone who grew up in underserved communities and attended struggling public schools, I'm all too familiar with the frustration, lack of support, and feelings of inadequacy upon beginning college. I've come to understand that the mantra of simply "work harder" is empty and short-sighted. The system is rigged and has undermined poor black and brown children, including those with special needs, in their pursuit of success. I believe public education is the lynch pin to creating a just society, but our current policies underfund and undermine our children's future. Furthermore, we must make sure public education is equitable and accessible all the way through college and not stand for a system that puts new college graduates in significant financial strain upon graduating.

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

Jon Santiago: I canvassed for the "No on Question 2" campaign in Massachusetts.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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?***

Jon Santiago: 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?***

Jon Santiago: 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?***

Jon Santiago: 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?***

Jon Santiago: 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?

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

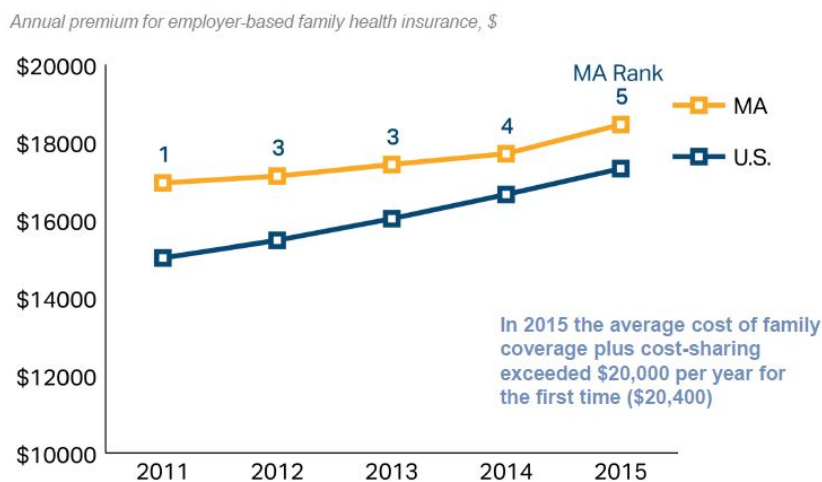
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?

Jon Santiago: 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.*

Jon Santiago: While Massachusetts has led the way in health insurance coverage, we must not equate that with health care. As a physician working in the largest safety net hospital in New England, I see every day the inefficiencies and injustice of our health care system. Much of what is wrong with our system is a result of a profit-driven insurance system while MassHealth remains underfunded and under attack. A single-payer system can provide the basis of a system more focused on providing equitable and cost-effective care. We must also address the social determinants of health if we are serious about improving health outcomes, particularly in underserved communities. I will also lead the

fight against the opioid epidemic, perhaps the most pressing issue in my district and one where the Democratic Leadership has largely deferred to Governor Baker.

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

Jon Santiago: I work as an ER physician at Boston Medical Center and have a strong record of implementing public health practices in America and abroad. In addition to my medical and public health practice, I have also written and conducted research on health disparities.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

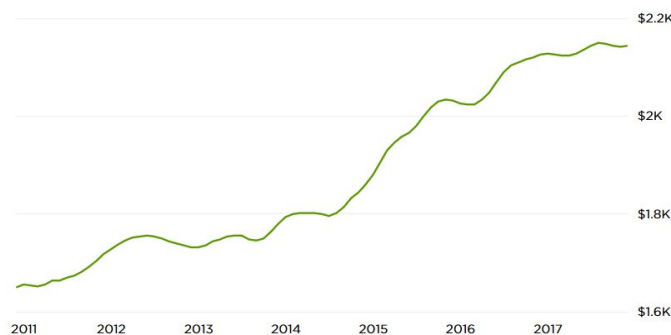
6. **Prescription Drug Pricing.** *Would you support a drug transparency law, like the one recently passed in California, that requires pharmaceutical companies to publicly justify steep price increases?*

Jon Santiago: 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?

Jon Santiago: We need a new vision to address the housing crisis in Massachusetts. It must be comprehensive, innovative, and include elements coordinating transportation and economic development. My district includes some of the most expensive real estate in Boston but also some of the poorest public housing developments. And while the disparity is revolting, the ongoing gentrification and displacement of longtime families is what concerns me the most. I will fight to maintain and expand affordable housing opportunities in the district by holding developers and public officials accountable. As a state representative, I will fight for legislation to protect tenant rights and expand affordable housing opportunities.

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

Jon Santiago: I actively supported the Community Preservation Act in Boston.

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

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

b. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

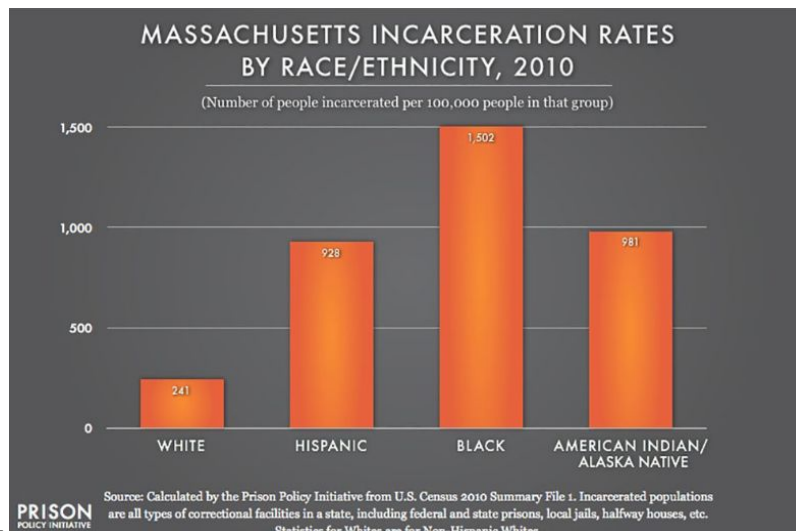
F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

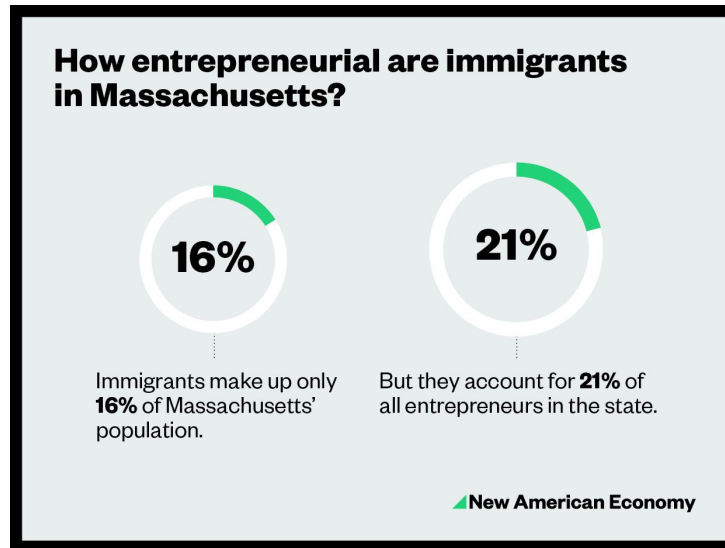
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

Jon Santiago: I have and will continue to defend and fight for the rights of marginalized communities, including communities of color, immigrants, LGBTQ people, and our incarcerated brother and sisters. As someone who grew up in underserved minority communities and who remains very much connected to them personally and professionally, I have the insight and credibility to advocate for those without a voice. And while we've taken a step forward in criminal justice reform, there is more work to do and justice to be sought.

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

Jon Santiago: I am a part of a group of doctors that is advocating for more physician diversity in the Boston Medical Center ER, an institution where the vast majority of patients are African-American and Latino, yet the staff is not. We've implemented changes to staff recruitment, conducted trainings in bias, and have seen immediate results among current staff and new hires.

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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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)?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

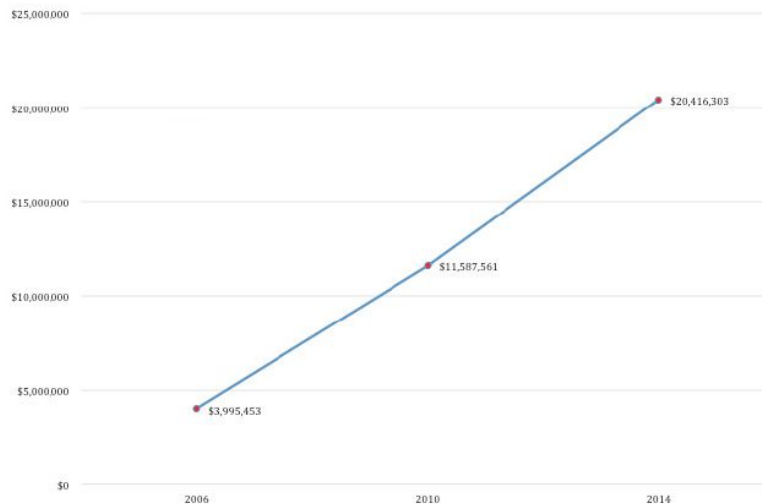
Jon Santiago: Yes.

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.*

Jon Santiago: While our Democracy is under attack at the federal level, our state is not leading the defense. Our elected representatives have failed to protect citizens from monied interests or expand voting rights. I believe our government must be more transparent and that the power and control of government ultimately rests with constituents, not a handful of power brokers and lobbyists on Beacon Hill.

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?

Jon Santiago: 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?

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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"?

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

a. Election day voter registration

Jon Santiago: Yes.

b. Automatic voter registration

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

d. No-fault absentee voting

Jon Santiago: Yes.

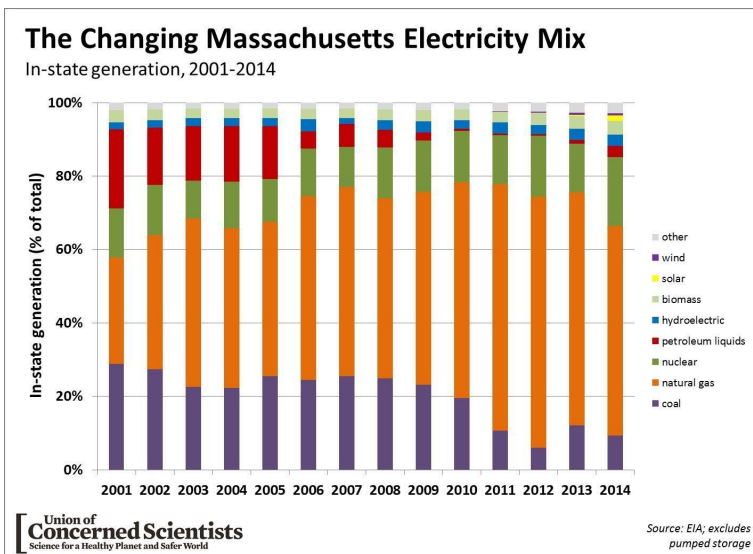
H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

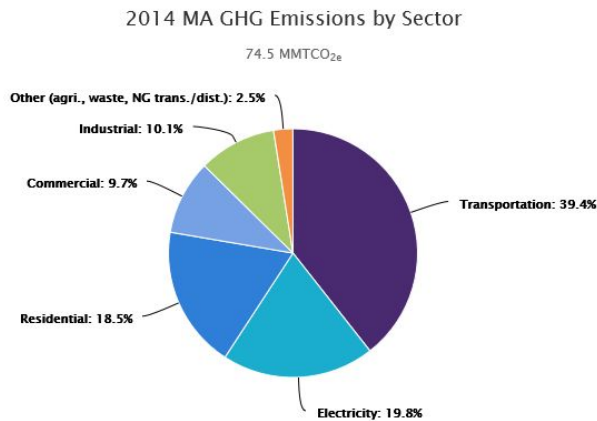
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and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

Jon Santiago: Climate change is the existential crisis. We have short-changed our future by continuing to invest in fossil fuels and delaying the implementation of policies that aim to increase renewable energy. We need an elevated level of urgency more than ever if we are to create and pass on a sustainable environment.

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

Jon Santiago: I personally have committed myself to living a 'greener' lifestyle. I do not own a car and either bike, walk, or take public transportation. Furthermore, I have collected signatures for Raise Up Massachusetts in favor of the Fair Share Amendment so that our transportation needs be funded.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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?

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: Yes.

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

Jon Santiago: 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?*

Jon Santiago: 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.

Jon Santiago: My campaign is a challenge to the establishment and is dedicated to the belief that we deserve more and can do better. While I have tremendous respect for the incumbent, Representative Byron Rushing who has served for almost 40 years, the district and its issues have changed tremendously and have not been adequately addressed. I believe it's time to elect a candidate who reflects the district's change, able to deal with its most pressing concerns, and ready to challenge a stagnant Beacon Hill.