

*Marie McCourt*

**2nd Hampshire**

**State Representative**

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*Endorsement Questionnaire*

**Office Sought:** State Representative

**Legislative District:** 2nd Hampshire

**Party:** Democratic

**Website:** [mariemccourt.com](http://mariemccourt.com)

**Twitter:** [@marie0215](https://twitter.com/marie0215)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/mccourt4rep/>



**Primary:** September 4

**Election:** November 6

# Contents

<b>Primary: September 4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Election: November 6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Introduction: Progressive Mass</b>	<b>2</b>
About	2
Membership	2
How Endorsements Work	2
Sources	2
<b>I. About the Candidate</b>	<b>3</b>
Marie McCourt	3
<b>II. THE ISSUES</b>	<b>4</b>
A. REVENUE AND TAXATION	4
B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY	6
C. EDUCATION	9
D. HEALTH CARE	13
E. HOUSING	15
F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	17
G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY	21
H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	23
<b>III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS</b>	<b>25</b>

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# Introduction: Progressive Mass

## About

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*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](https://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

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*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](https://massbudget.org)).*

# I. About the Candidate

## Marie McCourt

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

**Marie McCourt:** I have been an advocate for almost my whole life. I feel that being a state rep will allow me a better way to make progressive change in our district. My top 3 priorities are education, elder services/healthcare, and climate change.

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

**Marie McCourt:** For the past 12 1/2 years, I have worked in an education non-profit, running grant-funded after school programs that focus on kids with special needs and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. I am also the legislative liaison for this job. During this time, I have also served the community in many capacities, whether serving on town committees, helping run local fairs, volunteering, being on executive boards or as an elected official to the school committee.

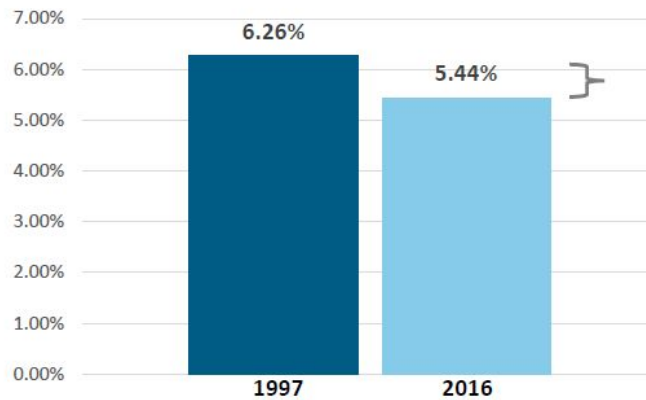
About 22 years ago, I began volunteering at the Granby COA where I met Ellen Story and began learning about working legislatively on elder issues. I also used my advocacy skills going to Washington DC and fighting for research funding for diabetes and trying to fight for a world where babies don't need insulin injections, and young diabetics don't have to fear that they won't grow old. As my son, now 21, became school-aged, I realized that he had special needs. Rather than just being a supportive mom, I put myself through training to become an advocate, and helped many parents with the education process.

# 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.

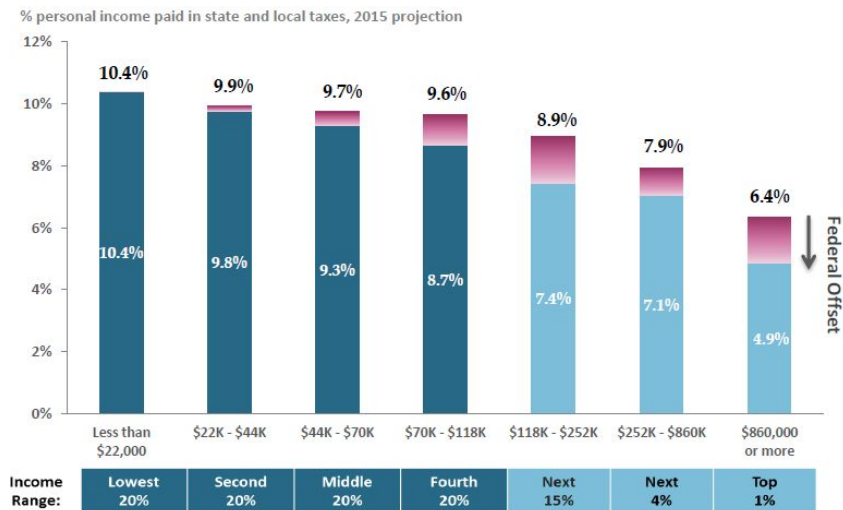
**Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.**

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?*

**Marie McCourt:** A progressive tax is needed in MA, but it has been fought against for many years. I am hoping the Fair Share Amendment will go through to at least bring money in for education and transportation, but I do not feel that it will be enough to save our state budgets.

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.).*

**Marie McCourt:** As part of the Granby School Committee, I have been talking about the Fair Share Amendment to people so they can understand it.

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?*

**Marie McCourt:** 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?*

**Marie McCourt:** 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?*

**Marie McCourt:** 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?*

**Marie McCourt:** Yes.

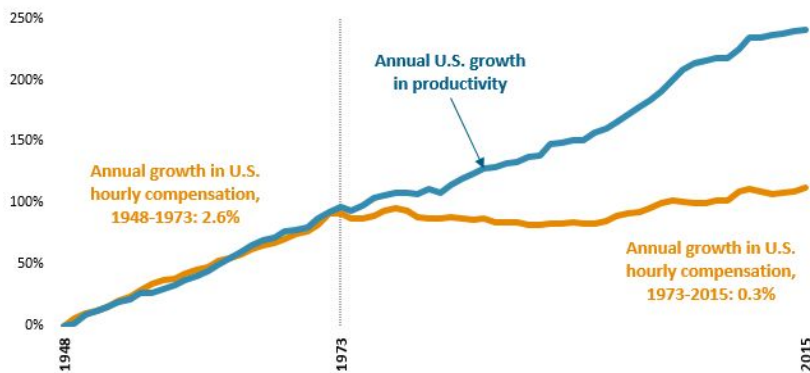
## B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

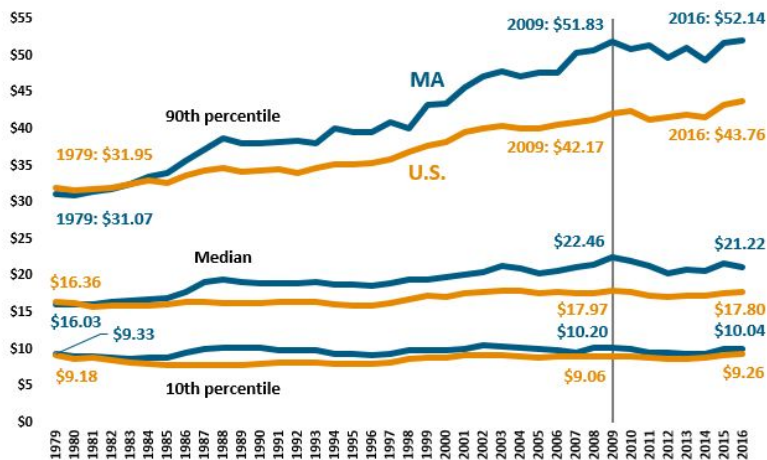
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?*

**Marie McCourt:** I believe that part of our problem is that we have over-supported college and not the trades. We are lacking new and trained people in high-paying trade jobs, and we are running out of people who can work those jobs. I think we need to boost training in the manufacturing and high-tech/STEM fields so that we will have a workforce that can fill jobs when companies want to come here. If we can have higher-paying jobs in Western MA, as well as fixing public transportation, we will keep more young and vibrant working people in the area which helps the tax base, helps our school districts and creates economic development.

I think there is a huge disparity in income equality. Too often the CEO's and higher management are making many times the amount that other staff are making. This is even happening in non-profits. I don't know how to fix it, but I do know we need to start the conversation.

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

**3. Increasing Wages.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?

**Marie McCourt: 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?

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

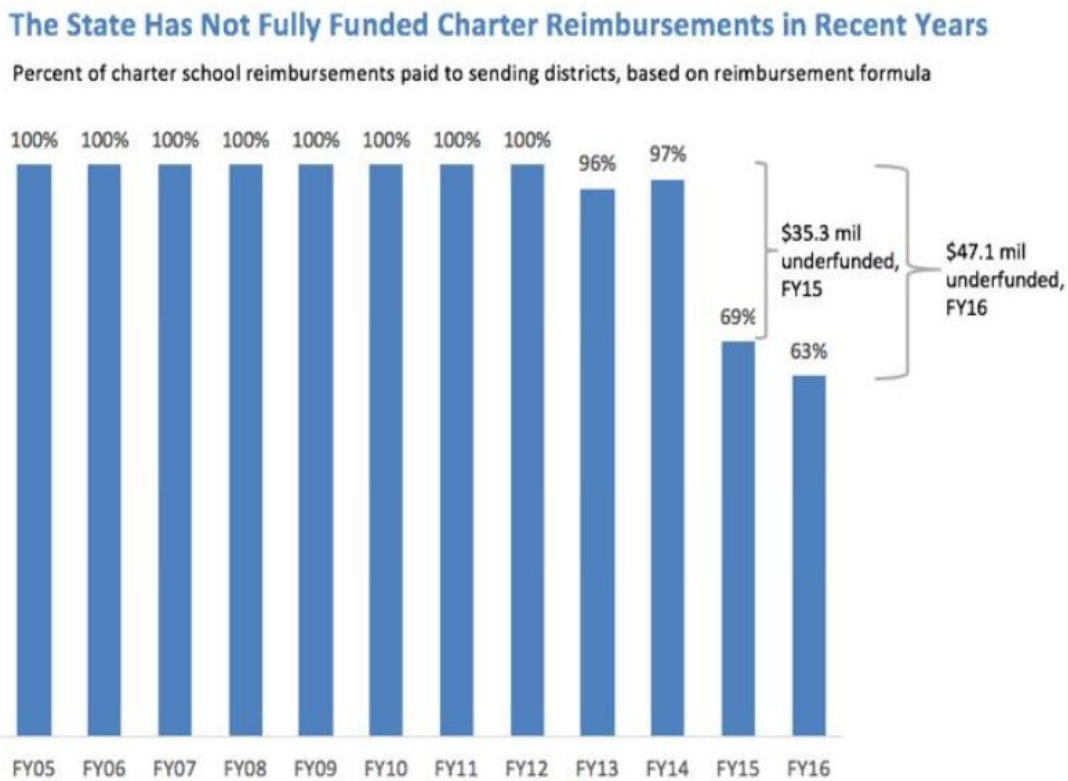
9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

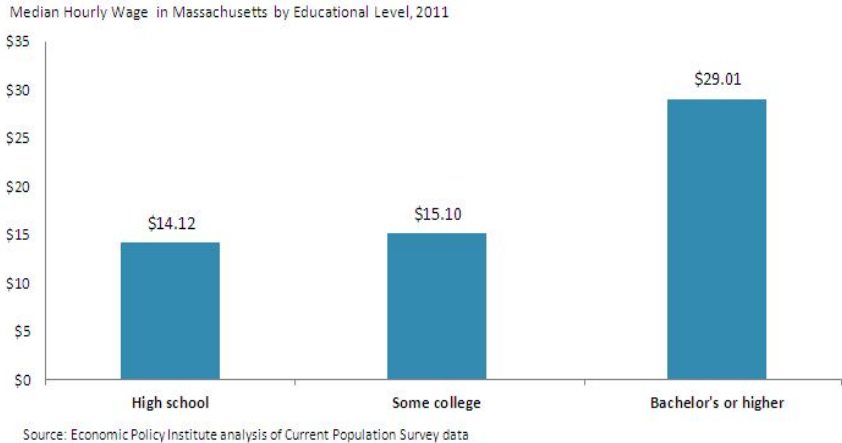
# C. EDUCATION

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.**

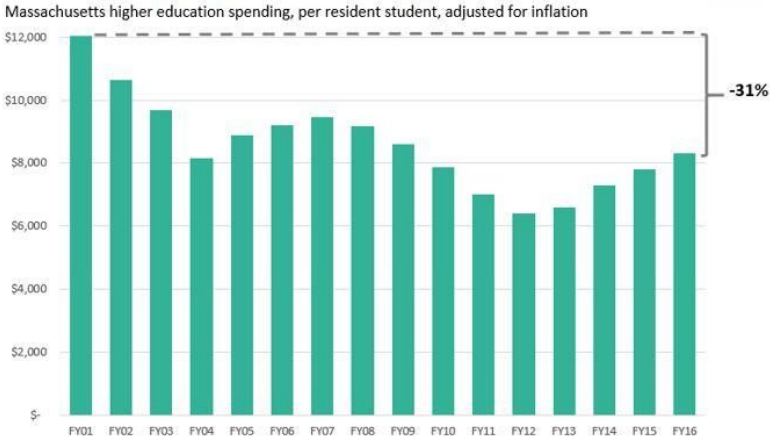


**Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.**



**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**



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?***

**Marie McCourt:** I work in public education so it is incredibly important to me. As well, I was on the Granby School Committee for 4 years, which taught me a lot about school funding. First, because the Chapter 70 funding is so skewed, there is not equity in education. The property owners are on the hook for higher and higher property taxes for education, and many are being priced out of their homes in Western MA. We have to change the formula and get back to the state paying its fair share. Also, it is unfair for public money to go to charter schools. That money should go to public schools who might then be able to set up different types of education. Right now they are stuck giving the basics.

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

**Marie McCourt:** I have worked in education for nearly 13 years, as well as being on the school committee for 4 years. I am a very vocal advocate for education.

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

**Marie McCourt:** 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?***

**Marie McCourt:** Yes. This high-stakes testing has ruined our school systems, made teaching almost impossible, and taken the joy out of learning.

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?***

**Marie McCourt:** 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?***

**Marie McCourt:** 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?***

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

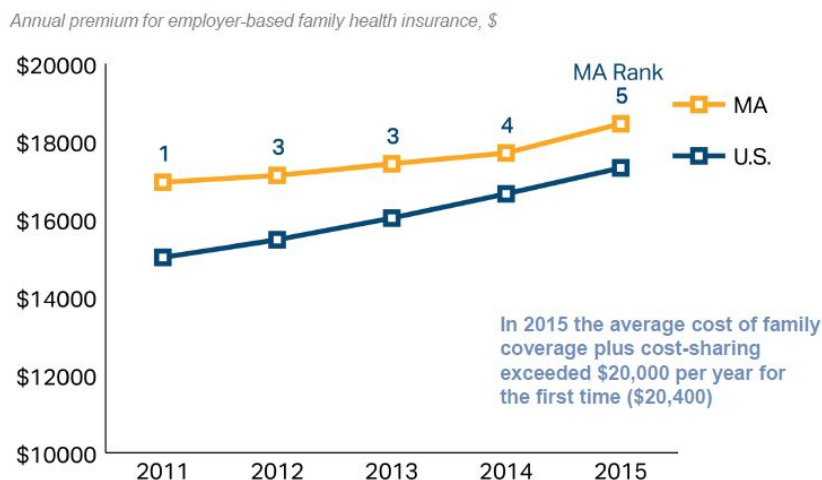
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** *Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?*

**Marie McCourt: 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.*

**Marie McCourt:** I have been diabetic for 38 years. As someone who lived without insurance, even while pregnant (because it was a pre-existing condition) I understand the imminent need for quality, affordable healthcare. I am hoping that a single-payer system would help us to create a better system and take the big money out of big insurance. I fight with my insurance all the time when they decide I don't need something for my health. healthcare has to be affordable and accessible.

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

*health care (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).*

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

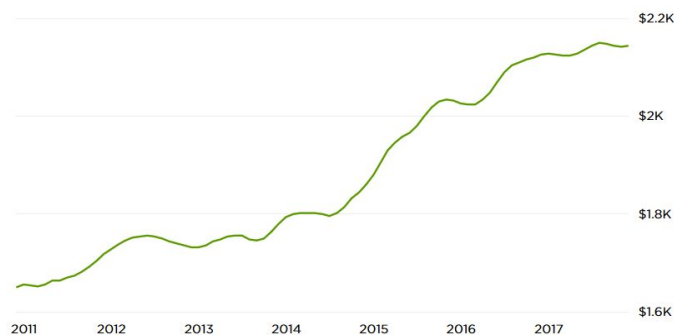
**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

## E. HOUSING

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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?*

**Marie McCourt:** I think we have a huge problem, at least in Western MA, with transportation. In our area, you almost need a car, but it makes it hard when you can't get to a job to afford one. I see this a lot for young people just starting out, or anyone who has become suddenly unemployed or displaced. In my town it is nearly impossible to use the bus for work as it is not convenient and doesn't run at normal hours. The roads are not safe for people to always ride their bike, and if you have health problems it becomes moot. I don't know how to fix the problem but I hope to support and help find viable solutions. There are too many people that have no choices, no money and no food.

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

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



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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

b. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

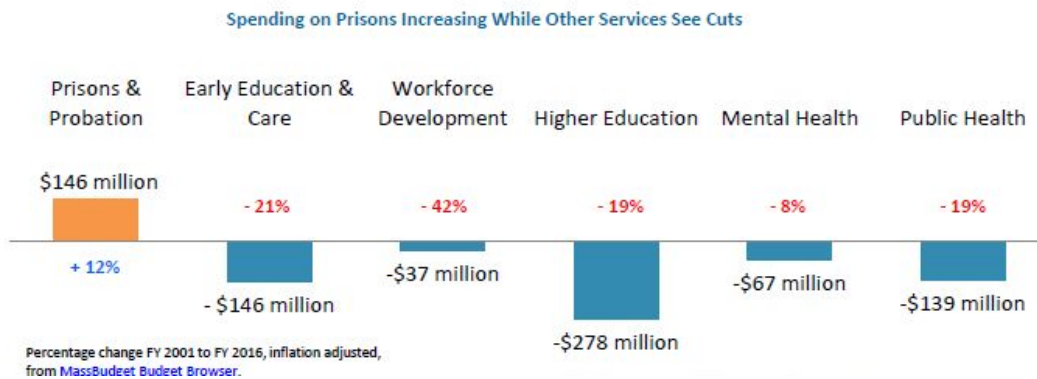
8. **Combating Speculation.** *Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

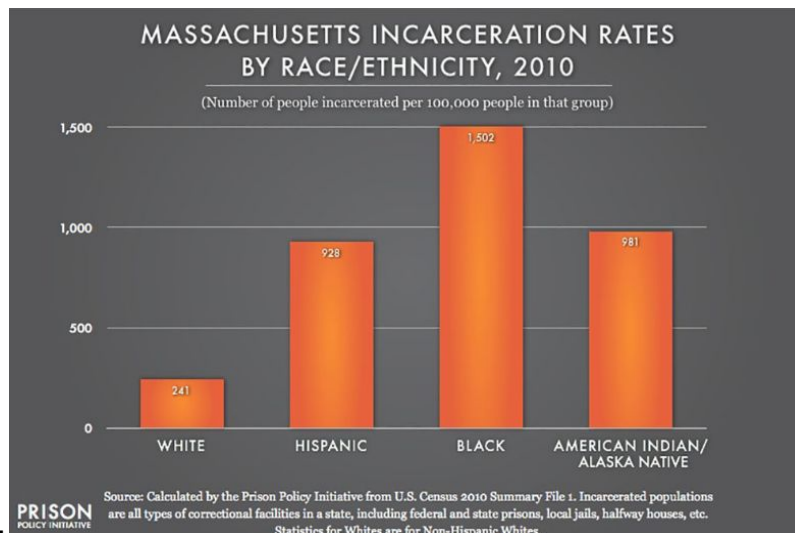
# F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

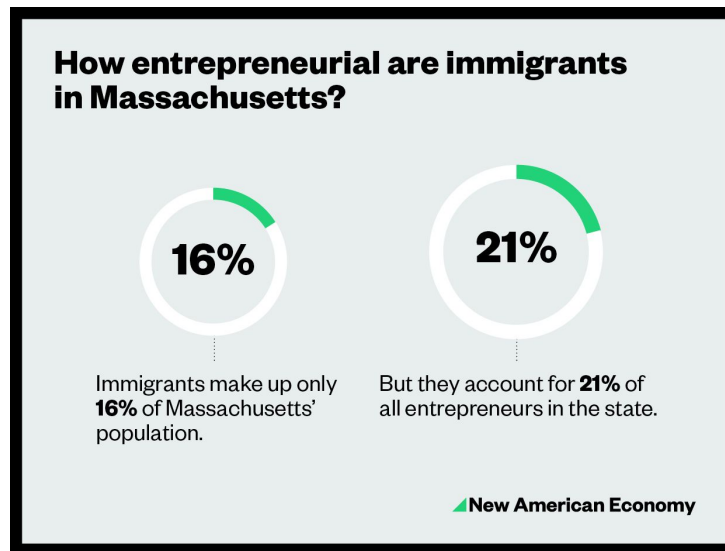
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

**Marie McCourt:** I believe we need to stop privatizing prisons and stop the school to prison pipeline. Money needs to go into prevention and treatment programs as well as programs that promote social justice/racial justice.

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

**Marie McCourt:** It is part of my job, every day, to create a path to equity. My personal philosophy is one of education, because I hope that creating ways for people to learn about our commonalities will help people to be more open to our difference - and even celebrate them.

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?*

**Marie McCourt:** Yes. I have 2 friends who are transgender, and I want to support any way for them to be healthy, happy and not afraid to be themselves.

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?*

**Marie McCourt:** 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?

**Marie McCourt: 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?

**Marie McCourt: 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)?

**Marie McCourt: Yes.** I have personal experience with this.

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?

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?

**Marie McCourt: 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?

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt:** Yes.

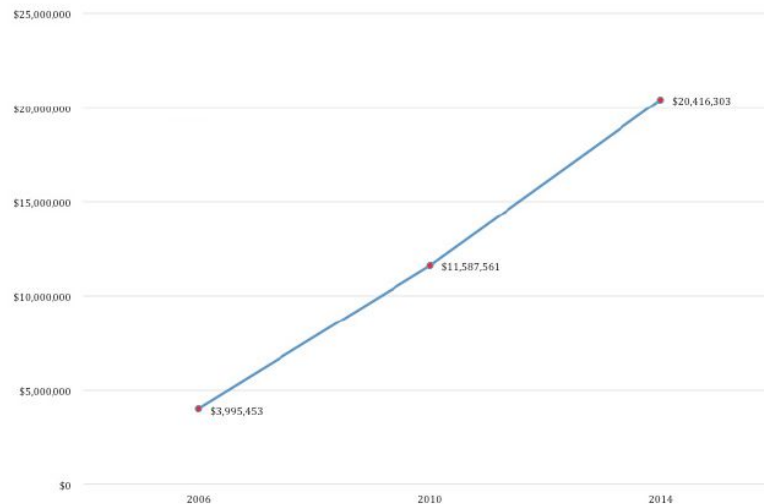
# G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

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*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.*

**Marie McCourt:** We need to get money out of politics. Currently it is set up to only support the rich to be in office, when people who have had to work hard seem to understand the needs of the constituency in a deeper way. Strong democracy can only happen if seats are available to all who wish to run.

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?*

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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"?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

a. *Election day voter registration*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

b. *Automatic voter registration*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

d. *No-fault absentee voting*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

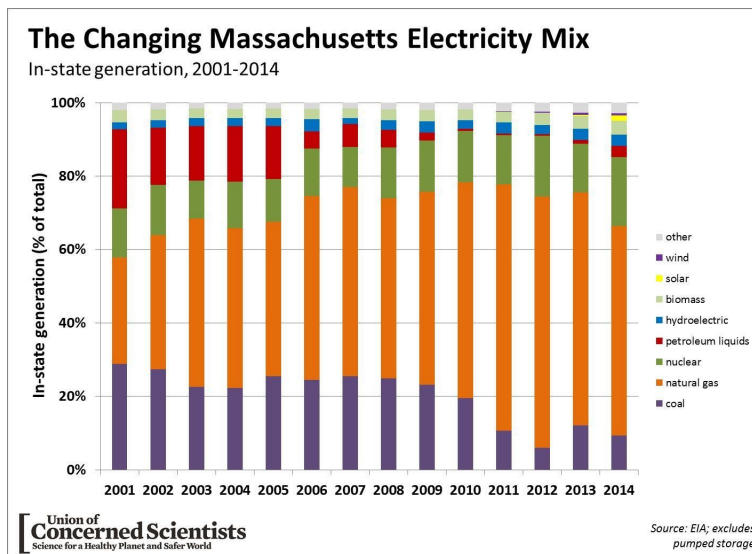
# H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

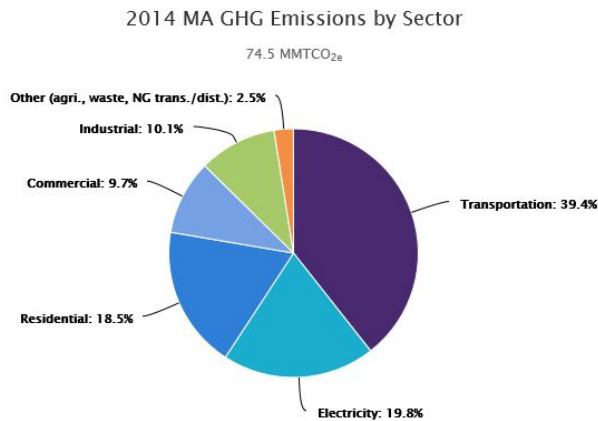
Public transit must play a role in decarbonizing our transportation system, as well as advancing complementary goals of equity and inclusion. However, Massachusetts politicians have lost their understanding of public transit as a public good that benefits all residents and businesses in Massachusetts, 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.*

**Marie McCourt:** The only way we can get more people and companies to go green is to make it affordable. There are so many people that need to have solar or other forms of electricity, but cannot afford to do the upgrades to their homes, or drive more efficient cars. If it costs too much to upgrade current public transportation, the cost will be put onto the riders, which will make it unaffordable. We must find a way to help, incentivize and fund a greener economy.

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

**Marie McCourt:** I chaired a green community committee and worked to research how to turn the town more green. I am also on the green committee at my non-profit.

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

**Marie McCourt:** 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?*

**Marie McCourt:** 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?*

**Marie McCourt:** 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: Yes.**

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

**Marie McCourt: 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?*

**Marie McCourt: 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.*