

*Mary Ann Stewart*

**15th Middlesex**

**State Representative**

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*Endorsement Questionnaire*

**Office Sought:** State Representative

**Legislative District:** 15th Middlesex

**Party:** Democratic

**Website:** <https://maryannstewart.org>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/MASewartMA>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MaryAnn4Rep/>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/mastewartma/>

**Primary:** September 4

**Election:** November 6



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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

## Mary Ann Stewart

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I've been giving voice to our progressive values for more than twenty years of activism and I'm the candidate working to make sure millionaires pay their fair share. My call to service has been a call to improve the lives of children, youth, and families; for fairness, opportunity, and equality for all; for strong workers' rights; for educational equity for all children no matter where they live, and for clean air, clean water, and protections for our environment.

I'm running for office to expand my call to service and to extend my leadership on critical issues we face in the district and beyond. My call to action is a call to affordable healthcare, affordable college, to challenge corporate power, to support working families, and to strengthen our safety net of services for people and to also strengthen the Progressive Caucus in the State House. We need a courageous champion who isn't afraid to speak up and make change. I believe in representation that champions quality public services that people need to overcome the challenges they face every day.

Competing and compelling priorities must be addressed. If elected, my top 3 priorities will be: 1) Improving public education, including fair, adequate funding for K-12, expanding early education and care, improving career/vocational technical education, and debt-free college; 2) Climate and environmental justice and renewable energy; and 3) Improving the lives of working people, including affordable healthcare, housing, and social, racial, and economic justice.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I was raised in working and middle-class neighborhoods by parents who were teachers and social justice liberals; from them I learned persistence, the value of hard work, and the importance of service and standing up for shared values.

I've served in Town Meeting since 2006. I've served in PTAs at the local, state, and national levels. I was elected twice to School Committee and served as chair during the worst recession of our lifetime. That experience has taught me the value of earnest questions and a soft heart.

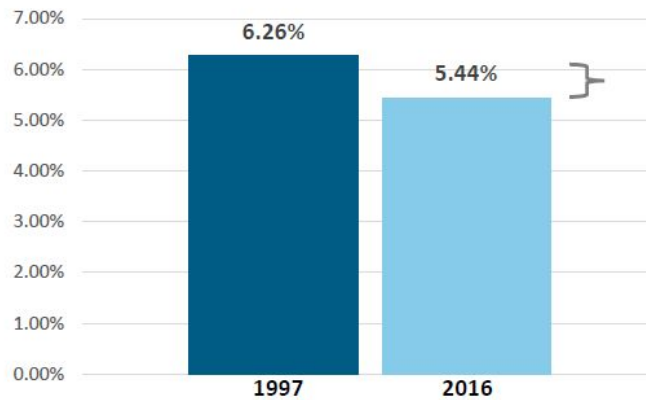
I'm a prominent voice for public education and Governor Deval Patrick appointed me a legacy appointee to the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; from that experience I've learned what it takes to both advocate for progressive change and navigate the body to forward that agenda on the state stage. It's that, plus a lifetime engaging in our political process and giving voice to our progressive values that I will bring to the legislature.

# 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.

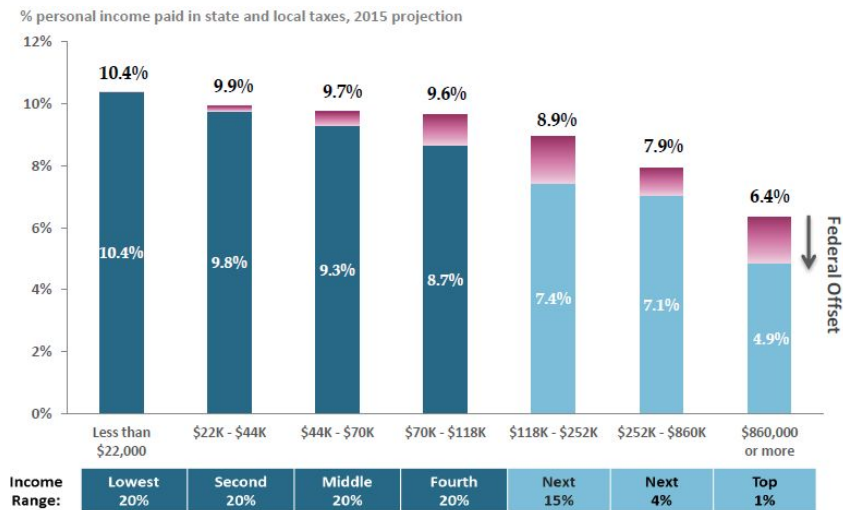
**Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.**

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** There are two important things to understand about our tax system: 1) it's inadequate and 2) it's unfair. We need a fair, adequate, sustainable, and predictable revenue system and a more progressive tax system overall. Internet sales tax. Complete review of the Commonwealth's tax expenditures. Protect taxpayers and prohibit reckless privatization of public services. This also includes support for the Poor People's Campaign, good jobs and strong workers' rights, including the right to organize and collectively bargain for wages and benefits. Green jobs for the economy and for all of the ways we live, build, and move. New revenue is necessary to rebuild crumbling roads, bridges, and paths, improve our public schools, invest in fast and reliable public transportation, make public higher education affordable, expand opportunities for health, walking and bicycling, and give every child access to high-quality early childhood education and preschool programs. If MA is serious about helping working families and building a stronger economy, we must invest in quality public schools, affordable higher education, and a reliable transportation system.

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.).*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** In 2015 I was asked by Raise Up Massachusetts to be one of ten original signers of the Fair Share Amendment. I provided public testimony to the Joint Revenue Committee (January 19, 2016) in support of the Fair Share Amendment. I have blogged about the Fair Share Amendment on my campaign website (<https://maryannstewart.org/2018/02/06/fair-share-amendment/>) and on my personal blog (<https://mastewartma.blogspot.com>) and about the necessity for investments for the long-term (<https://maryannstewart.org/2018/01/24/investments-for-the-long-term/>).

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** I fully support the Fair Share Amendment. I was proud when the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition asked me to kick-off this initiative and take the lead on better funding for public education and public transportation as one of ten original signers of the Fair Share Amendment. Those ten signatures were sent to the Attorney General for her approval. Once approved, I collected signatures to qualify the question for next steps to amend the Massachusetts Constitution. The wealthiest among us should pay their fair share of taxes, but that's not the way our tax system is set up. I've had to correct misinformation on the side of the opposition, this one was published in Commonwealth magazine:  
<https://commonwealthmagazine.org..opinion/correspondence-spring-2017/>.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

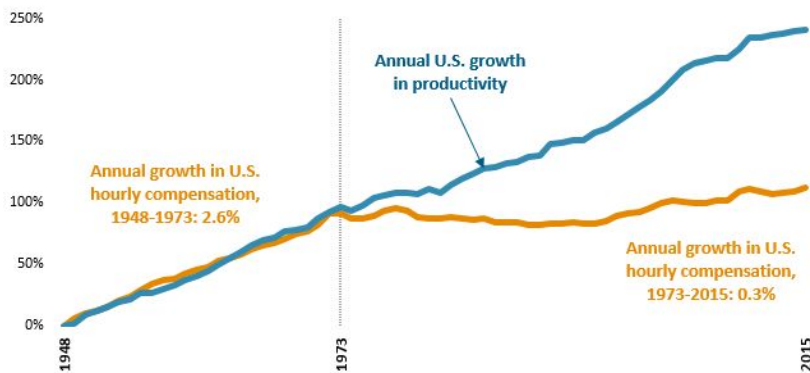
## B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

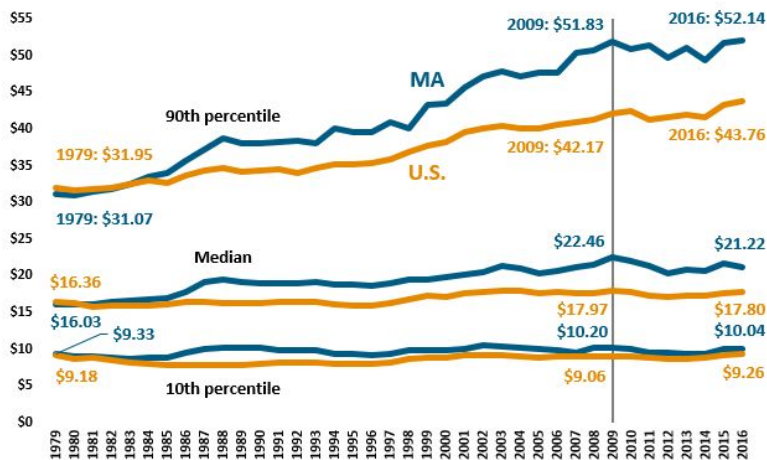
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I will support smart growth and development. Increased opportunities for small business and entrepreneurs that advance workers' rights. The best economic driver is to invest in education for our children, especially for early education and care and for those considered high risk. Strong community prosperity includes affordable housing and a robust transportation system. I do not support non-competes.

**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.).

**Mary Ann Stewart:** In 2013, I personally gathered more than 500 signatures to increase the minimum wage to \$11 and for Guaranteed Paid Sick Leave. See my post in support of workers' rights: <https://maryannstewart.org/2018/03/13/workers-rights>.

**3. Increasing Wages.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** When I taught at Middlesex Community College I was a member of MTA's Adjunct Faculty Union. My husband and I were able to raise our three children in a safe community and send them to good neighborhood schools because of unions. I believe in collective bargaining and I know that unions are the most effective tool available against income inequality.

**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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

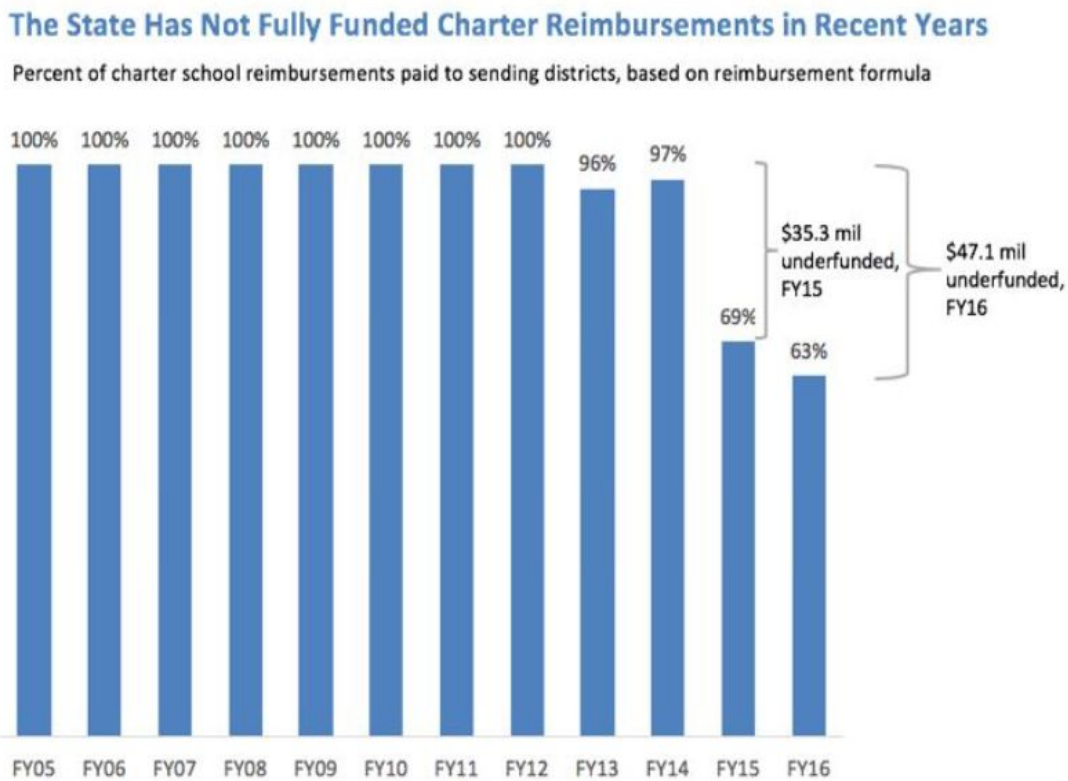
9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

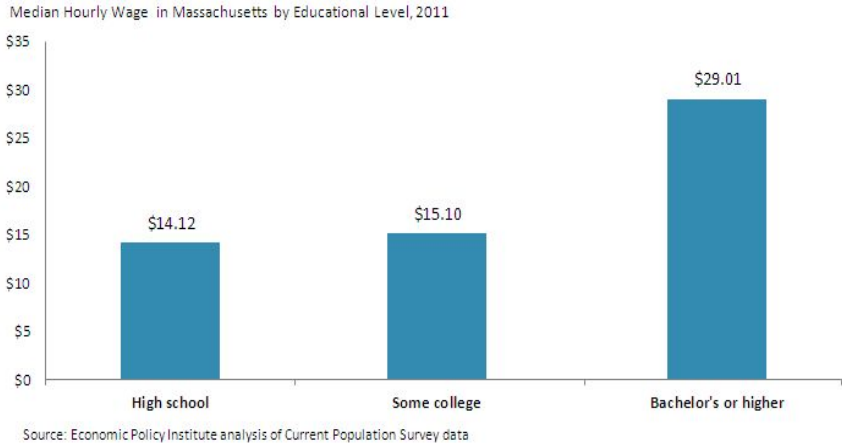
# C. EDUCATION

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.**

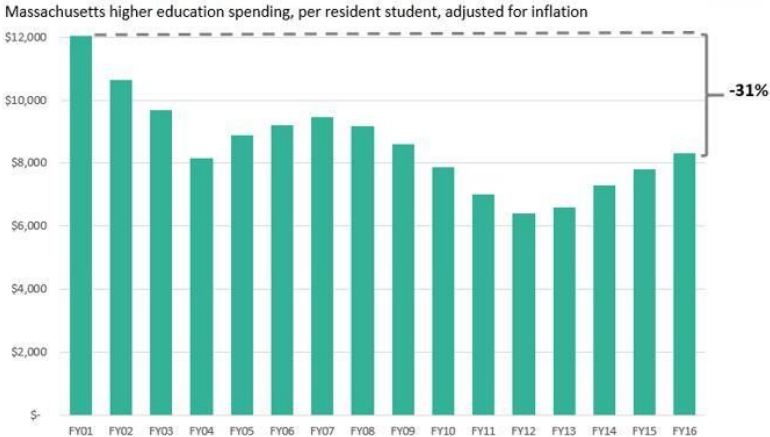


**Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.**



**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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** As the current parent representative on the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, I have not hesitated to speak up for educational equity across the Commonwealth. I support early education and care. Keeping the cap on charter schools. Fair, adequate funding. We must update the Chapter 70 funding formula so that it is reflective of actual costs for students in need of special education, English language education, and for the economically disadvantaged, including an increased percentage for students needing special education in Career/Vocational Technical Education. Ultimately, recalculate the Foundation Budget Formula. Reduced testing. Debt-free Higher Education. I have blogged on these topics many times on <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com>; see <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2015/11/some-reflections-on-boards-vote-for-new.html>; <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2016/03/written-testimony-long.html>; <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2018/01/charter-school-redux.html>; <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2016/12/essa-updates-from-dese.html>; and <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2015/09/public-testimony.html>.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** For over twenty years, I've dedicated myself to speaking up for children and families: for family engagement language in laws; safe, healthy, and technologically advanced schools; and equal opportunity for all children, regardless of socio-economic background. I have provided public testimony to the Joint Committee on Education on a range of education issues, including bullying, reduced testing, the importance of media literacy and eliminating commercialism in schools, and increasing physical education. I have championed adequate funding, arts integration, and opportunities to welcome all families into the school free of language, cultural, and socio-economic barriers. As the appointed Parent Rep on the BESE since 2014, I have learned what it takes to both advocate for progressive change and navigate the body to move forward that agenda. In 2016, I fought hard with MTA, PTA, & PDM to defeat Question 2. It's that, with my years of experience fighting for our community, that I will bring to the legislature. As member and chair of Massachusetts PTA's Federal and State Legislative Affairs, I've attended every legislative conference sponsored by National PTA between 2006-2015, taking the fight for better funding for education, IDEA, SNAP, and more to members of our Congressional Delegation in DC. I've maintained an active blog since my years on the Lexington School Committee, blogging on local, state, and national issues since 2009, much of it on education; it also includes letters and public testimony going back to 2006.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** The use of high-stakes test for such things as student promotion, high school graduation, etc., is a questionable practice. However we do need a process by which to understand the impact of all the testing being done in classrooms. I will continue to challenge common narratives about testing, accountability, and achievement to ensure students are safe, healthy, engaged, challenged, and supported.

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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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**?

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

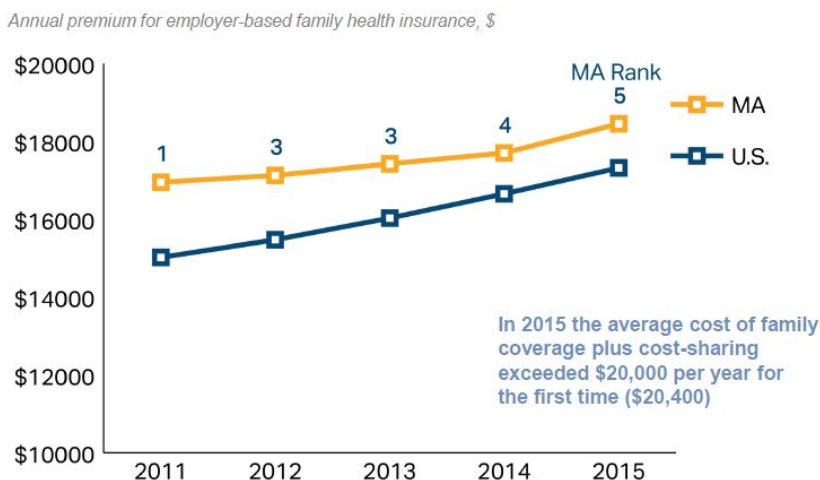
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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.*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Access isn't healthcare. Access isn't insurance. Access is cash. If you have the cash, you can afford healthcare. We need affordable healthcare for everyone. Everyone deserves affordable, comprehensive dental care and high quality physical and mental healthcare as a basic right, including reproductive healthcare and women's cancer prevention, screening, and treatment, and Publicly administered single-payer options that reduces costs are vital to reducing health care barriers.

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

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Examples include lobbying our Congressional Delegation for the Health Hunger-free Kids Act; testimony before the Joint Committee on Public Health in support of increased recess and physical education in schools and in opposition to commercialism in schools. I worked on revisions of Massachusetts PTA's public policy position statements as Member and Chair of the Federal and State Legislative Affairs Committee.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Yes.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Yes. I unequivocally support a woman's right to choose an abortion.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Yes.

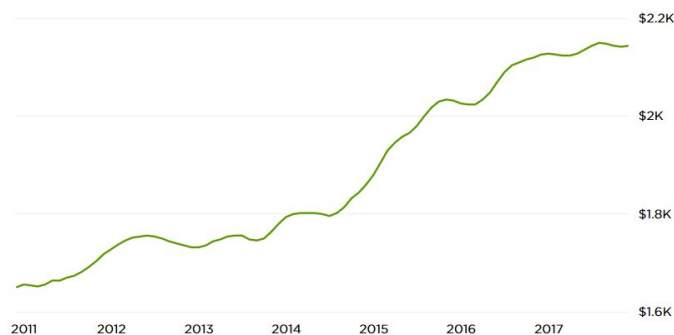


## E. HOUSING

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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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** We need more affordable housing for everyone, including for downsizing seniors and young families. We must address the need for more low and moderate income and affordable housing across the Commonwealth. Policies that support all residents, especially the homeless and those who cannot afford to rent or buy suitable housing. Strong community prosperity includes affordable housing and a robust transportation system. Many people, right now, have a place to live, thanks specifically to Chapter 40B. I personally have benefitted from 40B programs and find great value in them. I will be an advocate for these types of programs and will work with elected officials in Woburn and Lexington to improve housing for the community, and across the Commonwealth.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** When I was on the School Committee I participated in the Homelessness Working

Group and blogged about the work

<https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2014/02/community-matters.html>. Another relevant post is <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2013/11/urban-post-disaster-interim-housing.html>.

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

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

*b. The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

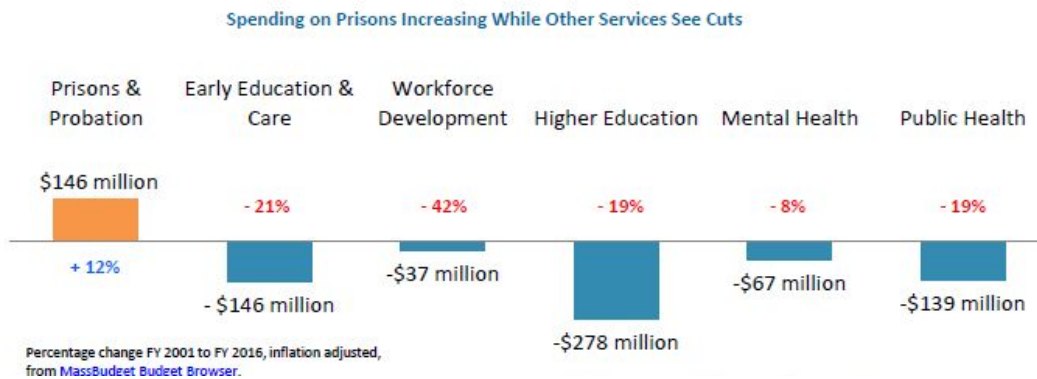
**8. Combating Speculation.** Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

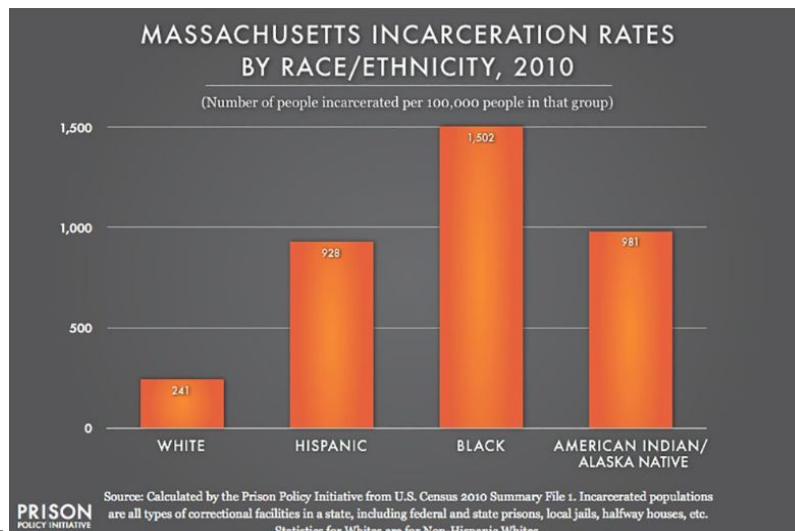
# F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

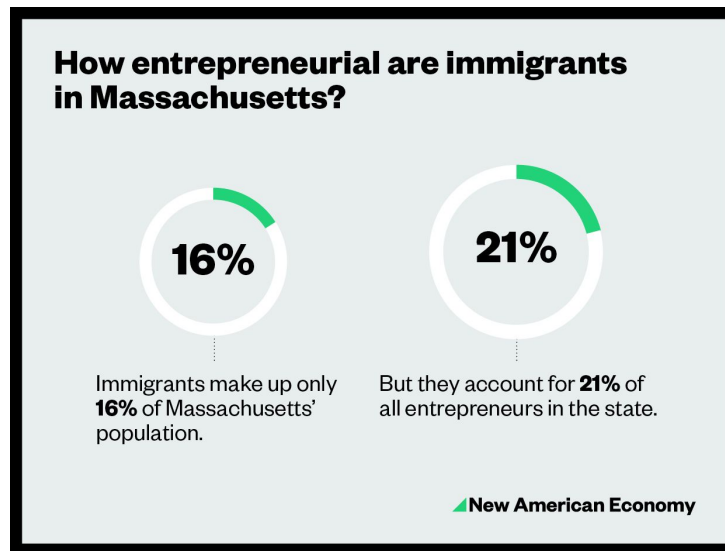
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I strongly support policies and programs that lead to justice and opportunity for all immigrant groups, including refugees and undocumented residents. Massachusetts must welcome all immigrants and refugees, who are integral parts of our community, social fabric, and economy. Support the Safe Communities Act, #MeToo, and #BlackLivesMatter. Opportunity and fairness for people regardless of age, ability, color, race, ethnicity, religion or creed, ancestry or national origin, gender, gender identity or gender expression, or sexual orientation, socio-economic status, including veterans, and homeless youth.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** At Lexington's recent 2018 Annual Town Meeting we overwhelmingly supported a resolution to make Lexington a Safe, Welcoming, and Inclusive Community; I expressed public comment to Board of Selectmen, who were slow to vote on this initiative and had not voted by the time the item had come forward on the agenda. When it did come forward, I spoke in support from the yes mic and my testimony is here: <https://maryannstewart.org/2018/04/05/a-nation-of-immigrants/>.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Yes. Action I have taken on trans rights is here: <https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2016/04/transgender-rights.html>; here: <https://maryannstewart.org/2018/05/27/yes-for-human-rights/>; and here: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BjHIB1fh81R/?taken-by=mastewartma>.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** I've been an elected delegate to the State Dem Convention numerous times. In 2009, I was a delegate to our state Democratic convention in 2009 (Platform Convention) and, with 4 others, ran an amendment from the floor to include a "plank" in the state party platform for "enumeration of bullying incidents of LGBTQ youth/students" (it passed overwhelmingly). As State President of Mass PTA, I facilitated the birth of the LGBTQ Committee -- the first of its kind in any state or national PTA. In 2014, I voted to support the Safe Schools Program on the BESE. In 2016, I wrote to Governor Baker, urging him to speak out for the Transgender Civil Rights Law. Two weeks ago, I submitted a letter to the MM on the importance of upholding that law for our transgender neighbors and youth -- it is published on my campaign website. Being Strong on LGBTQ equality is but one reason I've earned the endorsement of leading statewide progressive organizations in MA -- Mass Alliance and PDM We must strengthen gender and racial pay equity laws and end gender discrimination and domestic violence. I'm committed to opportunity and fairness for people regardless of age, ability, color, race, ethnicity, religion or creed, ancestry or national origin, gender, gender identity or gender expression, or sexual orientation, socio-economic status, including veterans, and homeless youth.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** I'm not alone in having experienced personal loss as a result of this crisis; many of us know a friend, neighbor, or relative who has been affected. The shortage of beds (and the deadly weeks-long waiting lists for them), for substance use disorders in treatment facilities contribute to the current set of challenges in treatment facilities. We need to make sure that people who seek treatment can get it in a timely manner and when it will be most effective. It's time to treat the opioid and heroin epidemics as public health crises with a universal healthcare system that covers substance use prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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)?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** When New England Patriots co-captain Devin McCourty joined the protests first set off by Colin Kaepernick and 'took a knee' during the National Anthem last season, he was making a statement about racial justice issues in the country and the treatment of blacks by law enforcement officials. #BlackLivesMatter

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** See: <https://maryannstewart.org/2018/04/05/a-nation-of-immigrants/> and <https://maryannstewart.org/2018/02/12/melt-ice/>.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

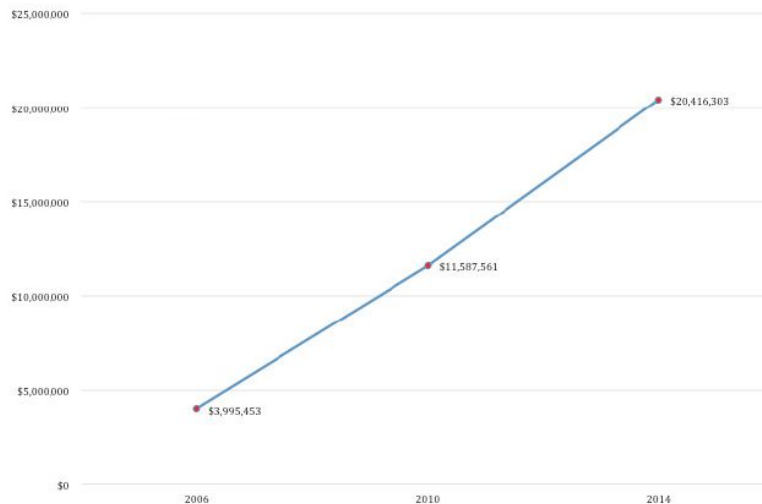
# G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

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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.*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I believe in a government of, by, and for the People — these are among the highest ideals of our country. Government transparency. Support for implementation of a robust public financing plan for politics at every level. Clean elections. Same-day voter registration. Automatic voter registration. Voting is a right. Voter registration should be made as easy as possible. Polls should be safe and accessible. Registration and voting processes should be quick and efficient. No eligible resident should be denied access to the polls.

2. *Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform, legislative rules reform, and access to voting.*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Here are two posts I have written that are related to the topic: Raising a Country (<https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2013/04/raising-country.html>)

and Time to Bring Public Policy and Social Media Together for Progress (<https://mastewartma.blogspot.com/2015/09/time-to-bring-public-policy-and-social.html>).

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** This is one of the defining choices of this election. I'm running for this seat to advance a progressive agenda. To do so requires being effective in getting things done, not just talking about it. Some lead by going first and try to get others to follow them, but I believe the most effective leader is someone who goes where they want to take others and get them to join you there. This is what I have done. If elected, I will strengthen the Progressive Caucus. And, I plan to build coalitions within the Caucus, working closely with other progressives in the legislature -- to be strategic -- to find ways to build relationships and connections with leadership -- and with the rest of my colleagues. Will we have to choose our battles? Likely -- and I will do so carefully. It will take judgement, courage, and leadership. At times, it will be important to speak up and stand up for my values and principles, even if that creates frictions with leadership. But, honestly? If progressives aren't ready to do that at critical moments, then our power is diminished, not enhanced. I will stand up for those values and help pass legislation that moves us forward. I've had experience in striking that balance on the School Committee, on the State Board of Ed, and I'm ready to bring it to the State House, as well. And, because they believe in my proven track record, it's why I've been endorsed by Mass Alliance and PDM -- who say that I will be the strongest, boldest, progressive leader, to do this in the State House.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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"?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

- a. *Election day voter registration*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**



b. *Automatic voter registration*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

d. *No-fault absentee voting*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

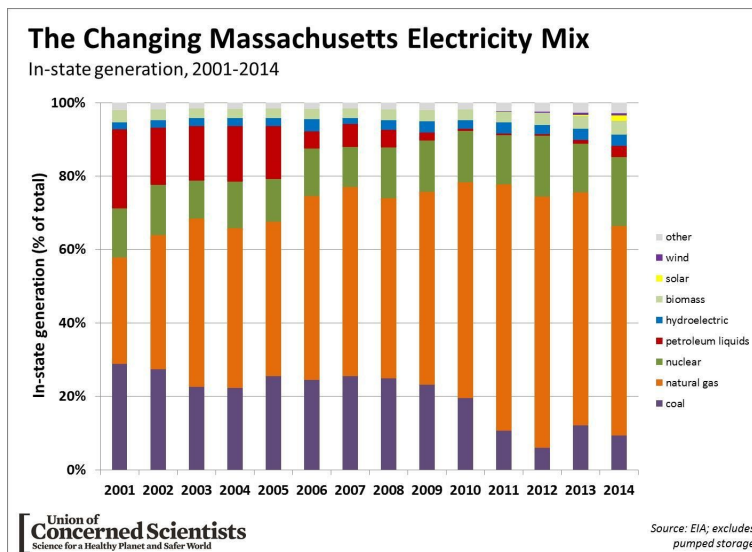
# H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

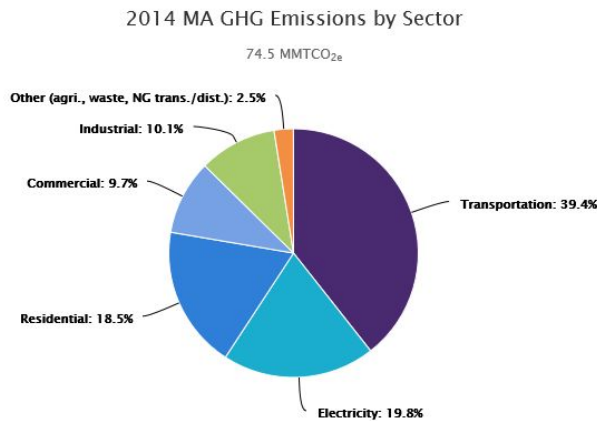
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I support the energy bill currently in the legislature. Climate science is real and we need action to rapidly address climate change. We need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, modernize the grid, accelerate renewables, and quickly transition to 100% renewable energy. We must create responsible policy to protect and sustain our environment and natural resources, strive for Net Zero carbon emissions, and increase opportunities to support green policy in the way we live, build, move. I will be a champion supporter of the Environmental Justice Act and vote in favor of funding for future legislation, whether or not it was in my district. I would invite and welcome an audience with stakeholders working with Department of Public Utilities leadership to listen and work with them regarding how they would implement policies related to the EJ bill, as I have done diving into details on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart:** Over the years our family have been members of Mass Audubon and Drumlin Farm, Trustees of Reservations, and The Arborway Foundation. We support our local Lexington Community Farm with a shared CSA with neighbors and are regular shoppers at the Lexington Farmers Market. I have pledged (with the Sunrise Movement and 350 Mass Action) not to take contributions from the oil, gas, and coal industry and instead prioritize the health of our family's climate and democracy over fossil fuel industry profits. I am one of the ten original signers of the Fair Share Amendment, which would provide funding for improved infrastructure and public transportation across the Commonwealth. Before we were married, I lived in a traditional Zen monastery with my husband where we practiced communal living, which informed an ethos of reducing our environmental impact, starting with our house, which is a smaller lot on the street in a town of manicured lawns and mansions. We eat less meat and drive as little as possible; when we do drive, we try to carpool. My daughter picked an afterschool job where she can walk to work. We live within easy walking distance of local pharmacy, butcher, and grocer, as well as to Wilson Farm and Lexington Community Farm. We compost, maintain a small vegetable garden, fruit trees and berry bushes. We have installed a NEST thermostat in our home and have had a home energy audit. We recycle, free-cycle, upcycle, and consume less, overall.

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** I strongly supported Lexington's warrant article for this at our 2018 Annual Town Meeting.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** Net metering caps limit our ability to fight climate change.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** Increasing the Renewable energy Production Standard to 3% is the best way to get to the climate change 2050 goal we've set for Massachusetts, for 80% reduction in our overall energy use.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** There is no need to expand gas pipelines. Rigorous studies say we do not need them, that they are ridiculously expensive, and harm the environment and the climate.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.** Not only will it get our Commonwealth running on clean energy, it would also be a signal to the market that it's time to invest in renewable energies. This is a critical investment in forwarding a strong green energy policy for our economy and our public health.

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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: Yes.**

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

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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?*

**Mary Ann Stewart: 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.*

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I support #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter.

We must strengthen gender and racial pay equity laws and end gender discrimination and domestic violence.

I will work to support programs to increase economic security for women and communities of color and do whatever I can to increase gender and racial balance on corporate boards, nonprofit boards, and executive and judicial branches of government, including work to recruit and support Democratic women candidates and Democratic candidates of color through mentoring and training programs.

I've been recognized by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America as a candidate who will stand up for gun violence prevention and gun safety. Reducing and preventing gun violence is a public safety issue not a political one. And while Massachusetts has some of the strongest gun laws, respecting rights and protecting people go hand-in-hand. Common-sense public safety measures make our communities safer and save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to address some of the issues and concerns that are important to the members of Progressive Massachusetts.