

Rebecca Stone

15th Norfolk

State Representative

Endorsement Questionnaire

Office Sought: State Representative

Legislative District: 15th Norfolk

Party: Democratic

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Primary: September 4

Election: November 6

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Introduction: Progressive Mass

About

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

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

Membership

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

How Endorsements Work

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

Sources

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

I. About the Candidate

Rebecca Stone

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

Rebecca Stone: I have spent more than three decades as a non-profit leader, policy strategist, and advocate working to improve life for women, children, vulnerable families and communities. Everything I have worked for and care most about is now under assault from the Trump administration, and I am running for office to be part of the persisting, resisting opposition to the threats we face in the Commonwealth and the country.

When Washington abandons the people, our state legislatures become even more important. We need to preserve and build upon the gains we have made in Massachusetts on issues such as gun control, protection of reproductive rights, health care coverage, climate change, and clean energy. But much more can and should be done as well. This is no time to embrace the status quo that has steadily reduced funding for our public schools, for state and local aid, for environmental oversight, for infrastructure and public transportation. Tax breaks to attract corporate giants and a builder's market for high-end development have left our cities and towns struggling to support public education and affordable housing, further widening the gaps between haves and have-nots and hollowing out our middle class. The cost of health care and rapidly rising premiums have individual families, municipalities, and the state in a losing battle to finance both short- and long-term benefit obligations. Last but not least, I am running as a highly qualified woman to address one of the Commonwealth's worst failures as a progressive state: the enduring under-representation of women in elected office. The recent harassment scandals and the chronic neglect of issues essential to economic, gender, and racial equity and advancement, not to mention funding cuts or shortfalls in all areas pertaining to the support of vulnerable families can be tied directly to an overwhelmingly (75%) male State House. Changing the gender balance in our state legislature should be an explicit goal of the progressive movement. This is no time for complacency or being satisfied with the status quo; my priorities focus on making progress in areas too long neglected:

- 1) **Raise Revenues.** We must reverse what has happened to the income tax and raise public revenues if we are going to make real progress on an ambitious progressive agenda for shared prosperity. Every agenda item covered in this questionnaire comes with a significant price tag. We have to budget accordingly and then finance that budget responsibly and fairly.
- 2) **Invest in Social & Economic Equity and Justice.** We need to pass both policies and budgets that support marginalized and/or vulnerable populations and invest early in children and family wellbeing. Those policies include affordable health care (single payer), 0-5 education and supports; affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families, public education that truly serves all families, closing the school-to-prison pipeline, full inclusion of women and people of color in all aspects of life; reproductive rights; and humane treatment of immigrant families.
- 3) **Sustainable Energy & Infrastructure.** While we need to continue to lead on clean energy and CO2 emissions reductions, I want the Commonwealth to lead on a support structure for electric cars,

expanded public transportation that allows municipalities to implement SMART growth principles, climate readiness and long-term infrastructure planning for climate change impacts, and environmental justice so all communities benefit from a cleaner, greener environment.

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

Rebecca Stone: Since graduating from college, I have worked on grassroots action and congressional responsibility for Ralph Nader, spent 4 years working on human rights and foreign policy as a legislative aide in the U.S. Congress, received a M.P.A. focusing on international and domestic human rights and working with women's groups and reproductive rights advocacy abroad and at home, held leadership positions in non-profits focused on early childhood health and education, and systems of support for low-income children, families, and communities, and worked with private philanthropy to advance policy and practice in support of children and families.

My four+ years on Capitol Hill, in particular, gave me a realist's view of both political climate and culture in the legislative arena and the avenues for policy change.

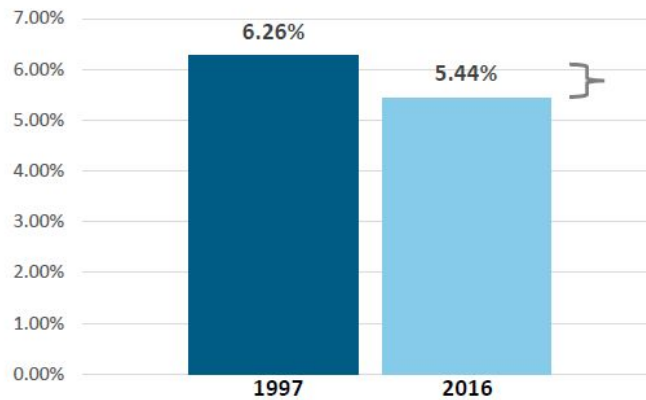
In addition to that broad policy expertise, I have a long commitment to public service in Brookline (2 children through the public schools, 16 years on Town Meeting, 12 years on School Committee including 2 years as Chair). My dozen years on the Brookline School Committee gave me strong relationships with state legislators who represent Brookline as well as insight into how important the State Legislature and carefully crafted legislation is to the healthy functioning of municipalities and especially public school districts.

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.

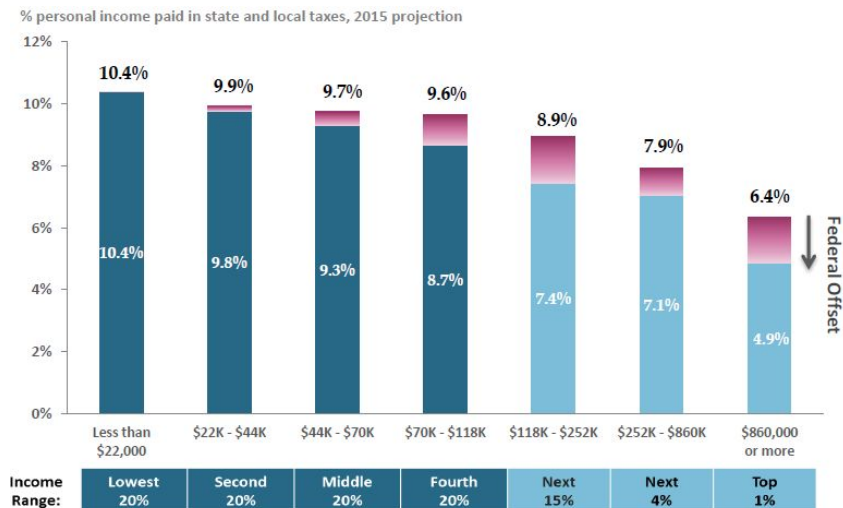
Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: I believe the only way out of this mess is to reverse what has been done re: the state income tax. Raising income taxes and instituting a truly progressive approach is the only long-term solution to the problems described so well in the preamble to the question.

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.).*

Rebecca Stone: I have led two successful Prop 2 ½ override campaigns in Brookline, so I have personally worked to compensate locally for the failures at the state level to realize essential revenues. Part of that effort is public education re: why an override is necessary, and that necessarily includes explanation of state aid reductions over time. I hope this has the effect of bolstering local support for statewide reform of the income tax.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I support the “Millionaire’s Tax.” I also believe reforming and raising income taxes across-the-board (in addition to the Fair Share Amendment) is a better and more equitable long-term solution. My current concern is that the SJC will rule the ballot question ineligible because of the earmarking of the funds, leaving us without the legislative lever of a strong ballot question and without the possibility of a statewide vote.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I have never really understood the sales tax holiday given the clear evidence that it does not boost sales. I do not support extending it.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I would also support repealing tax credits if the promised benefits are not provided. Under certain circumstances, the state should also consider recouping lost revenues if the benefits are not realized within a reasonable timeframe.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

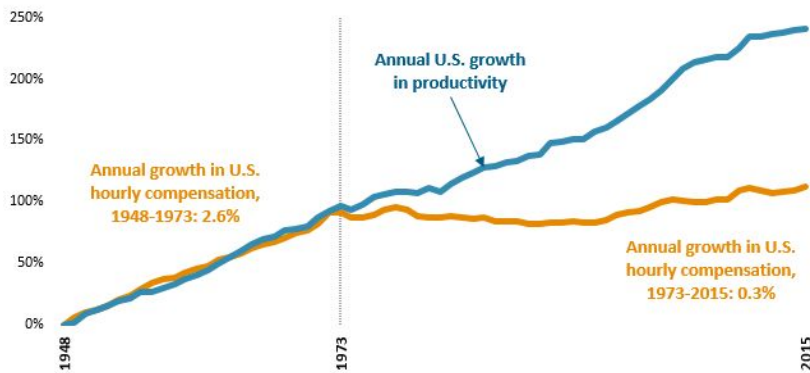
B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

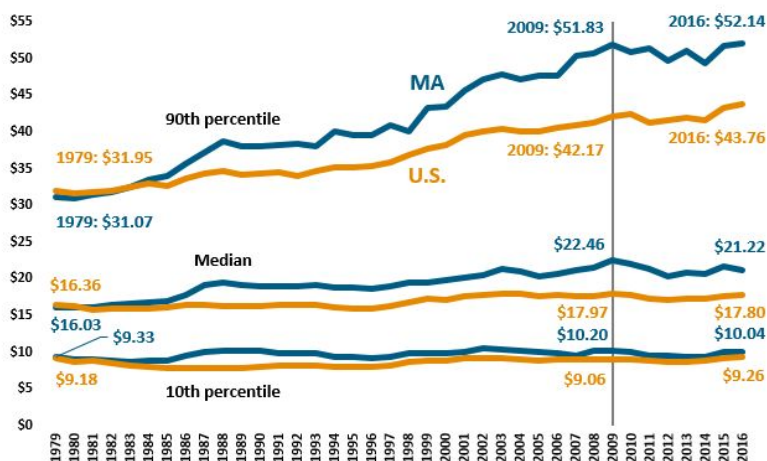
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?

Rebecca Stone: We have to focus investment on areas of job growth such as the green economy, technology, health care, and services for an aging population, not artificially shore up declining industries like coal. We also have to ensure that full-time work yields a livable income, and provide supports to those who lose a job or are temporarily unable to work. Welfare-for-all will significantly reduce the single greatest individual and employer expense, allowing us both to guarantee better health across the lifespan and invest resources where the economy can and must grow.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I support \$15 by 2021 and believe it is a reasonable and achievable goal that will significantly help workers without disrupting hiring and strong employment levels.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. We should be moving away from differentiated minimum wages such as these, and at the very least ensure that hourly wage plus tips is no less than the regular minimum wage. Because I believe the latter is very difficult to determine or enforce, I would favor one minimum wage regardless of tips.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. That's the only way we will avoid repeating the decline of the purchasing power of the wage over time.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I believe in equal pay for equal work. There is also a false assumption behind a teen subminimum wage that teens only work to "supplement" other resources or to get work experience. Many are supporting others, paying for school, supporting children of their own, etc.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I have always believed that FMLA was a false and inequitable promise – protecting only those who could afford to take time away from a job without pay. As someone who struggled after the birth of my first child (even with no complications) and took time away from work to care for my mother and then my father when they became ill, it is a very personal issue that new parents and adult caregivers be able to afford to provide loving care to a family member without sacrificing everything to do so.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I support the right to organize and will strongly defend it.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I strongly oppose so-called 'right-to-work' laws and believe we must respect and protect collective bargaining. Having participated in collective bargaining several times as a School Committee member and negotiations chair, I know bargaining can be difficult and even contentious, but it remains an essential and fair framework for both workplace advocacy and productive collaboration between administration and public employees. I believe my experience with negotiations makes me a stronger and more credible advocate for collective bargaining especially with those who might seek to weaken it.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I am not familiar with this as a legislative issue. It sounds like something the Attorney General's office should pursue.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

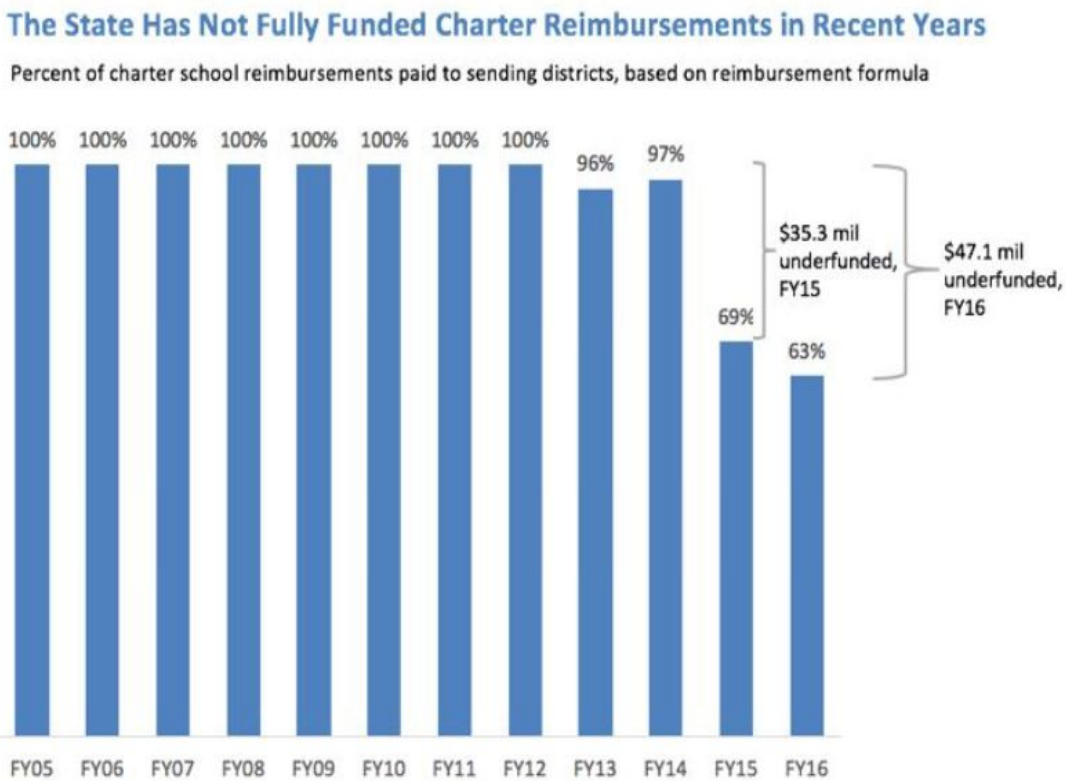
9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

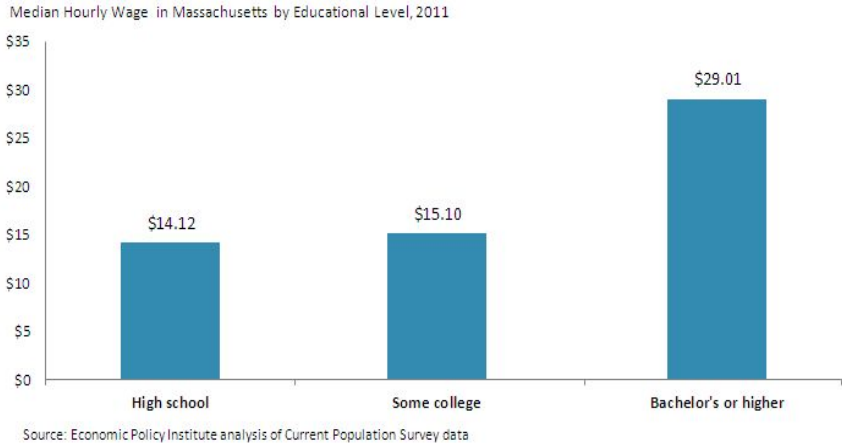
C. EDUCATION

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.

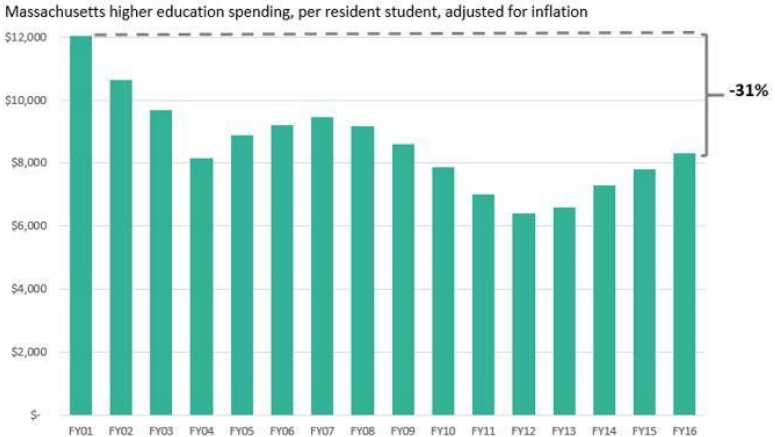


Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.



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?*

Rebecca Stone: I strongly believe that the fundamental goal of American public preK-12 education is to prepare our children for thoughtful, critical, productive, and informed participation in democracy. That participation requires literacy, numeracy, engagement with our own and others' history and culture, understanding of the global context, and appreciation for diversity and broad liberal themes of justice, personal responsibility, and civic engagement. It means encouraging children's natural curiosity which leads to a lifetime of questioning and seeking answers. It means nurturing social engagement and helping children navigate and respect differences of opinion. And it means doing this for all children learning here. All means all.

A commitment to equity is absolutely essential to the promise of public education. Equity is the piece that makes public education an engine of social and economic justice, and our policies should strive to keep educational equity at the heart of everything we do in this sphere.

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

Rebecca Stone: I served on the Brookline School Committee for almost 12 years, chairing the Policy, Government Relations, and Negotiations subcommittees, serving as Vice Chair in 2009, and chairing the Committee from 2010-2012. I am proud to have helped lead the Public Schools of Brookline through their first comprehensive strategic plan, an effort that elevated Educational Equity to a core value of the system and established our mission "to ensure that every student develops the skills and knowledge to pursue a productive and fulfilling life, to participate thoughtfully in a democracy, and to succeed in a diverse and evolving global society."

During my tenure on SC, we invested in participation in the Minority Student Achievement Network to focus our work on creating racially inclusive and safe learning environments. We strengthened a public/private partnership called Steps to Success (begun with Gear Up funding), which has taken college attendance rates of our students in public housing from less than 40% to over 90%. I have advocated for reform of the Foundation Budget and for increased funding for special education services, opposed Charter Schools that drain scarce resources from regular public schools, opposed high-stakes use of testing, and supported the use of data that shines a bright light on structural inequities in our service to students and their success in school. Being a voice for public education that truly serves to advance learning, intellectual growth, and socioeconomic equity is a priority for me as a future legislator.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I am a proponent of universal quality preK, and also of supports for families with children 0-5 – starting with adequate support for women in pregnancy. My concern is that (as we have seen with Head Start as well as full-day Kindergarten), funding will not match the cost of providing quality preK and so we will reproduce some of the inequities across the system in terms of access and quality that we see in elementary and secondary education. That is why my priorities in

Question 1 start with raising revenues.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I have consistently opposed high stakes use of these tests, and I do not support standardized testing in every grade 3-10. I do support some standardized testing to the extent that it helps illuminate areas of strength and weakness across a system -- in particular opportunity and achievement gaps that suggest structural issues (e.g. racism) that require systemic responses. There are many other sources of data, not requiring standardized testing, that contribute to that analysis as well.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. These are issues on which I worked as a School Committee member, especially 1) trying to raise Circuit Breaker funding by lowering the trigger to 3x the regular education cost and adding high-cost special education transportation to the formula; 2) implementing the reforms recommended by the Foundation Budget review committee to better reflect real costs of education (including smaller class size) and reduce inequities between districts; and 3) shifting charter reimbursement away from the sending district's funding.

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**?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. See above.

- 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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. But I do not believe that goes far enough in addressing the problems to our system that charters represent.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. This is essential. Having spent a significant portion of my professional life working on reproductive rights and, in particular, reproductive health and access to care for adolescents, strong sex education is a priority issue for me. I am a big fan of the Planned Parenthood curriculum that is sensitively inclusive of LGBTQ+ students and relationships.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. The public interest is (or should be) having young people achieve their potential. Immigration status is immaterial – we should celebrate their success and help them to keep going.

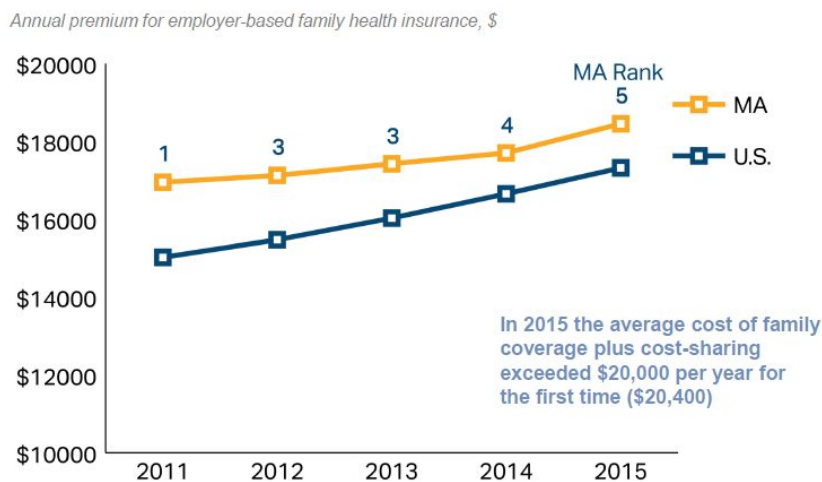
9. *Tuition-Free Higher Education. Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. But too often it is the cost of text books, room & board, and other living expenses that cause disruptions in a low-income or middle-income student's higher education path – even when they have a full tuition waiver. We have to look at the costs of higher education comprehensively to really address the issue of affordability.

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.*

Rebecca Stone: Access to and affordability of health care is one of the biggest challenges we face. Like Climate Change, it affects everyone in the country, we have not invested sufficiently in prevention, and vulnerable populations are disproportionately hurt by our failure to address key problems with access, quality, and cost of care.

In addition, health insurance costs have driven much of the economic instability in municipal budgets as premiums rise, making employee costs significantly higher and creating structural deficits in funding

of long-range pension benefits that include health insurance. As life expectancy increases, so too do the costs of living longer with its attendant physical and often medical challenges, and pension obligation costs rise commensurately. The result is chronic structural municipal and state deficits and chipping away at crucial health benefits to public employees as state and local contracts seek to lower the share of premiums paid by the employer.

At the same time, we are not seeing dramatic gains in overall health. The U.S. still has absurdly high rates of child and maternal morbidity and mortality, heart attack, diabetes, and obesity. These rates soar in low-income populations and especially in African Americans whose health outcomes are further worsened by the effects of racism, less responsive treatment, and stress.

A single-payer, Medicare-for-all health insurance system that gives the government enormous influence over health care costs would dramatically improve all of the economic issues just described. Coupled with a payment system that pays for health outcomes and rewards preventive care rather than paying per procedure, single payer would improve the equity of care by driving care where it is needed, lowering costs, and improving outcomes.

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

Rebecca Stone: As Policy Director at Advocates for Youth years ago, and later at the Ounce of Prevention Fund in Chicago, my work focused on access to and delivery of reproductive health care. I advocated for free contraception, unfettered access to reproductive health including abortion, school-based health clinics that provided comprehensive health care and screenings, and the integration of full-service health clinics with age 0-5 early childhood programs in public housing. I have been a clinic volunteer at Planned Parenthood in both Trenton, NJ and Washington, DC.

As an evaluation consultant to the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, I reported on key success factors in their Child Mental Health initiative (Bridges). That review revealed that lack of funding for mental health services for children and youth and the difficulty of procuring a referral for such services were major obstacles to quality care.

As a Special Programs Consultant for the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation, I developed a \$1.5million initiative trying to bolster home visiting programs with extra interventions focused on reducing maternal distress. That initiative was possible only with the federal funding under ACA that included \$1.5 billion over 5 years for home visiting programs to address deficits in maternal health and child outcomes in low-income communities. We used the results of the initiative to help advocate for early home visiting and insurance coverage for those and other preventive health interventions for women and children.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. See above. This has been a priority area for me professionally and will continue to be a top priority for me as a legislator.

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?

Rebecca Stone: I am not familiar with the term “dental therapist,” but to the extent that they can improve low-cost access to preventive dental care and oral health then YES.

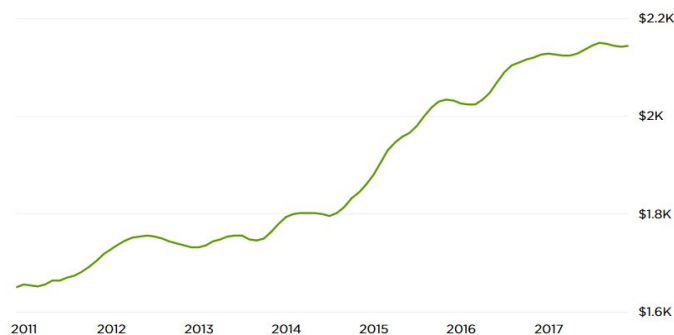
6. *Prescription Drug Pricing.* Would you support a drug transparency law, like the one recently passed in California, that requires pharmaceutical companies to publicly justify steep price increases?

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

E. HOUSING

Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. Although Massachusetts ranked #1 last year in the [US News & World Report's state ranking](#), we were #45 in cost of living and #44 in housing affordability. A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [80 hours a week](#) to afford a modest one bedroom rental home at market rate (and almost 100 hours a week in Metro Boston). Over the last ten years, the need for affordable housing has increased, while funds for affordable housing have decreased at both federal and state levels. The Commonwealth is at risk of losing [14,231 subsidized units](#) by December 31, 2019, as subsidies expire and owners convert properties into market-rate condominiums. Half of families in Greater Boston alone pay over 30% of their income in housing and utilities costs—and over 25% of households pay more than half their income to housing. There is a waiting list of up to ten years for a rental voucher. This is unsustainable. It has led to expanding economic inequality, increased homelessness, and damage to our economy, as talented workers often leave the state for less expensive regions.

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



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

1. *Please share your personal values and principles regarding affordable housing.*

How would you ensure that there is suitable housing for all who need it, within reasonable distance of job opportunities? How would you address the need to link housing, jobs, and transportation? How would you tackle homelessness?

Rebecca Stone: The most stable communities are mixed income and mixed use for residential and business opportunities. Teachers and public safety professionals (i.e. the middle class) need to be able to live near where they work, and as a society we need to embrace economic diversity instead of marginalizing low-income families to substandard housing far from the amenities everyone should be able to access and enjoy. To achieve that, we have to ensure diversity of housing rents and purchase price, pitched to no more than 30% of income.

The incentives for developers, unfortunately, have mostly been in the other direction. Because building costs are hugely dependent on the cost of land, public or affordable housing in “desirable” neighborhoods near public transportation and jobs is difficult to finance and incentives to build market rate housing are significant. We need to make affordable units attractive to builders/developers, and we need to liberalize subsidies to achieve more housing opportunity and diversity.

Homelessness is a related but very different issues. I agree with recent developments in approaches to housing for homeless families, especially, focusing on housing first and on permanent housing with subsidies and supports so that individuals and families can remain in housing even if their income fluctuates with variable job opportunities, problems with child care, etc.

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

Rebecca Stone: While a Senior Researcher at Chapin Hall Center for Children, much of my work (research and writing) focused on comprehensive community building initiatives, looking at how local CDCs could collaborate with social service agencies and grassroots groups to rehab and/or build housing, drive local economic development, and restore economic stability to marginalized urban communities. In particular, I looked at confounding dynamics within these foundation-driven community development efforts that led often to disappointing results, but also what created the most success such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston that pioneered the use of eminent domain to take abandoned lots and build affordable housing.

As a program consultant to the O'Neill Foundation (see earlier discussion of maternal health), I also developed a grant initiative to support better approaches to preventing cycles of homelessness of families.

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

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

- b. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. We should increase qualifying income levels for renters and the maximum subsidy to increase incentives for landlords to participate. Because it allows individuals to choose where they live, Section 8 is a good tool for increasing economic diversity broadly without the stigmatizing effects of a public housing development. The biggest problem is low participation rates by landlords, leading to a significant waiting list.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I supported the CPA in Brookline, but it has yet to pass.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: In general, I favor statewide solutions when local variations can easily lead to inequities from one town/city to the next. If the expiration cannot realistically be postponed state wide, then allowing local municipalities to require affordability makes sense.

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

Rebecca Stone: 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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I would want any such legislation to require evidence of the reasons given as well.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. Inclusionary zoning is essential in the fight for affordable housing. Unfortunately, in Brookline, the otherwise useful 40B has become a sledgehammer, burdening the town with high-density market-rate housing but not enough affordable units to achieve a desirable level of economic diversity. This has been especially difficult as our population of seniors hoping to age in place on moderate fixed incomes increases, and it is costing the town hundreds of millions of dollars as we expand the physical plant of the public schools to accommodate 40% enrollment growth. So I favor the objectives of zoning changes that provide both positive incentives for developers and enough local control to adapt to unique impacts.

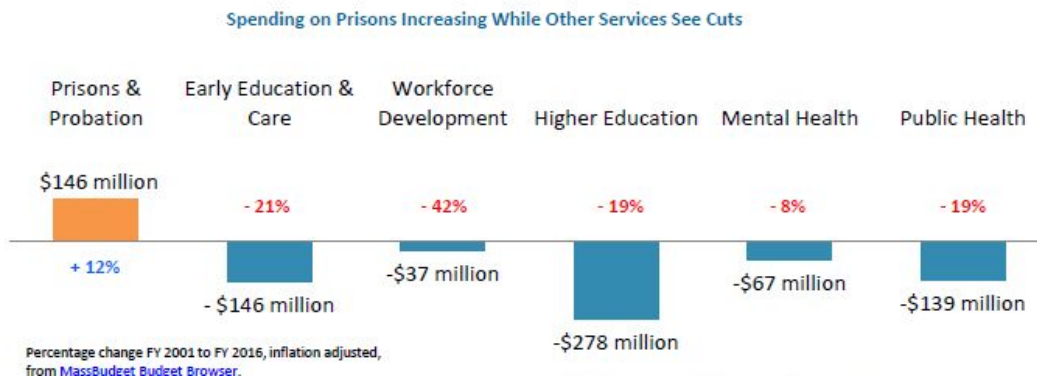
8. **Combating Speculation.** *Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I supported a new effort this year in Brookline to consider a Land Bank that would have contributed to an affordable housing trust fund among other things. I spoke to this issue just last week in Town Meeting. The Land Bank would be financed by a transfer tax on local real estate transactions, so is similar in structure to what is described here.

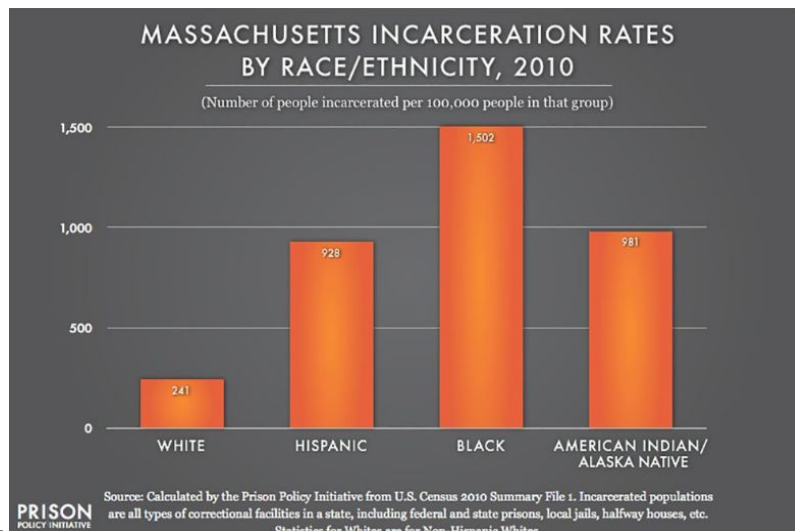
F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

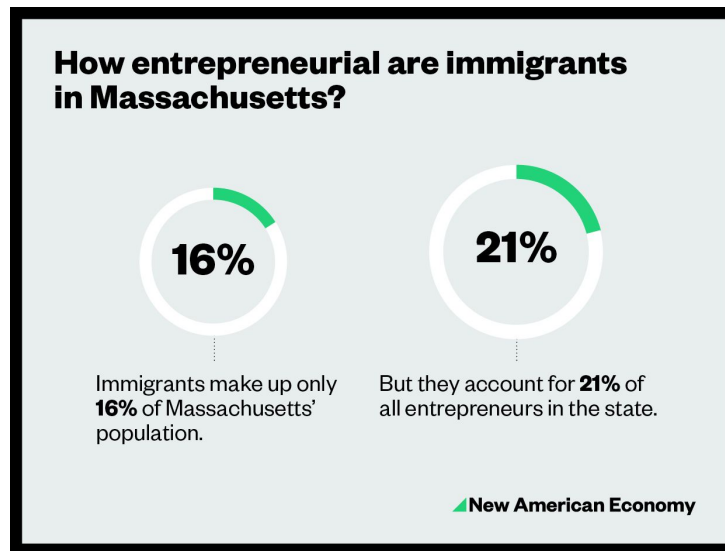
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

Rebecca Stone: I cannot put it better than the questionnaire intro to this section: “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.”

We have miles to go in this regard, however. Discrimination and systemic racism, sexism, and mistrust of “new” immigrants must be addressed every day, at national, state, and local levels. These issues are at the heart of my work professionally and they animate my candidacy.

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

Rebecca Stone: Throughout my career as a policy strategist and advocate, I have worked to amplify the voices of those who struggle to have their voices and opinions heard, to defend human rights and reproductive freedom, to advance gender, racial, and socioeconomic equity, and to support disadvantaged children, youth, and families.

In response to attacks on immigrants and immigrant rights in Arizona and elsewhere (several years ago), I sponsored a warrant article in Brookline Town Meeting to extend local voting rights to permanent legal residents (green card holders). [The article passed, but the Legislature did not act on the home rule petition it authorized.] I still believe that extending local voting rights is a step we should take as part of embracing immigrants and combating the idea that those without full citizenship are somehow “other” or “less than” in our communities.

As a legislative staffer in the U.S. Congress, I went to Nicaragua to document human rights abuses in the U.S.-backed guerilla war. In 1985, I was with Kim Dae Jung (later elected president) when he returned to South Korea in defiance of the military dictatorship.

After working with women’s organizations in the barrios of Lima, Peru during graduate school, I began focusing my work on women’s rights and reproductive health. I have since been a clinical volunteer, pregnancy options counselor, and patient escort at Planned Parenthood. I was Policy Director at

Advocates for Youth, lobbying for school-based health clinics and advocating against parental consent restrictions on teen access to abortion and other reproductive health care.

At Chapin Hall (see discussion of housing above), my research on community building initiatives included authoring a report on race, racism, and power imbalances that drove dynamics of those initiatives.

When I was a School Committee member and leader, working to eliminate structural inequities was the top priority in our data analysis, policy development, and budgeting.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. It seems every time there is an issue of basic human rights and dignity, someone creates a furor about bathrooms. The same thing happened with the ERA. It was ridiculous and wrong in that case, and it's just as ridiculous and wrong in this case.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: 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?*

Rebecca Stone: 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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I support raising the age of criminal majority, but more than that believe we have to strengthen the juvenile system with diversion programs that reduce incarceration.

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)?

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I agree that the statutory rape should not be applied when there is consensual sex between minors. I am not well enough versed on the issue to say an exception for “close in age” is the best legislative approach or what age gap would be the right interval.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

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

Rebecca Stone: 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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. Brookline Town Meeting debated this issue on May 29, 2018. I hope the study committee that will now take it up will consider this requirement in its recommendations.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. The abuses of ICE enforcement have been sickening, especially the separation of children from their mothers/parents. Brookline was one of the first sanctuary cities, and I strongly support limits on cooperation with ICE and will oppose any registry that singles out religious or ethnic groups.

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?*

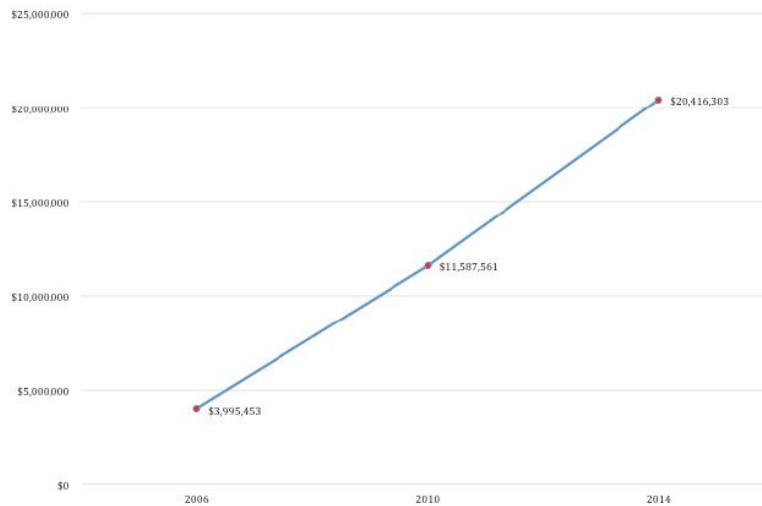
Rebecca Stone: Yes. As the name implies, our priority should be safety on the roads, and that means drivers who are licensed.

G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

The influence of big money in politics is detrimental to democracy. Independent expenditures in MA elections have grown by a factor of five over the past decade. A centralized power structure on Beacon Hill, is undemocratic, and makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine the system. A strong democracy requires an engaged electorate, but voter turnout in midterm elections, and especially local elections, remains low. Myths about voter fraud are peddled in order to justify voter suppression. The Election Modernization Act of 2014 helped eliminate Massachusetts’s embarrassing status as one of the ten worst states in terms of voting rights, but there is still much work to be done.

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

Figure 1: MA Independent Expenditure Totals



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

Rebecca Stone: I often describe my overall philosophy as “good government.” I believe that elected representatives should be responsive to the people, and not to corporations. Almost everything about modern campaigning (television and radio, polling, technology, etc) has dramatically increased the cost of campaigns and the focus of those in elected office on continual fundraising.

It is ironic that voter turnout is so low especially in the local races where every vote does matter tremendously and where the enacted policies affect daily life to the greatest extent. I support Automatic Voter Registration and election-day registration, but that leaves unaddressed the idea of voter turnout. I believe that low turnout is more about the disconnect between people and policymaking that affects them, and we need to work on addressing that as well.

As I said in the section on public education, I believe the first priority for public education is to give young people the tools they need to participate thoughtfully in a democracy. That engagement, plus voter turnout at significantly higher levels, is what we need to shift the spheres of influence from those with the money cash to those who vote.

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

Rebecca Stone: In my first job out of college, I worked as a researcher and newspaper writer/editor for Ralph Nader's Congress Watch. A top issue for us at the time was the influence of money on Congress, and we released numerous reports on PAC money and its influence.

I support the effort to overturn Citizens United, but I have worked on this issue for long enough to know that campaign finance corruption did not begin with C.U., and it will not end if it is overturned. Without changing the laws about private contributions fundamentally and creating a real path to public financing, the undue influence of campaign contributions will likely continue.

That said, I took the #nofossilfuelmoney pledge and support efforts to unseat those who have been recipients of NRA funds or other help. I continue to support transparency in reporting on campaign finances and will support that as a legislator.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: I support rules that expand the opportunities for legislators to serve in leadership roles. To that end, I favor the ability of a committee's majority and minority parties to elect their leaders from their membership. Trust and respect are important to committees functioning well, and the ability to elect leadership from within the committee is the best guarantee that the chair has the respect and trust of their members. I was honored to be elected by my colleagues to be Chair of the Brookline School Committee in 2010 and 2011.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I believe transparency fuels a stronger democracy and lack of transparency is one reason voters are disaffected.

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

Rebecca Stone: 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”?

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I would also support allowing parents in elected office to continue to be able to access those funds for child care while in office.

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

a. *Election day voter registration*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

b. *Automatic voter registration*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

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

Rebecca Stone: Maybe (I think this is covered if we have no-fault absentee voting).

d. *No-fault absentee voting*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

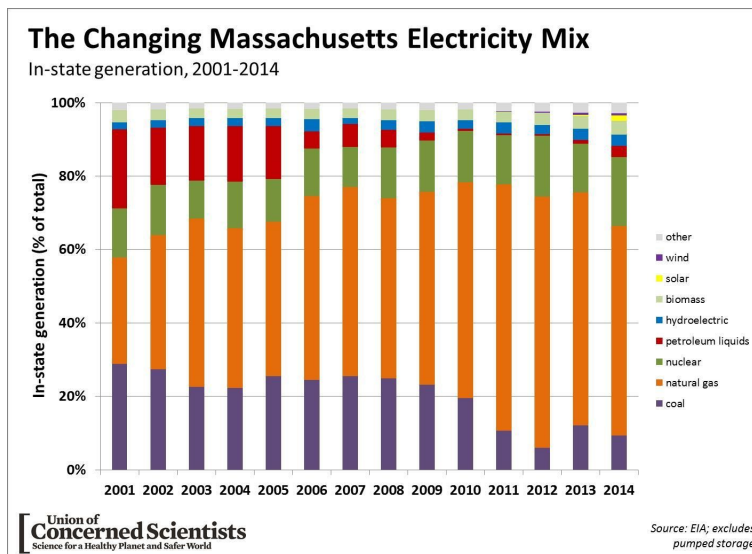
H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

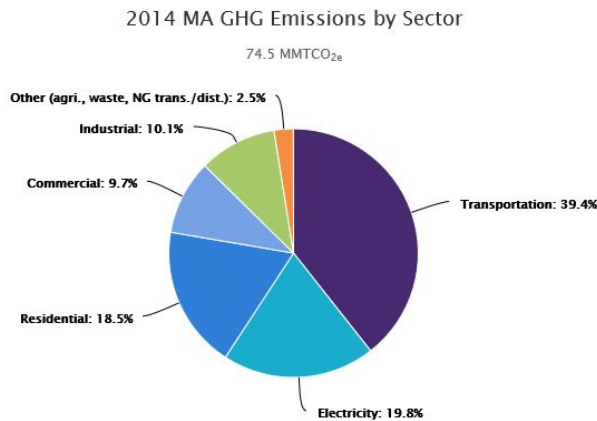
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and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

Rebecca Stone: My top priorities in this area are 1) budgeting to meet climate & environmental goals, 2) climate readiness and resilience, and 3) environmental justice.

In both Washington and in Massachusetts, even when there is a will among the population to take bold action on the environment, the budget “way” to solve the problem lags behind promises. We need the legislature not just to set ambitious environmental goals, but to set up budgets that enable us to meet those goals.

In Massachusetts, that means committing no less than 1% of the annual budget to staff environmental oversight, with renewed attention to our Superfund site clean-up, lead abatement, and methane gas leak repairs to reduce toxic contamination especially in lower-income communities where these hazards threaten public health and safety.

To stay on track for renewable energy targets, we need to find a way for offshore wind to be politically feasible so that it becomes a good financial investment, especially given the limits of locally-sourced solar in the New England geography and climate. Investments in a public transportation infrastructure run on electricity will reduce transportation-related CO₂ emissions and improve worker access to job growth sectors, including those in an expanding green economy.

Both the Boston waterfront, coastal communities, and inland water resources must focus more heavily on climate adaptation and resilience, making them secure against the continuing rise in precipitation and more severe weather.

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

Rebecca Stone: While this is not where my professional or political life has focused, I publicly advocated for West Station to be built in the first phase of the I-90 Interchange project, and for long-term climate readiness to be a higher priority in all infrastructure planning. I am personally committed in my home to renewable energy use, recycling, and composting, and my husband commutes to work by bicycle.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I far prefer a statewide ban to individual local bans that can disadvantage independent local businesses in the short term. I voted yesterday in Brookline Town Meeting to ban polystyrene and other non-biodegradable plastics used in food service and packaging as well. Hope the legislature will not wait too long to follow suit.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: 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?*

Rebecca Stone: 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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. See above regarding the need to budget for this implementation. That is the only way to make good on these promises.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I think we should be using funds to repair the thousands of leaks in the current natural gas infrastructure that poisons the air and trees and exaggerates supply deficiencies.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

I think carbon pricing has potential for further reducing emissions and would like to learn more about it.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes.

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

Rebecca Stone: Yes. Improving public transportation options, and requiring expansion of an all-electric fleet on the roads, is an essential element of the state's plans for environmental sustainability and economic growth and fairness.

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?*

Rebecca Stone: Yes. I support local control over budgeting and revenue-enhancing approaches. However, I think we need to see what the SJC rules on the Fair Share Amendment ballot initiative before moving ahead with others that pre-determine allocation of state revenues.