

*Sarah Hewins*

**2nd Plymouth**

**State Representative**

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*Endorsement Questionnaire*

**Office Sought:** State Representative

**Legislative District:** 2nd Plymouth

**Party:** Democratic

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

**Twitter:**

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



**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://www.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://www.massbudget.org)).*

# I. About the Candidate

## Sarah Hewins

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

**Sarah Hewins:** For the past 15 years, I have been frustrated as a local elected official with the lack of response, cooperation, and interest from our current Representative. We have issues of education reform, environmental, economic, and overdevelopment issues associated with the downturn in the cranberry industry, aquifer protection issues, and affordable housing that cannot effectively be addressed at the municipal level and are not being addressed at the district level. My priority issues are dealing effectively with the opioid epidemic and helping all of the victims it has claimed, Chapter 70 educational funding reform, and transportation infrastructure. I am also very concerned with protecting our environment and family farms and providing affordable housing that respects all residents.

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

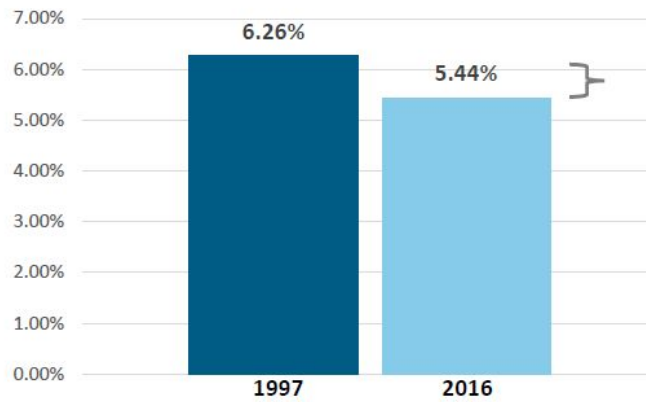
**Sarah Hewins:** I am in my fourth consecutive term as Selectman in the Town of Carver, was an elected Planning Board member twice (10 years), and served as the town's Conservation Agent for 15 years. I have run a small business for more than 25 years. Over more than 20 years as an elected official, I have worked extensively with our previous State Representatives and our State Senator to get real, effective results for residents, our environment, our family farms, and our local economy. I am proud to say that over 20 years as an elected official I have come through on every single promise I made to voters. I earned a Ph.D. in Sociology of Community from Princeton University. I co-founded and served as Executive Director of Young Peoples' Alliance of Carver (YPAC), Inc., and currently serve on the board of directors of South Shore Community Action Council, Inc. I preserved 600 acres of land, established requirements for affordable housing that respects all residents, built the town's first playground, and have volunteer-read to toddlers at the public library for the past 22 years. Thirty years ago, as Environmental Co-Chair of the League of Women Voters of Mississippi, I formed a coalition of sportsmen, environmentalists, and state government to preserve hundreds of acres of wetlands in the Mississippi delta.

# 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.

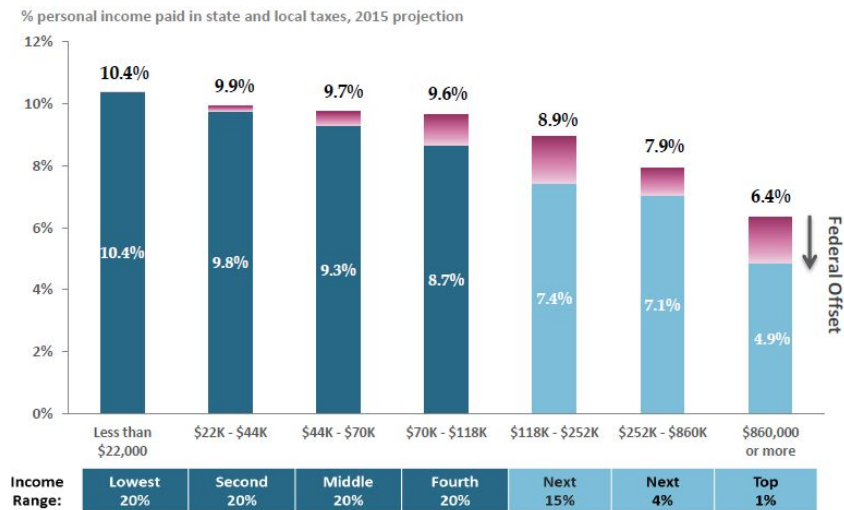
**Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.**

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?*
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.).*

**Sarah Hewins:** As selectman, I have been part of our town's successful payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program for solar projects, bringing revenue to the town on solar projects that generate clean energy without shifting the cost of their depreciation to residents, as would be the case if these projects were taxed as personal property. I spearheaded the ultimately successful program to have our town accept the Community Preservation Act at the highest (3%) level. I ensured that lower-income and elderly individuals could exempt themselves from this surcharge and that other individuals would be able to deduct \$100,000 from their assessed property value prior to calculation of the surcharge. The cumulative effect is that CPA—as applied in our town—is not a regressive tax in that its costs are shifted toward individuals with higher incomes and higher property values.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Unfortunately, the millionaires' tax has been taken off the table, at least for the time being. This is unfortunate, because many highly-compensated individuals supported the tax, research indicates that such a modest tax surcharge does not cause individuals to relocate out-of-state to avoid the tax, and voters appeared to support the legislation. The legislature should revisit the Supreme Judicial Court's decision and craft alternate legislation that can pass the Court's muster. Tax revenues are fungible and a Fair Share Amendment that avoided explicit earmarks for the funds should succeed, and I would support and sponsor such legislation.

In the interim, it would be reckless to recommend cuts to personal income and sales tax until the Commonwealth's financial house is in order, major infrastructure initiatives are underway, and the rainy-day fund is fully funded.

4. *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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** My husband and I have run a small business as a type C Massachusetts corporation for more than 25 years, and our reporting requirements are extensive even though we are a two-person operation. An incremental requirement for all corporations to report benefits would not be a significant bureaucratic expense, since all benefit costs are already tabulated and reflected in corporate expense filings, taxes, etc.

5. *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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Yes, but I would prefer not to link responsible corporate conduct to a tax break. All companies must now pay a minimum wage, adhere to government-specified safety regulations, follow such environmental regulations as remain under the current administration, etc. Corporate

responsibility should be extended to cover a living (rather than minimum) wage and at least basic health and family leave benefits. The legislature has shown us recently that it is willing to act on these issues; it should continue in that direction. We may also find that corporations will be more supportive of single-payer and other government solutions if the alternative is that they provide these benefits. In short, I feel that companies should not receive tax breaks for responsible behavior; they should earn them for undertaking an endeavor that benefits the public.

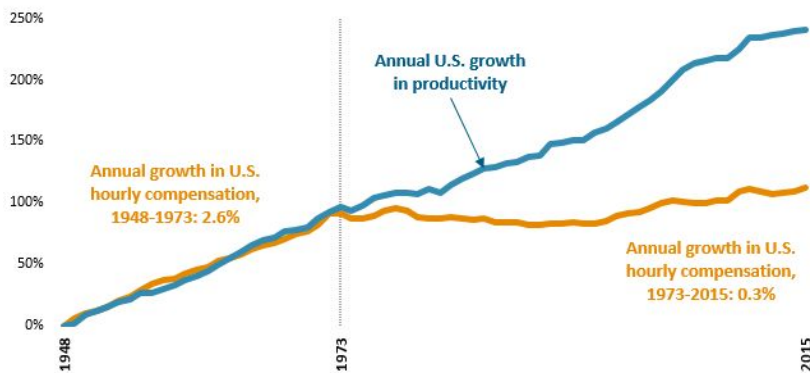
## B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

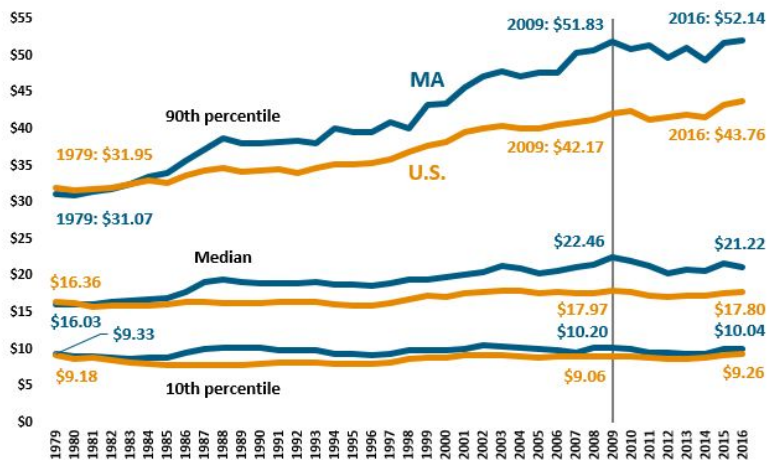
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Locally, I am focused on saving our small family farms, and attracting jobs related to renewable energy.

**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. Fair Wages.** *Do you support eliminating the subminimum wage for tipped workers in support of one fair wage?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** As I mentioned above, my subminimum wage as a waitress was never adequately offset by tips. Recent legislation at the federal level has gone further and allows employers to confiscate tips that patrons intended for servers.

**4. Paid Vacation Time.** *The US is the only advanced economy that does not guarantee workers paid vacation time. Would you support legislation to require that employers provide at least 10 days of paid vacation time per year?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

**5. Unions -- Part I.** *If workers in Massachusetts make the decision to unionize, would you be willing to publicly support a union-organizing drive and discourage management from fighting their decision?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** I was the Town of Carver's Conservation Agent—one of the town's non-unionized, at-will department heads—from 1999 to 2014. From 2009 to the present, I have also been a Selectman. In the spring of 2013, I spearheaded an attempt by the department heads to unionize due to a hostile working environment caused by the elected Board of Selectmen in place at that time. Although our effort to join AFSCME was eventually unsuccessful, I was involved in the effort until it became a lost cause.

**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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Particularly in the context of the current political environment and the recent SCOTUS Janus decision, I would support increased protections for collective bargaining, would not support weakening or temporary exemptions of their enforcement, and would oppose any attempt to implement "right to work (for less)" legislation.

7. **Unions -- Part III.** *In the 2018 Janus ruling, the US Supreme Court banned unions from collecting "fair share fees," i.e., fees that workers whose workplaces are they choose not to join the union. Would you support legislation authorizing unions to charge non-members for the specific costs incurred for representing a non-member in a grievance or arbitration case?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** The dark money-funded "my pay my say" propaganda neglects to mention that those who opt out of paying their fair share may have to bear the consequences of that decision. I would support allowing unions to have their own version of my pay my say. Additionally, if those who opt out of supporting their union are so opposed to the concept of collective action, they should also have the opportunity to negotiate their wages and benefits directly with their employer.

8. **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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** When our business subcontracts to others, we are legally held to the same responsibilities as the subcontracting primary business, and we are required to provide periodic documentation that we are in compliance.

9. **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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Along with "non-compete" agreements, mandatory arbitration agreements are the most heavily prejudiced practices employed against working people. If a corporation can limit the downside cost of illegal conduct, there is very little practical (ethics aside!) reason to avoid such behavior.

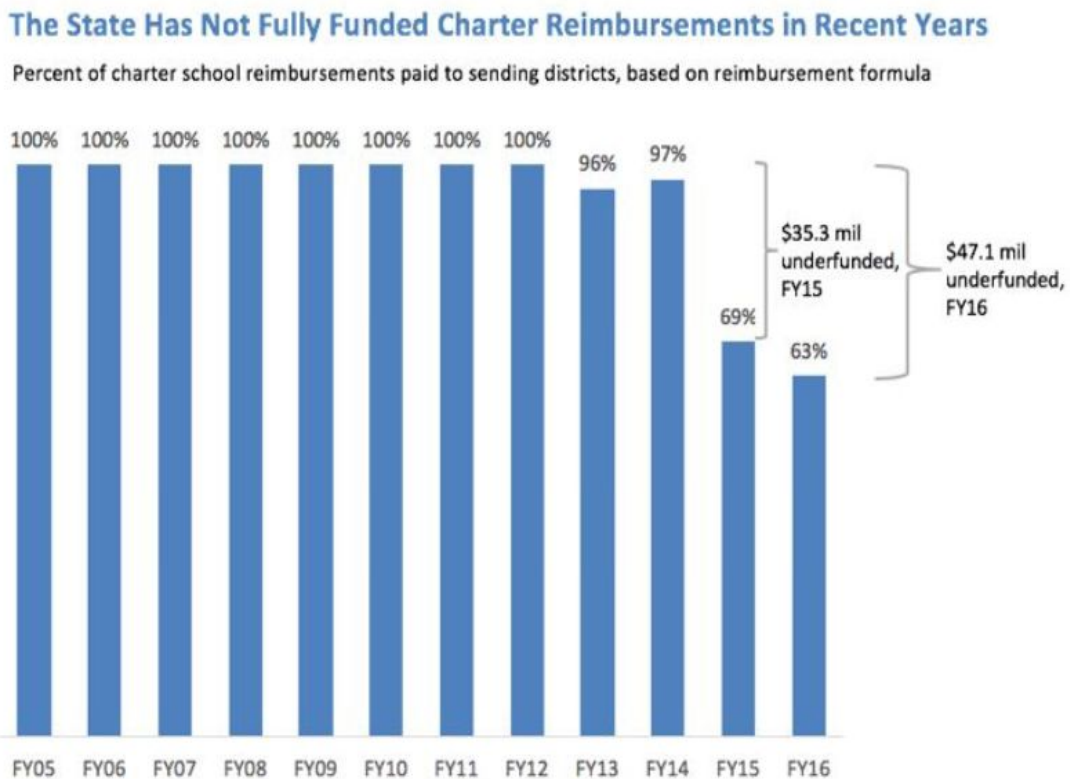
10. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

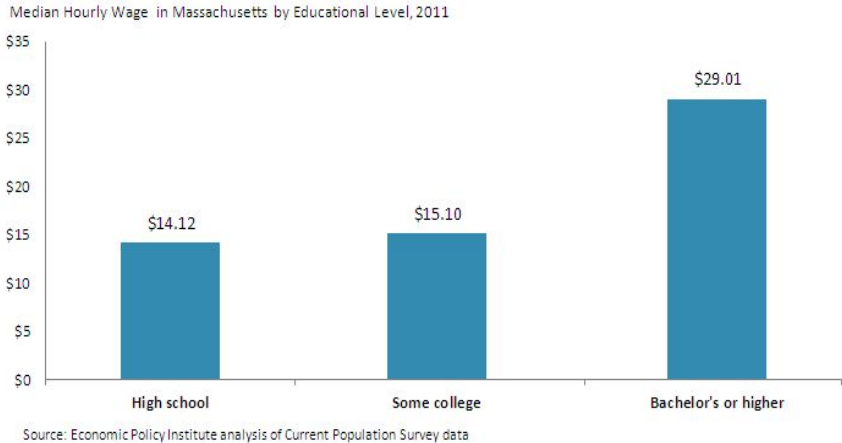
## C. EDUCATION

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.**

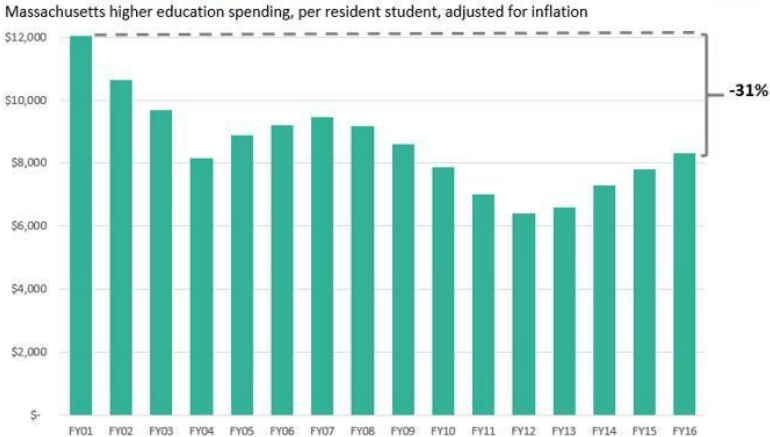


**Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.**



**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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** As a candidate in 2016, I was a strong partner of the Mass Teachers Association in opposition to Question 2. As a Selectman, I was a strong and eventually (after three attempts!) successful advocate for funding construction of a new elementary school. I also wrote CPA grants totaling \$2,000,000 to help make the school more affordable to residents. As Conservation Agent for the town, I taught classes on environmental issues to elementary school children and conducted outdoor classes in our local environment to middle school and high school students.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** Many years ago, I volunteer-taught poetry to children at an inner-city public school in Philadelphia. I was a co-founder and volunteer Executive Director of the Young Peoples' Alliance of Carver (YPAC), Inc., a non-profit after-school program for Carver's youth that involves the whole community. To quote YPAC's motto: "YPAC' goal is to build a community network in Carver that will provide a safe haven with appropriate, monitored programs that will enable young people to reach their greatest potential. YPAC means a reduced chance our children will make bad life choices; a reduced chance they will take unhealthy risks; a reduced chance for drugs or alcohol to end their childhoods.

For the past 22 years, I have been the volunteer reader at the Carver Public Library's toddler story hour. I take the opportunity to help these children (and their caregivers!) to learn to love reading, become familiar with the library, and to expand their horizons with stories about the natural world, other peoples and cultures, and generally to help them to prepare for school and citizenship.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** 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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes.

5. *Equitable Funding. Do you support changing the Chapter 70 Education formula, including the Foundation Budget, to incorporate proper state funding for ELL students, Special Education students, transportation costs, charter school reimbursements to sending schools, and class size reduction?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes. One of my major campaign positions—and one of the major reasons I'm running for State Representative—is to fix our broken Chapter 70 funding formula for public education that rewards wealthy communities at the expenses of less wealthy communities (like the communities that comprise the 2nd Plymouth district). This is an issue I have tried to work with our current Representative, but she has shown little interest.

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**?

**Sarah Hewins: 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?

**Sarah Hewins: 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?

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** All my experience with young people (see above) indicates that they need more, medically-accurate information and access to responsible guidance to make important life choices.

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** People's immigration status should not deny them access to a future. The best way to prevent brain drain is to give people the means to an education in this country.

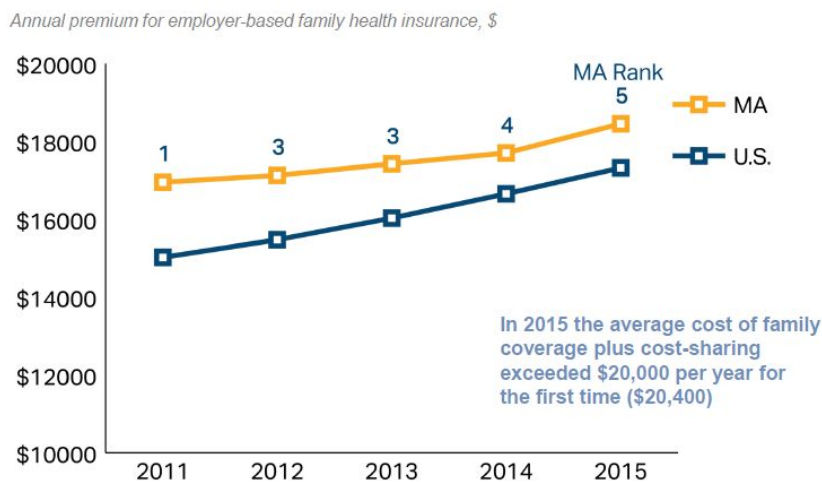
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** However, I recently had a nuanced discussion with Beata Coloyan of the Hildreth Institute, where we amicably agreed that I would not sign their pledge, but would nevertheless be a strong supporter of their goals. My short answer is that I fully support tuition-free higher education, but as an experienced elected official who has had a legal responsibility to produce a balanced budget every year for the last ten years, I would want to identify funding sources in support of that goal. A pledge that does not address practicalities is a wish, not a policy statement.

## 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.*

**Sarah Hewins:** I feel that health care is a right.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** As Selectman for the Town of Carver, I ensured that the share of health care premiums would not increase for employees who have had a certain number of years of service and had

committed themselves to their jobs based in part on that promise. I dissuaded my fellow Selectmen, who were ready to increase employees' share of health care from 25% to 50%, by shaming the other Selectmen into an understanding that to do so would be a betrayal to those employees who had worked for so long with the promise of 25% / 75%. The best I was able to do with that Board was to get them to agree that 50% / 50% would apply only to new hires ten years down the road. This would give those who wouldn't be able to retire in ten years' time a chance to relocate so they could keep the benefits they were promised.

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Additionally, we must sponsor legislation to reign in the duplicitous activities of "crisis pregnancy centers" by making their operations completely transparent. We must also require any health insurance issued in the Commonwealth to provide access to free contraception.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: 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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

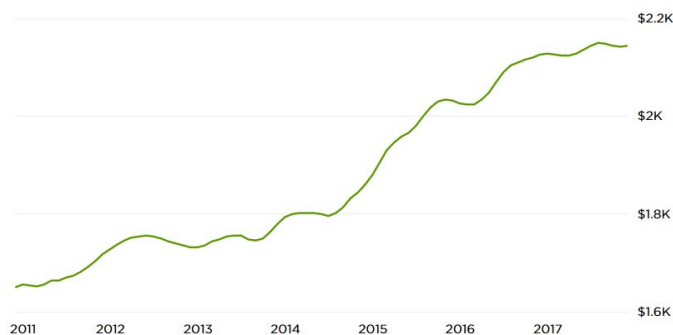


## E. HOUSING

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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?*

**Sarah Hewins:**

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

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

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** But see below my concerns about 40B and successes with integrated affordable housing.

b. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

**Sarah Hewins:** I am not familiar with the program (but will be soon...)

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** After years of effort, I was able to get CPA passed in Carver, at the 3% level. See below additional discussion of my involvement with ensuring that the CPA surcharge was implemented as a non-regressive tax.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** One of my earliest memories is of my family being evicted from our home. I have a deep and very personal association for what it means to grow up poor in America, or at least the America of the '60s and '70s. My mother did a remarkable and heroic job keeping our family together after we were abandoned by my father but having to move more than 30 times growing up, wearing other children's cast-off clothes from the church donation box, and eating "variety meats" that few would consider eating in order to get proper nutrition affects a child's outlook. It also affects the way an adult looks at affordable housing.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Even in its much-reduced form, H. 4142 would have been a practical step forward. Even having ready access to the data it would provide policy makers would be of use. I would certainly try to resurrect the bill.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** However, My experiences on the ground dealing with this issue have lead me to what may be an unpopular position with respect to 40B regulations. Having grown up poor and sometimes homeless, I do recognize the need for affordable housing. But 40B isolates people and circumvents local environmental and planning regulations to everyone's detriment. Housing that integrates income levels also encourages environmental justice. One obvious way to ease problems of environmental injustice is to make environmental issues everyone's immediate problem regardless of income level, but 40B regulations simultaneously encourage division of our communities and

environmental degradation. I am committed both to affordable housing and to the environment. My successful approach while a member of the Planning Board was to draft and pass local zoning regulations that required 10-15% of housing – in projects that required a special permit – to be integrated with and have the same exterior appearance as market-value units. Nobody can point to a neighborhood like that and say, “That’s where the poor people live.” Any environmental issue in such a neighborhood will affect all income levels equally and be more likely to receive attention.

When I received my Ph.D. in Sociology of Community from Princeton University, I was courted by corporations who wanted to capitalize on my expertise to persuade residents (mainly in low-income neighborhoods) on behalf of these corporations to accept building projects and policies that were profitable for the corporations but against the residents’ interests. I turned them all down (with prejudice) and have instead devoted myself to building coalitions to protect people’s interests. With respect to walkable development, as Conservation Agent and Selectman I worked for many years with our DPW Superintendent Bill Halunen to obtain federal funding for an upgrade to Rt. 58 through the center of Carver. A major part of the upgrade installed sidewalks that connected the town center (town hall, playground, library, post office, shops, etc.), the middle-high school, elementary school, and recreational fields into a safely-walkable whole.

I serve as chair of the Municipal Playground Committee that built the town’s first playground. We sited the playground next to the library so that visitors to the playground would be able to use the library’s facilities. We designed the playground to bring residents of all ages together. Play structures for children and their caregivers of course, but also exercise stations, walking trails, and game tables to encourage all residents to meet and engage with each other. I was also careful to reserve enough space on the property to allow an additional municipal building on the site. This is now likely to become the location of a new Council on Aging facility, which will encourage further interaction and community of visitors to the COA, playground, and library.

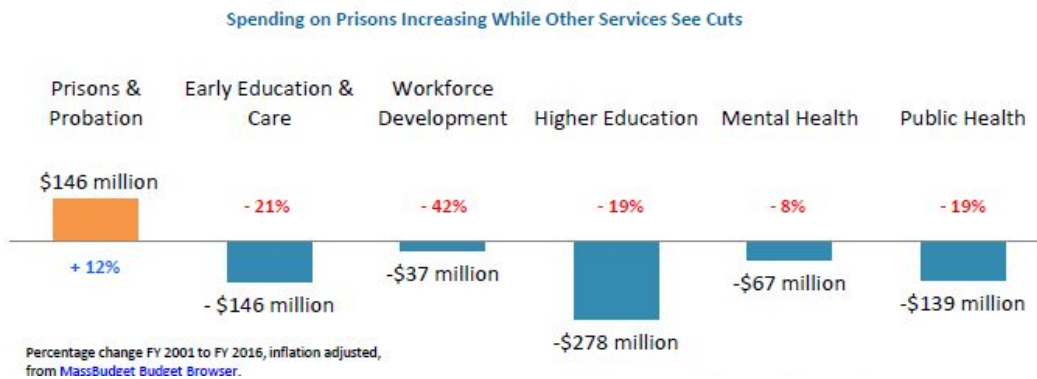
8. *Combating Speculation.* Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes.

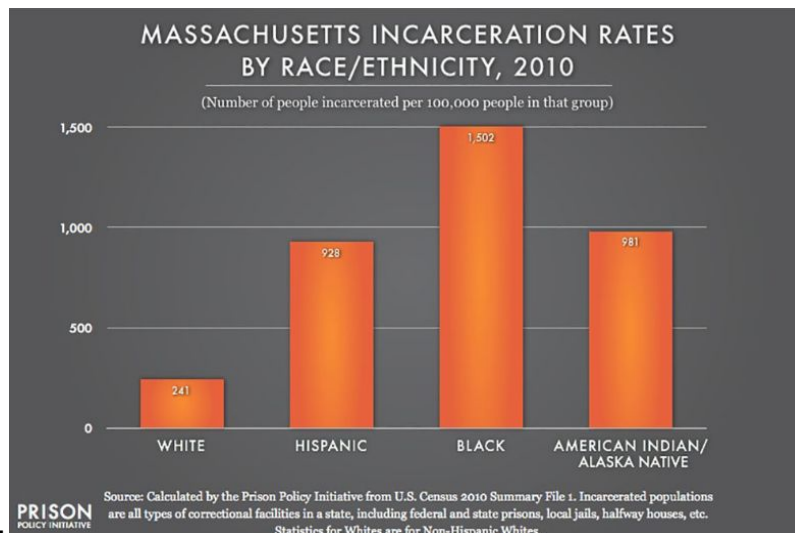
# F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

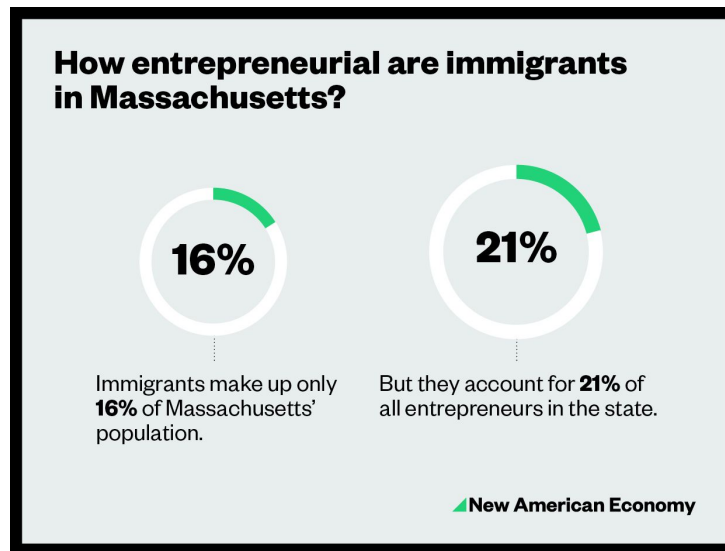
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

**Sarah Hewins:** To answer this, I would like to share an email/ phone conversation I had with Sathya of Mass Equality: “Dear Sathya, I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to earn your endorsement. I filled out the questionnaire in its entirety and read through it again. On re-reading, I was brought up short by my own answer to your very first platform question: ‘I know that I don’t have the bona fides that indicate that I will be a champion for LGBTQ rights, but I like to think of myself as a moral person who will fight for human rights, however they may be expressed. Like everyone else, I have friends and family members who are LGBTQ, and like any decent person, I want them to have the same opportunity for happiness and fulfillment as anyone else. I think my record does show that I work hard, never give up, and can be very effective in getting real results for just causes.’ But this answer doesn’t even approach a real reason for you to grant me an endorsement. It’s all true, and I do like to think that I am a decent person, but I don’t think that decency in and of itself is reason enough for you to endorse me. Therefore, I respectfully decline to return your endorsement questionnaire, and I hope that you will instead endorse a more deserving candidate who has the bona fides for your endorsement.” Sathya very kindly encouraged me to submit the questionnaire regardless. I do not yet know whether Mass Equality will endorse me or not.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** Please see my answer above.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes.

4. *LGBTQ Youth. Our neighboring states of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Vermont ban the use of harmful conversion therapy practices for minors. Do you support banning the use of conversion therapy*

in Massachusetts?

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** And fortunately most of the current legislature has indicated their support as well.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Judicial discretion is an important principle of our criminal justice system, if employed correctly. If employed properly, judicial discretion can mitigate racial inequity in incarceration and additionally direct those who would benefit to treatment..

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: 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)?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** And see my answer above regarding the importance of providing young people with explicit, age-appropriate information about health and sexuality.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** It's not clear to me that solitary confinement is of any use whatsoever in rehabilitation and additionally would come under the category of cruel and unusual punishment were it less usual. My views on this issue are aligned with those of the American Friends Service Committee, and I would advocate for an end to the use of solitary confinement.

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

**Sarah Hewins: 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?*

**Sarah Hewins: 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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** We should listen to our local law enforcement officials who do not support policies that make state and local officials responsible for enforcement of national immigration laws. Those national policies make local officials' job harder, reduce cooperation from immigrant communities, and make us all less safe. The very idea of having "Muslim Registry" is morally abhorrent, historically ignorant, and any government involvement in such a scheme would be unconstitutional.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

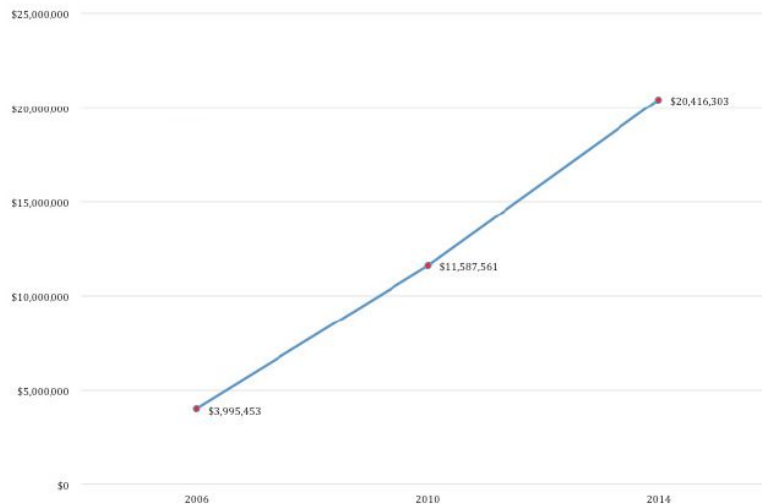
# G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

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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.*

**Sarah Hewins:** As my former Town Administrator used to say, “Government does the things that private enterprise cannot or will not do.” I’ve been an elected official for more than 20 years, and I’ve run a small business for more than 25 years. Government is nothing like business, and it’s typically not valid to compare the two. The only possible valid analogy of government and business is that government is like a “cost center” that the rest of the business (i.e., society) needs to survive and prosper. Cost centers don’t turn a profit, but they are essential to success. However, it’s unlikely you’ll find a “business” candidate who will advocate directing additional tax revenue to our vital government cost center. Whenever I hear a candidate say they’re going to run our government like a business, that implies they know nothing about government, and probably very little about business.



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

**Sarah Hewins:** As Selectman, I advocated for the establishment of a modern town website that would allow anyone, anywhere to examine all public documents, view recorded meetings, be informed by email whenever anything of interest to them occurred, and allowed direct communication between town officials and employees and the public without an intermediary. When the rest of the Board of Selectman balked at the cost, our (private) business developed and maintained the website for the town for free. For years I have insisted that the Board of Selectmen review and release to the public executive session minutes that could legally be released. I have finally made headway on this and the Board is releasing these minutes.

3. *Power and the Legislature. Concentration of power in Leadership remains a problem in the MA Legislature and has been a persistent obstacle to progress, and that power is maintained by “process” rules on how decisions are made and which legislation moves forward. Would you support the following rules changes to dilute the amount of power held by leadership in your respective branch of government...?*

- a. *Allowing committees to appoint their own chair, instead of Leadership?*

**Sarah Hewins:**

- b. *Allowing bills to be discharged from a committee if they have majority support in a given chamber?*

**Sarah Hewins:**

- c. *Limiting extension orders to one per bill per committee for a maximum of 1 week in order to prevent needless delay?*

**Sarah Hewins:**

All these proposals sound reasonable but – as I mentioned elsewhere – the devil is in the details. It would be dishonest of me to say I support all these proposals without additional study and consideration. However, I do promise that whatever decision I come to will not be affected by pressure from House leadership.

4. *Transparency. Too often, decisions that affect millions across the Commonwealth are made behind closed doors with little public input. Indeed, 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. Would you support the following efforts to increase transparency and public accountability...?*

- a. *Allowing committees to appoint their own chair, instead of Leadership?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

- b. *Allowing bills to be discharged from a committee if they have majority support in a given chamber?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes. Most definitely.

- c. *Limiting extension orders to one per bill per committee for a maximum of 1 week in order to prevent needless delay?*

**Sarah Hewins:** As a local elected official in a small town, I've had the experience of having to submit to well-intentioned but antiquated laws regarding public information, and unreasonable requirements on public meetings. My misgivings were not related to transparency, but to process.

For example, the website our company provided to the town made all public documents immediately available to the public and ensured that the electronic copy of the document was identical to the original and any copy of the original through use of a very strong cryptographic hash. Nevertheless, state law required us to maintain a paper copy on acid-free paper in a fireproof vault. Since the town did not have sufficient space to store all the paper copies from all committees and boards in a fireproof vault, the task of maintaining the originals often devolved (as allowed by state law) to the various committee and board chairs. You can probably find most original documents in shoeboxes stored underneath the beds of committee chairs.

This is a roundabout way of getting to the point of your question. It sounds like a good idea to record and share conference committee minutes within 24 hours but, as with the antiquated laws mentioned above, the devil is in the details. For instance, a hard 24-hour deadline to produce minutes may have the perverse effect of quashing open discussion and instead lead to private discussions of issues that should be public. The goal is transparency, and requiring recording of committee meetings with timely release of written minutes may be more effective. State law does prioritize written minutes over sound and video recordings, and minutes are often edited after the fact, so it's always instructive to have both available.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** 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"?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes.

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

- a. *Election day voter registration*

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes.

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

c. *No-fault absentee voting*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

d. *Universal voting-by-mail*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** Given that sufficient protections are in place to ensure that the individual who cast the vote is indeed the individual indicated on the ballot. The protections that are already in place for absentee voting – with a little streamlining – should also accommodate no-fault absentee voting and universal voting by mail.

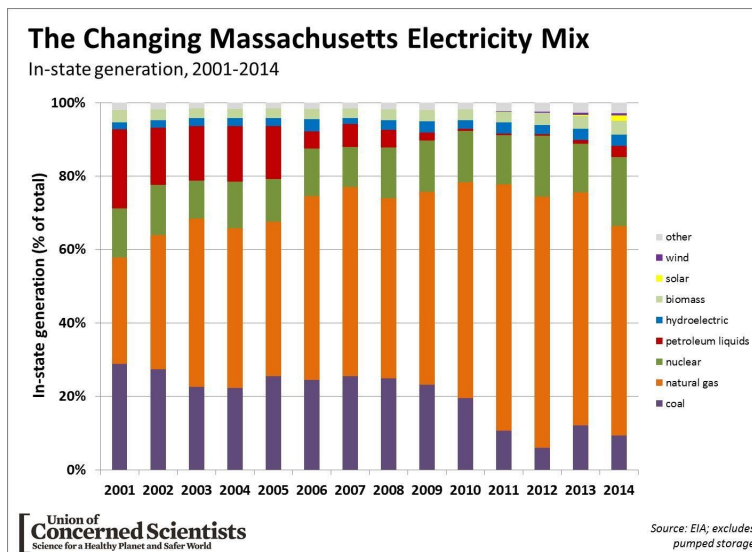
# H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

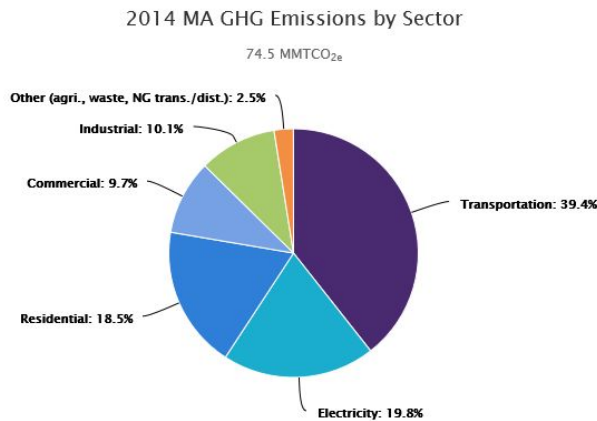
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and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

**Sarah Hewins:** I am a lifelong environmentalist, I care deeply about our natural world, and I will never – ever – give up the fight to defend and protect our environment.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** Thirty years ago, as Environmental Co-Chair for the League of Women Voters of Mississippi, I formed a coalition of sportsmen, environmentalists, and state government to save hundreds of acres of wetlands in the Mississippi delta. As a public official over the past 20 years, I've preserved 600 acres of land in southeastern Massachusetts; spearheaded conservation subdivisions that preserve much more land and vastly reduce impervious surface; been part of the town's successful payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program for solar projects, bringing revenue to the town on solar projects that generate clean energy without shifting the cost of their depreciation to taxpayers; negotiated (as part of a program that reduced trash hauling costs to residents by 50%) free, voluntary curbside recycling; worked with the cranberry industry to promote healthy conservation practices and environmentally-sound decisions; earned the trust and respect of local growers and received a public service award from the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association; and chaired a seven-town regional aquifer advisory committee to protect the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer. As a mom, I have been reading stories to toddlers for 22 years at the local library, since my son was three, helping children learn about seasons, animals, and the natural world – helping children learn love nature so they'll be adults who'll fight for it.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** Yes.

4. *Solar energy. Do you support increasing equitable access to solar power by removing caps on solar generation and restoring compensation for low-income and community solar?*

**Sarah Hewins: 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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** While I'm personally in favor of moving aggressively to increase the use of clean energy, we do have to be careful to ensure that the solution is more than purely regulatory or punitive. We have all seen, with the current administration of the EPA, how fragile our gains can be in the face of a backlash by parties who feel that they have been unfairly regulated. 3% seems like an aggressive but reasonable goal, but I feel that there should be additional incentives that will encourage utilities to comply not only due to regulatory pressure, but also because compliance is in their own economic interest. We have already seen some success in this area—in spite of the current administration—in the retirement of many coal-fired generation facilities.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.**

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** The 2014 EO should be implemented (note that one of the 137 communities with identified environmental justice populations is in the 2nd Plymouth district) but much more should be attempted. Also please see my answer above with respect to 40B and affordable housing.

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

**Sarah Hewins: Yes.** In particular, I would absolutely oppose allowing natural gas pipelines on Article 97 land.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

**Sarah Hewins:** I am in favor of any rational mechanism to reduce carbon pollution. An economic approach to including what is now a negative externality in an economic decision is an attractive and likely effective one. However, I don't have the expertise to say whether I'd prefer to use a negative approach like a carbon fee or a positive one like carbon trading. I am concerned that a fee approach could easily become a kind of regressive tax on lower-income residents.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** I am obviously in favor of secure funding for green infrastructure but—given the

legal issues encountered with the fair share amendment – it would be wise to consider the effect of, and perhaps avoid, an earmarking of funds.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** But, the truth is I really don't know how to answer this. As Selectman, I arranged for our town to purchase our streetlights from NSTAR (for \$1) and was thereby able to reduce our streetlight costs by 34% and incidentally curb our light pollution to some extent by turning off some lights that were not required for safety. However, what worked for street lights and electricity consumption may not work for electricity generation. Municipalities are often cash-strapped, and it's not clear to me that in every case the most environmentally-friendly options are the most inexpensive options (at present). I'd expect that many of these municipal plants would use natural gas for generation (exacerbating the pipeline issue), and it would be difficult or expensive for them to transition to renewable sources in the future. Such legislation may also allow the state to evade or slow its responsibility to transfer to renewables by "writing off" any environmental costs of electricity generation that is ceded to municipalities.

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

**Sarah Hewins:** I assume the use of "progressive" in this context refers to a revenue source that is automatically adjusted over time without the need for continual legislative courage. Clearly, additional rational and protected funding sources are required to address transportation infrastructure issues. Revenues from state gasoline taxes have been basically flat for a decade, and we'd like to see a downward trend in those revenues going forward owing to more alternative energy vehicles being put in use. Nevertheless, Massachusetts gasoline taxes are well below the national average and could be raised but the public doesn't seem to see this as a viable path. However, the repeal of inflation-indexed increases in the gas tax in 2014 was narrow enough that it may itself be subject to repeal. A vehicle miles-traveled tax is going to be a tough sell to both the Governor and to rural voters, but it could be a possibility for large-scale commercial vehicles. The best short-term solution may be to revisit the Fair Share Amendment, and (separately!) allocate some of that tax revenue for transportation investments. We should also note that other infrastructure upgrades can serve as an economic boost – producing more tax revenues that could be applied to public transportation – while at the same time reducing load on our existing transportation infrastructure, and thereby reducing transportation-related pollution. For example, when we first moved to our rural town and founded our small business 26 years ago, we had very poor communication infrastructure (phone, internet, reliable power) and as a result had to physically travel to clients' locations. In recent years this communication infrastructure has improved to the extent that we can serve clients worldwide through use of webcasting technology and other communications facilities made possible by fast, reliable internet and reliable cellular and power. Improvement like this – particularly in rural areas – would have a compounded beneficial effect.

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?*

**Sarah Hewins:** Certainly, a municipality should have the legal ability to raise local funds for its infrastructure, but this ability is unlikely to have any practical effect outside of local infrastructure in

larger cities. Regional transit infrastructure is more properly in the purview of the state.



## 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.*

**Sarah Hewins:** I have spent a lifetime working for environmental protection, education, our children's future, and so on. As I said above, I think my record does show that I work hard, never give up, and can be very effective in getting real results for just causes.