

Mike Armano

**Second Essex &
Middlesex**

State Senator



Endorsement Questionnaire

Office Sought: State Senator

Legislative District: Second Essex & Middlesex

Party: Democratic

Website: ArmanoforSenate.com

Twitter:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/armanoforsenate/>

Primary: September 4

Election: November 6

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Election: November 6	0
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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](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

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

Mike Armano

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

Mike Armano: As a delegate to the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts I was influenced by charismatic and compassionate leaders like retired firefighter, State Senator Ken Donnelly. Right around the time we experienced the tragic loss of Ken Donnelly, Senator Barbara L'Italien announced her campaign for Congress. With the recent departure of leaders who championed our cause, I wanted to ensure that the person that would fill the vacancy in the 2nd Essex and Middlesex would be a voice for every member of the community including unions, public servants, those fighting for social justice, educators, working-class families, and seniors.

I am passionate about initiatives that support (1) equal effective and quality education for all children, (2) fairness and equality for all human beings, and (3) a strong middle class. While there are several other priority issues that my community must continually work on, I am also passionate about many legislative initiatives that protect first responders and protect the rights of seniors and retirees, including but not limited to:

- SB 1402 An act that would cap the contributions of health insurance premiums for retired municipal employees at the rate they were paying at the time of retirement
- HB 3278 An act relative to disability/ death caused by contagious diseases establishing rebuttable presumptions for emergency service personnel
- HB 2515 An act relative to disability benefits allowing firefighters the ability to utilize leave with pay if they are off the job for treatment related to presumptive conditions such as cancer.

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

Mike Armano: Serving on the Lawrence Fire Department, public service is not foreign to me. I have been humbled by learning from my community and connecting with individuals during their most vulnerable moments.

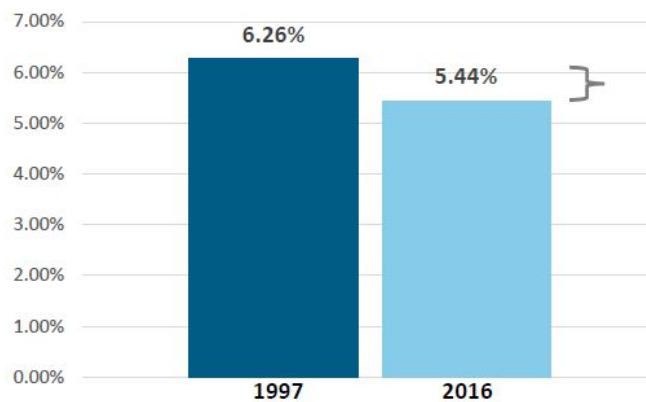
My education, background, and experience make me a strong candidate for this open State Senate seat. Before joining the fire department, I graduated from law school, passed three bar exams (MA, NH, ME), and practiced law for 7 years. After joining the fire department, I earned a Masters in Public Administration, became a licensed EMT, and served as a delegate to our state union, the PFFM. IN my current position on the fire department, I work closely with public officials in City Hall in several departments including Zoning, Planning & Development, Inspectional Services, and City Attorney's Office. I also serve on the Mayor's Distressed Property Task Force and the Firefighters Local grievance and contract negotiation committees. Lastly, before I joined the fire service, I had the opportunity to diversify my career working for the Boston Public Schools, coaching at a local high school, and working as a camp counselor.

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.

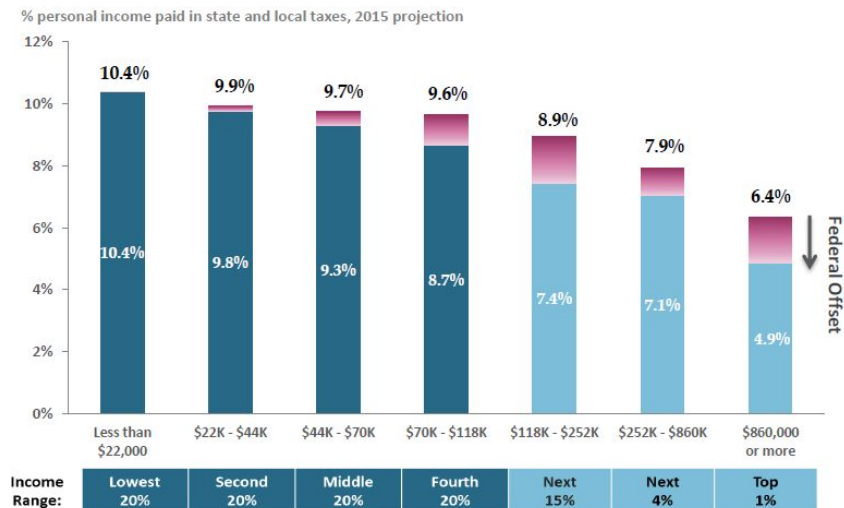
Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.

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?

Mike Armano: Where income tax is the major source of funding for state programs and services, one of the most effective methods of increasing funds and working towards eliminating a regressive system is to ensure the wealthiest taxpayers are paying their fair share to maintain the strength of the community. I support an amendment to the state constitution that would create an additional tax of 4% on income more than one million dollars.

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.).*

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

4. **Sales Tax Holiday.** *It has been demonstrated over and over that the annual sales tax holiday does not serve its intended purpose of increasing sales, but rather just shifts sales to the weekend of the holiday. Would you oppose efforts to extend the sales tax holiday?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

5. **Corporate Tax Breaks & Disclosure.** *Do you support the state's collecting and publicly disclosing the information about the benefits actually provided by corporations receiving tax credits?*

Mike Armano: Yes. Ensuring accountability and disclosure in economic development is critical in an era where there appears to be a seismic shift in incentives but a shortfall in the state budget.

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

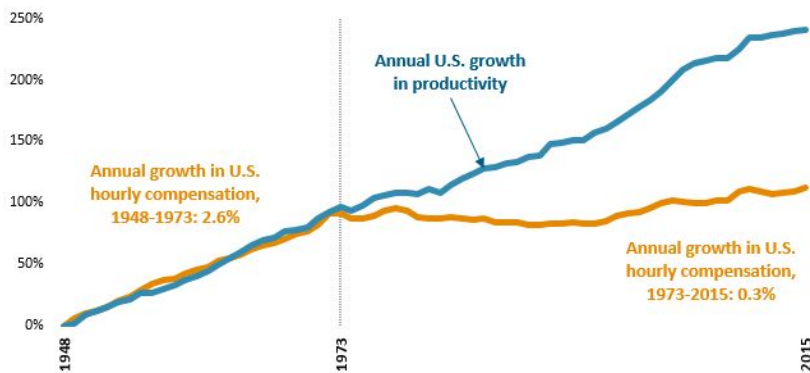
B. JOB GROWTH AND THE ECONOMY

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

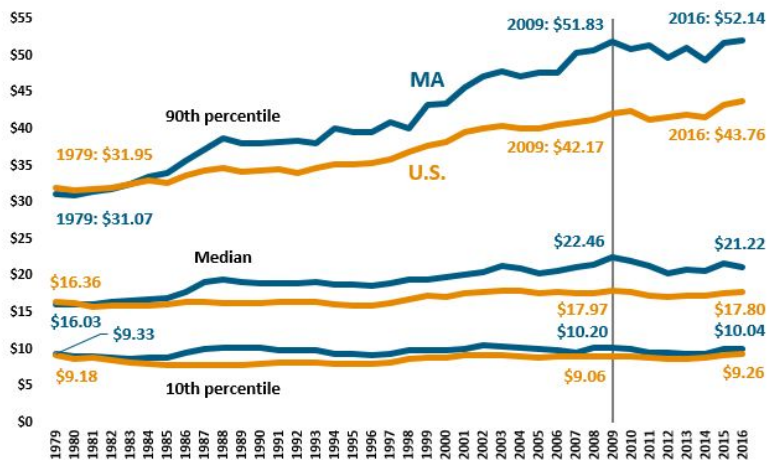
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?

Mike Armano: To improve the economy, we must continuously strive to make health care affordable, strengthen and fully fund early childhood and public education, and make state universities affordable. The wealthiest taxpayers are paying their fair share will help maintain the strength of the community. A strong community and infrastructure will attract companies from all sectors. Unions must continue to fight against Right to Work initiatives, educate their members about the value of unions, and inspire their members to run for office. This will assist in maintaining good paying jobs.

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

A living wage and good benefits helps both employees and business. Strong Massachusetts businesses realize that fair wages and benefits motivate staff, increase productivity, reduce turnover, increase quality of work, and strengthen the community.

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

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes. Beginning with my great-grandfather, a business agent (union leader) for mill workers throughout New England, I am a proud 4th generation union member. As a member of the Lawrence Firefighters Local 146, I serve as a delegate to our state union, the PFFM. One of my inspirations for running for State Senate was my brother and sister firefighters in NH who organized a movement to get 40 firefighters to run for State Office to fight Right to Work initiatives. Labor, unions, and working-class people must stand together and ensure that our State House seats elected officials that will fight, advocate, and educate about the importance of collective bargaining rights and the

preservation of the middle class. I will always stand with my brothers and sisters in labor.

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

7. **Wage Theft.** *Do you support legislation to hold businesses responsible for the wage violations of their subcontractors when the work they do is substantially connected to the company's operations?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

8. **Mandatory Arbitration.** *Would you support legislation to prohibit the use of mandatory arbitration provisions in employment contracts, i.e., requirements that an employee forfeit the right to sue the employer for discrimination, nonpayment of wages or other illegal conduct?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

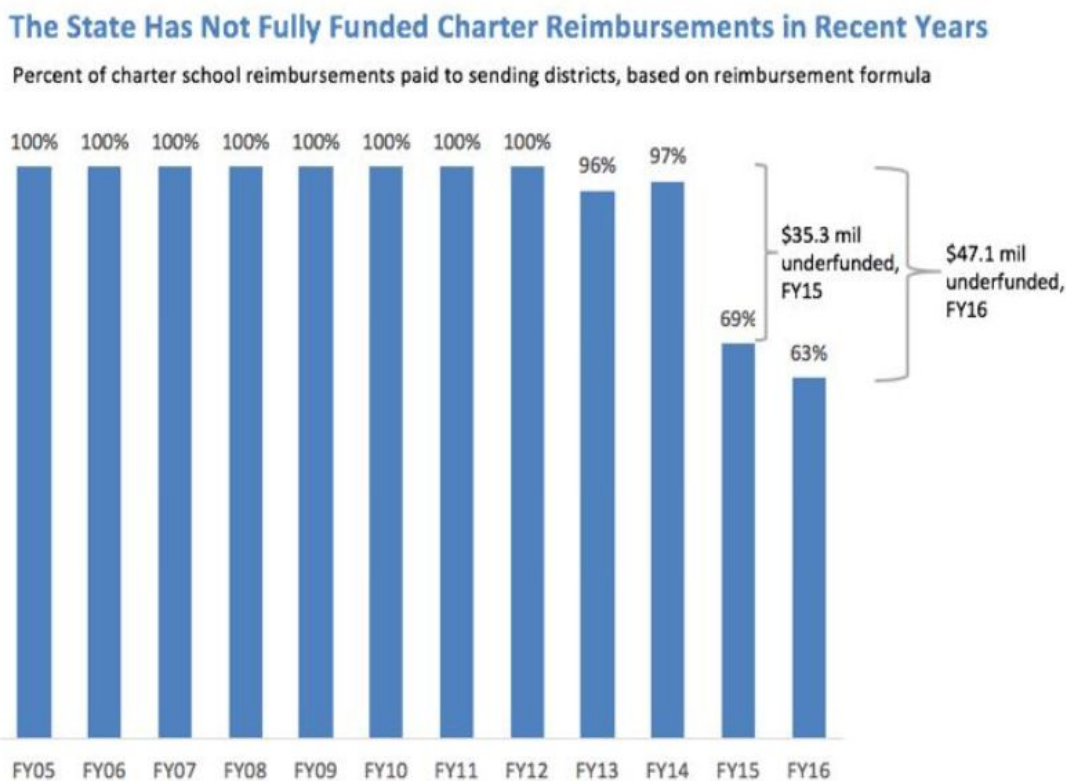
9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

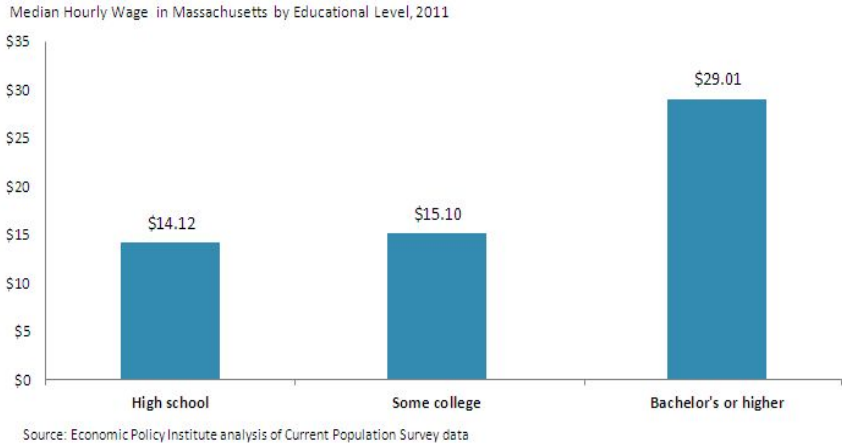
C. EDUCATION

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.

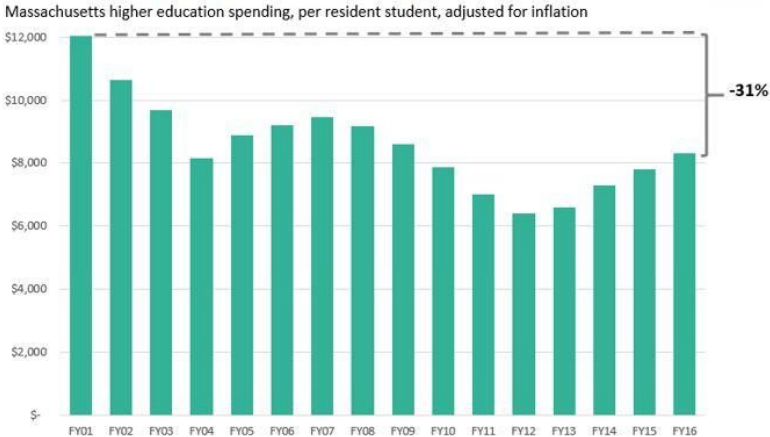


Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.



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?*

Mike Armano: Strongly funded public education is critical to improving our economy and addressing economic justice. Education must be available for every student. I strongly support keeping a cap on Charter Schools. Valuable resources are taken away from public education and not all children are given equal educational opportunities.

2. ***Optional/As Applicable:*** *Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on public education?*
3. ***Universal Pre-K.*** *Would you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system?*

Mike Armano: Yes. Funding should be increased allow more 3- and 4-year old children to have access to early education programs.

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?*

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

6. ***Charter Schools.*** *Last November, Massachusetts voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public schools.*

- a. *Would you support keeping the cap on charter schools?*

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

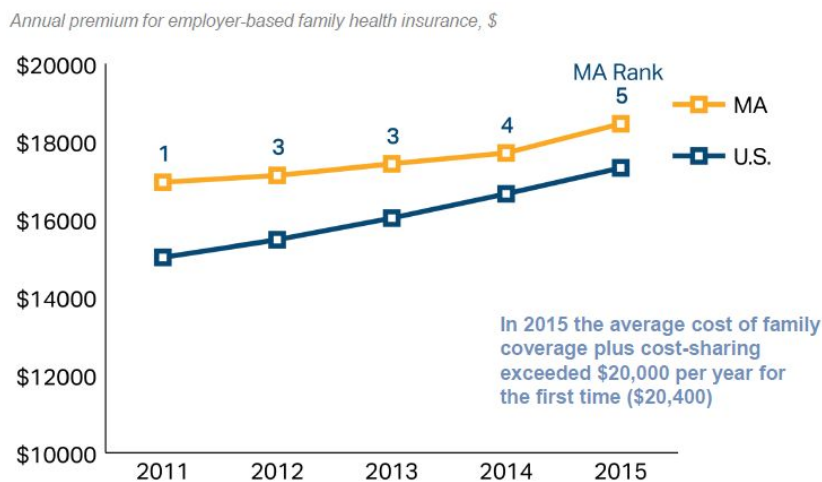
9. *Tuition-Free Higher Education.* Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?

Mike Armano: Yes.

D. HEALTH CARE

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health insurance coverage, with 97% of the state having health insurance. We provided the blueprint for the national Affordable Care Act, with an insurance-based reform passed by the Democratic Legislature and signed by Republican Governor Romney. While the reforms of President Obama's Affordable Care Act are under assault by Republicans (who control the Executive and both legislative chambers), Massachusetts could lead in more progressive health care reforms. Even without the Republican dismantling of national reforms, there is still work to do right here in Massachusetts. MA's Democratic Legislature passed, and the Republican governor signed, the ACCESS bill in 2017--protecting the right to no-fee contraception, which is (federally) under threat: Where our federal advances are being rolled back, Massachusetts could--and should--push progressively forward. Significant disparities in health insurance coverage and health care access continue to exist along income, racial, and education lines. Premiums continue to rise, and medical debt remains a persistent problem. We still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, but without necessarily achieving better health outcomes.

MA has among the highest health insurance premiums in the country.



Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, Insurance Component

1. *Please share your personal values and principles regarding health care insurance, delivery, and outcomes.*

Mike Armano: There are large disparities between coverage and care along income, racial, and education lines. Middle and Low-income families are struggling to afford health care premiums. These premiums are growing.

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

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

5. **Dental Care.** *Do you support the authorization of dental therapists in Massachusetts, similar to a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, in order to expand access to dental care?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

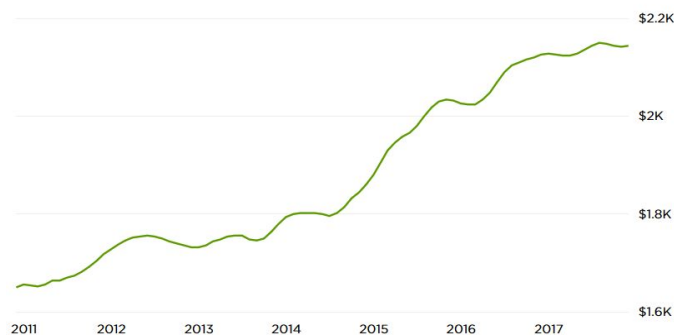
6. **Prescription Drug Pricing.** *Would you support a drug transparency law, like the one recently passed in California, that requires pharmaceutical companies to publicly justify steep price increases?*

Mike Armano: 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?

Mike Armano: In my district is one of the most impoverished cities in the Commonwealth. People struggle finding housing and struggle finding jobs in areas that are within their transportation means. As housing costs rise, wages are staying the same for those who can find work. We need to increase funding and change zoning regulations to encourage projects to increase housing opportunities.

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

3. Funding. Do you support increasing funding for

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

b. The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: No. I would like to explore whether fees from the Registry of Deeds is the best option for funding the Community Preservation Act. Home ownership is very important to maintaining a strong middle class, stabilizing families, and offering low income earners the chance of building wealth. I would not want increased fees to become an obstacle.

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

7. Zoning Reform. *Would you support legislation to upgrade Massachusetts's zoning laws to encourage more affordable housing and transit-oriented, walkable development and to promote inclusionary zoning practices?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

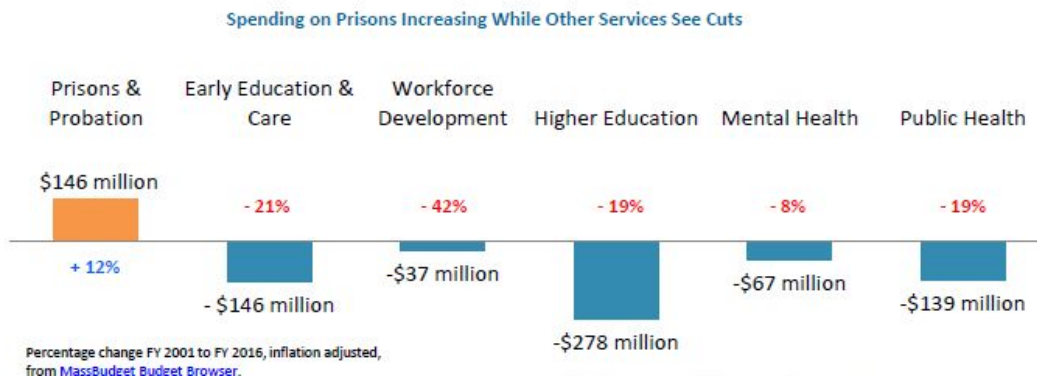
8. Combating Speculation. *Would you support legislation to allow cities and towns to impose a graduated tax on private real estate transactions over \$2.5 million, with the money allocated to affordable housing trust funds?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

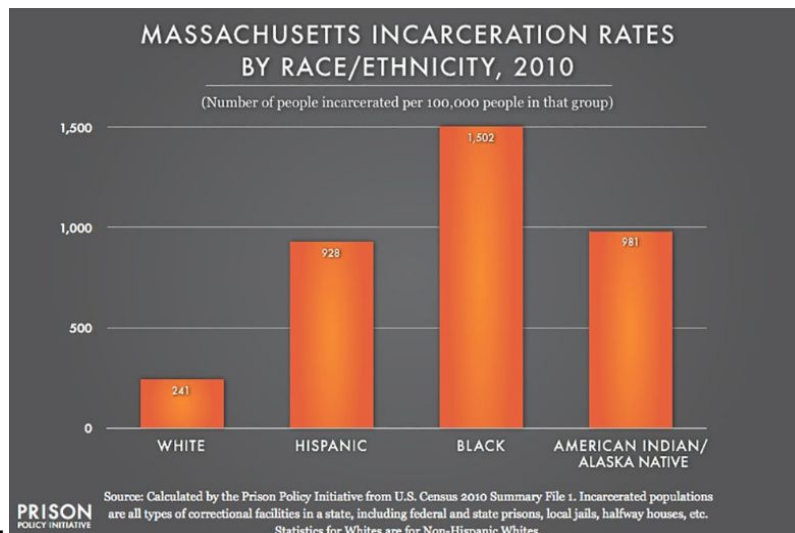
F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

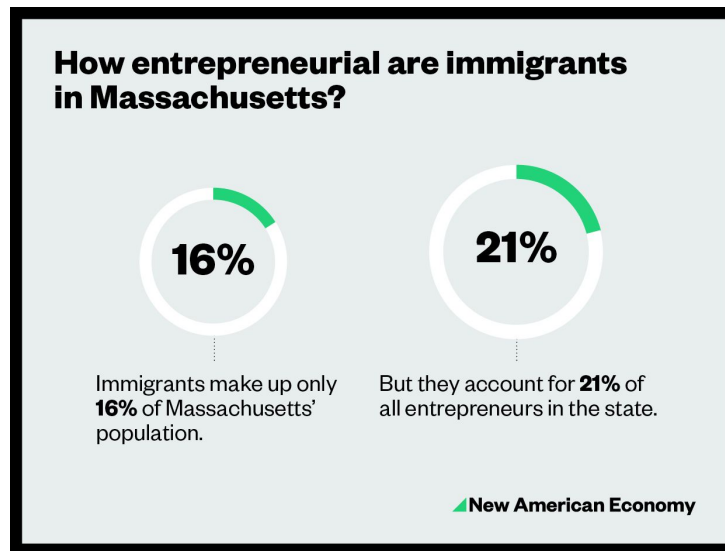
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

Mike Armano: Massachusetts still has a lot of work to do. In my district, the City of Lawrence has a long history of embracing every member of the community. The City welcomes homeless struggling to find shelter, immigrants, and other vulnerable residents of Massachusetts. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts must stay united and find ways to strengthen the community. Through education, compassion, and a strong voice, we can continue to play a notable role.

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

Mike Armano: Yes. I admire and stand with courageous organizations like Freedom for All. In the words of their leadership, I believe that with education, compassion, and love we will win this fight.

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes. I have not held a position as an elected official however as a responsible, compassionate citizen I have and always will advocate for LGBTQ social justice. In my capacity as a coach at and graduate of Central Catholic High School, I had the opportunity to advocate for LGBTQ students and faculty by addressing the faculty and staff during their monthly meeting. As a teacher of Paralegals LGBTQ, fairness and equality for all was always part of my lesson plan. As an elected official, I will continue to advocate for LGBTQ social justice.

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?

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes. As an arson investigator for the Lawrence Fire Department, I believe in programs like our Juvenile Intervention Firesetter Program. Community partnerships such as the one we have with the Lawrence District Court must be supported in an effort to successfully help young offenders transition to adulthood.

- 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)?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

- 8. **Solitary Confinement.** Do you support limiting the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days, and eliminating the use of solitary confinement for at-risk populations, including pregnant women, LGBTQ people, those with mental illness, and those under age 21 or over age 65?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: 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?

Mike Armano: Yes.

12. **Safe Driving Act.** *Would you support the Safe Driving Act, which would remove immigration status as a barrier to applying for a license or learner's permit?*

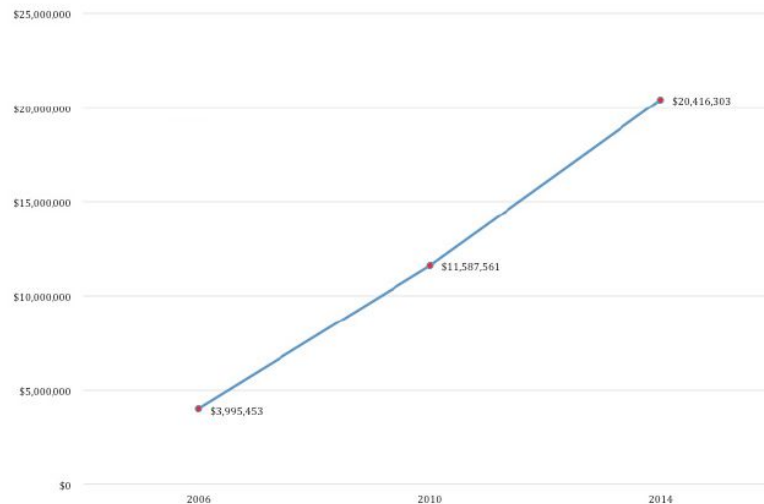
Mike Armano: Yes.

G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

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

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

Figure 1: MA Independent Expenditure Totals



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

Mike Armano: Legislation is needed to encourage working class members of the community, public servants, public employees, parents, and others to run for office. Additionally, we must fight for legislation that increases voter participation.

2. *Please indicate work you personally have done to promote transparency, campaign finance reform, legislative rules reform, and access to voting.*
3. *Power and the Legislature. If elected, would you support efforts to dilute the amount of power held by leadership in your respective branch of government? For example, would you support a rule change*

allowing committees to appoint their own chair, instead of leadership?

Mike Armano: Yes.

4. **Transparency.** *Massachusetts is one of only two states where the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Judiciary claim full exemption from the public records laws. Do you support ending that exemption?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: 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"?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

a. *Election day voter registration*

Mike Armano: Yes.

b. *Automatic voter registration*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

d. *No-fault absentee voting*

Mike Armano: Yes.

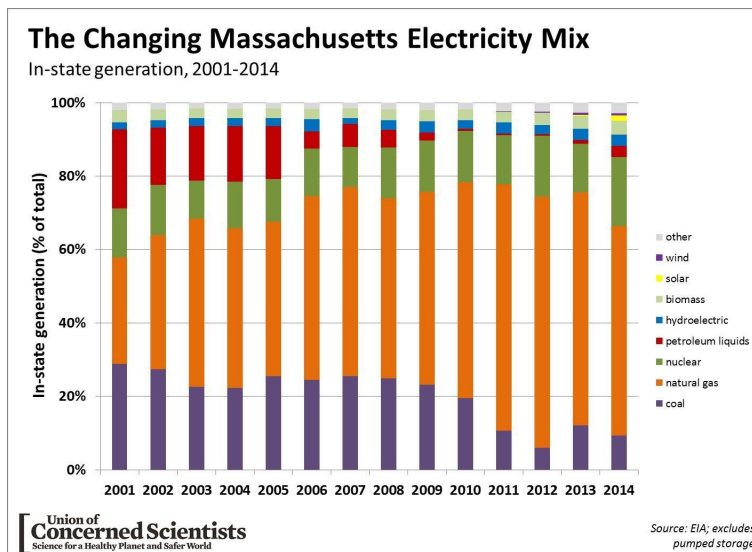
H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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.

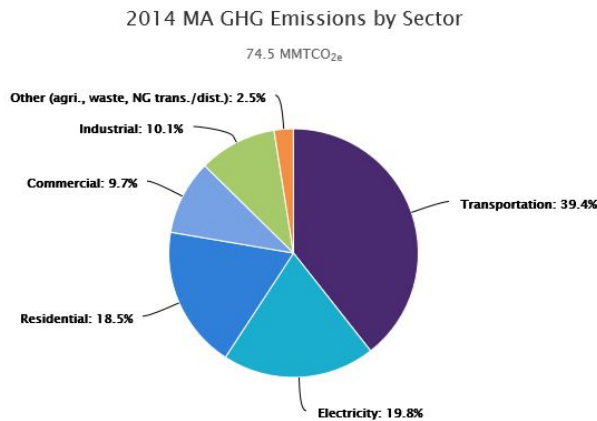
Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and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

Mike Armano: Massachusetts must work on reducing its dependency on fossil fuels.

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

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

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes. My home runs on solar. I love solar. I strongly support increasing equitable access.

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?*

Mike Armano: 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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes.

9. **Public Utilities.** *Would you support legislation to allow municipalities to purchase their electric distribution utility (the poles and wires that transmit power) and operate a municipal or cooperative electric utility?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

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

Mike Armano: Yes. Massachusetts is behind in public transit. I strongly support progressive revenue sources to fund public transit initiatives.

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?*

Mike Armano: Yes.

III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Limit answer to 150 words or fewer.

Use this space to add any other issues important to your vision for Massachusetts or any other matter you think progressive voters should know about your candidacy.

Mike Armano: Another one of my inspirations for running for State Senate was Senator Ken Donnelly, a retired firefighter, who passionately advocating for labor, working-class families, social justice, and other progressive initiatives. Ken brilliantly pointed out common threads that connected both union and non-union workers and families. The values of your organization are aligned with my values. I am running for office to fight for issues that came long before me and that will last long after me. To win any campaign, like-minded people must stand together and support each other. I would be honored to have your endorsement and I would be even more honored to developing a long and continued relationship with your organization. If we stand together, we can and ensure that our State House seats elected officials that will fight, advocate, and educate about the importance of collective bargaining rights, preservation of the middle class, social justice, and other progressive issues.