

*Sam Hammar*

# Fifth Middlesex State Senator

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## *Endorsement Questionnaire*

**Office Sought:** State Representative

**Legislative District:** Fifth Middlesex

**Party:** Democratic

**Website:** [samhammar.org](http://samhammar.org)

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

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**Primary:** September 4

**Election:** November 6

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# Introduction: Progressive Mass

## About

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

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

### Membership

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

### How Endorsements Work

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

## Sources

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

# I. About the Candidate

## Sam Hammar

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

**Sam Hammar:** I never expected to be running for State Senate - I've made a career in public service but I've always stayed behind the scenes. But I'm putting my name forward and running for office because I'm done waiting for Beacon Hill to make the progress our working families need. People are falling further behind because of massive student loan debt, a lack of access to affordable child and senior care, and a housing market that pushes families out of their communities. These overlapping economic crises are suffocating us, and it's time for the State House to act with an appropriate sense of urgency.

**Provide Childcare for All and Universal Pre-K-** We need to fund vouchers for families in need and work with municipalities/entrepreneurs to open more service businesses to drive up the supply and drive down the cost. We also need to fund and create more resources for free public preschool options throughout Massachusetts within our Department of Education budget.

**Guarantee Reproductive Healthcare Access for All-** I agree with NARAL, "access to affordable contraception is a basic human right, and is crucial for the economic empowerment of women and their families." We need to ensure that all who need it have access to available, safe, and equitable health care, especially those within vulnerable populations, including undocumented immigrants, those in poverty, and our trans siblings. The Massachusetts ACCESS Bill must have strong implementation.

**Create more Affordable Housing-** To say Massachusetts is facing a housing crisis is an understatement. Our young people can't afford to rent, our young families can't afford to buy, and our aging population is getting priced out of the communities they love. Housing supply has not kept up with rapidly growing demand and the resulting crisis is eating up incomes for both renters and owners while furthering the wealth gaps in our communities. It's time for everyone involved in the housing industry and in our government to work together if we want to seriously tackle our affordability crisis.

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

**Sam Hammar:** I am an experienced public servant, activist, entrepreneur, and mother of twin girls.

As Progressives, we believe in the same things: criminal justice reform, economic justice, environmental justice, and racial, gender, and LGBTQ equality. But unlike a lot of other progressive leaders in the State House, I understand working families' issues because I've actually lived them. I know what it's like to grow up without financial stability. I know what it means to work 3 jobs to pay off student loans. I know the pain of spending more than your entire paycheck on childcare. I know that buying a home in Massachusetts means spending every penny you've got -- including whatever you've finally put in your kids' savings accounts. Our leaders don't feel the urgency of our needs because they've never walked in our shoes and don't understand our perspective. I do.

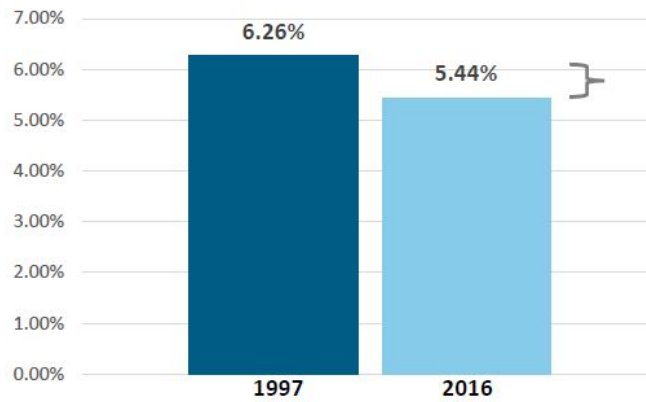
Unlike politicians who can only talk about policy, I've actually implemented it. My first job after graduate school was teaching journalism and civic activism at Boston Community Leadership Academy. I later worked for the City of Boston in Economic Development, and helped develop Boston's Seaport Innovation District. I served as the Executive Director of the Capital Network -- a nonprofit which mentors early entrepreneurs -- before accepting the role of Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Technology. Most recently, I was the Director of Digital Engagement for the Massachusetts Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General. Embedded with the Office of Economic Empowerment, I helped the team advocate for Equal Pay for Women as well as deliver financial literacy education online. As a dedicated public servant, I know the consequences --- and possibilities -- of government decision-making.

# 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.

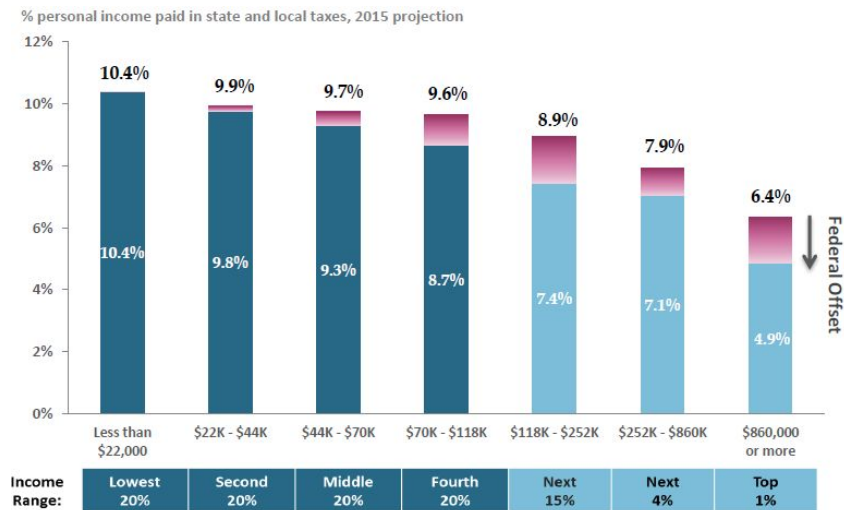
**Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.**

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?*

**Sam Hammar:** I have worked with capital and operating budgets at the Commonwealth and understand the benefits, limitations, and consequences of raising and using both sources of funding. I'm a proponent of the Fair Share Amendment, our emerging Cannabis industry, and the ability for regions to increase taxes for transportation needs and Business Improvement Districts.

Additionally, I believe the Commonwealth can re-prioritize spending from our criminal justice system to early education, and I would like to explore the opportunity for a state bank for student loans, infrastructure loans, and general banking services to lower the personal and capital costs to the taxpayers.

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.).*

**Sam Hammar:** I've worked to support the formation of the Downtown Crossing BID and experienced the community engagement process which was essential to passing the BID.

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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

6. *Corporate Tax Breaks & Wages. Do you support requiring any company receiving tax credits from the state to pay a living wage and provide good benefits to all its employees?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes. Other countries have requested payroll information to also measure a company's gender wage gap. I support that effort, too.

## 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

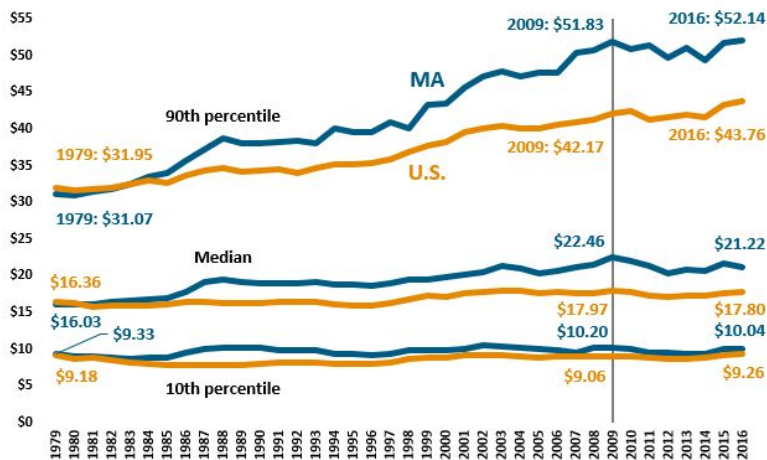
Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



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?*

**Sam Hammar:** I believe in people over profits and that corporations should pay employees living wages and provide family-friendly benefits. Corporate greed has led to staggering income inequality across the nation, but we can't have an honest conversation until we have all voices at the table. We need progressive legislation to level the playing field so that the odds aren't stacked against working folks and that everyone is paid equally for work regardless of gender, race, age, or ability.

Given the assault on workers' rights at the federal level, we need to support our unions and pass legislation which protects employees from harassment and bans mandatory arbitration clauses. We need to invest in the industries with significant opportunities for job growth -- clean energy, technology, healthcare, child/senior care, and cannabis.

**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.).*

**Sam Hammar:** While at the City of Boston, I worked on several sector specific economic initiatives to attract global companies to Boston, help start companies that were emerging, and help scale companies in growth phase. I've done this work within the manufacturing, technology, lifesciences, retail, green and clean tech, and creative economies, each requiring a specialized strategy.

As someone in the digital innovation sphere, I have dedicated much of my career to supporting women in the workplace and using technology to improve financial literacy for veterans, seniors, women, young adults, and college students. I have led initiatives focused on closing the gender wage gap, salary negotiation, and helping low-income families start college savings accounts.

**3. Increasing Wages.**

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

Many teens have to work to support their household, and I believe in equal pay for equal work regardless of age.

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

*paid medical leave?*

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

6. **Unions -- Part II.** *Since 2010 election, a number of states have rolled back the collective bargaining rights of public workers as part of a well-funded, nationwide assault on unions led by wealthy, conservative donors. Would you oppose any effort to roll back the collective bargaining rights of state or municipal employees?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.** We do not have supportive, effective structures for public employees, and our unions provide that necessary protection and assistance.

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?*

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

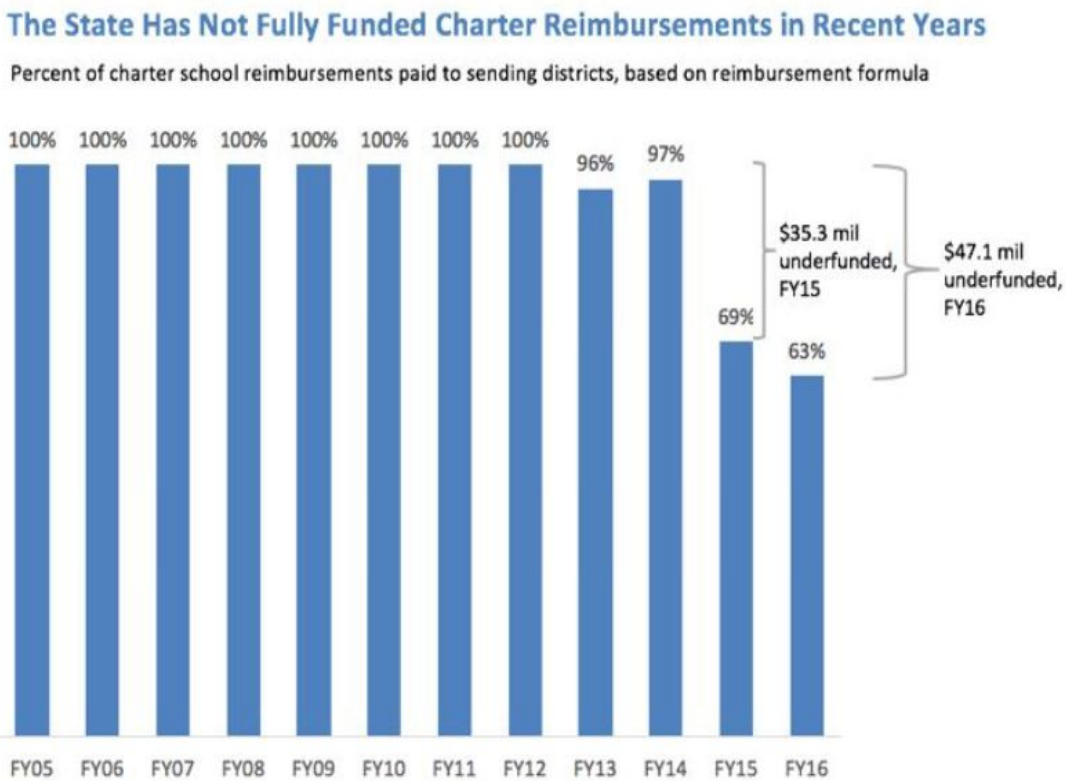
9. **Economic Democracy.** *Would you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts and encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

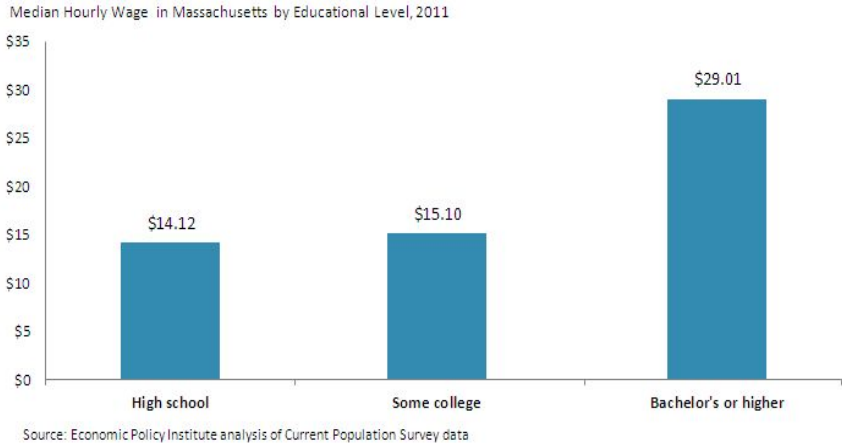
# C. EDUCATION

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.**

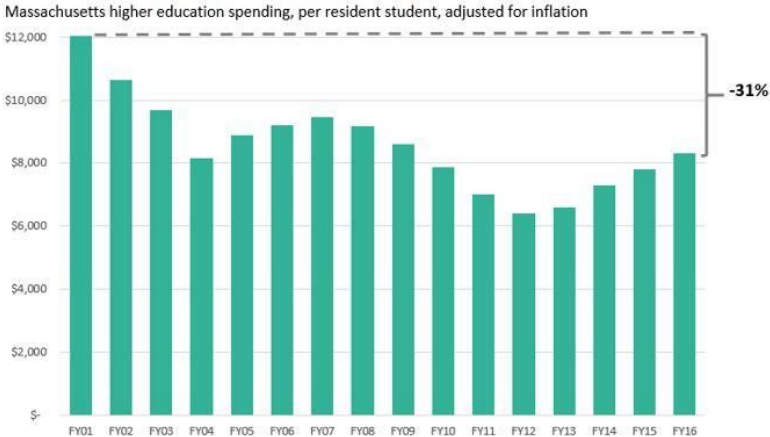


**Higher educational attainment leads to higher wages.**



**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?*

**Sam Hammar:** I fundamentally believe that public services should not be performed by organizations that need to report profits to shareholders, and this is absolutely true for our education system. Schools are the center of society. I'd argue our most precious and important public service, yet we undervalue and underfund our systems. The goal in education is to provide equitable education for all, which sometimes means that the funding is not equal. The State budget needs to prioritize education reimbursements to our districts for special education and charter school funding losses.

Chapter 70 formula has always been ineffective. It is past time to address equitable funding for our districts.

When many of our decision makers are not current consumers of the system, they aren't experiencing the modern needs of our children. This is why we need better representation to make sure that the voices of school-age children are at the table.

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

**Sam Hammar:** As a Boston Public High School Teacher, my classroom was full students eager to learn and with technology that did not work. I had to get creative quickly. The curriculum pivoted to focus on community activism and leadership, which was in the school's mission. The students would decide upon a community-improvement project, we would co-author the proposal, present it to administration (sometimes asking for a loan with interest), execute the project together, and evaluate the results. Our projects varied based on classroom selection, but were rooted in a topic where the students could make and feel their impact. When we studied issues of homelessness, we adopted a shelter for mothers in recovery and their children and served them throughout the year. We painted murals in the children's playroom, brought them toys and new linens, and even sang to them during the holidays. Another class decided to focus on senior homelessness, which brought us to several senior homes to participate in activities to maintain physical and cognitive function. This new class - derived from a serious lack of resources - exposed my students to their first acts of community service and changed their perspective on the world around them. That class is now the capstone for all students to take as a graduation requirement.

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes. Studies show that Pre-K is an essential foundation for the success of our children, and I know we can create this service for our children with commitment and re-prioritization. Access to affordable childcare and universal Pre-K are central issues of my campaign.

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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes. I saw the early days of MCAS destroy 10th grade curriculum.

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?

**Sam Hammar: 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**?

**Sam Hammar: 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?

**Sam Hammar: 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?

**Sam Hammar: Yes.** I previously taught sex education in a Boston Public High School and am a passionate advocate for comprehensive health education that empowers all our youth. We need to teach about consent and create safe spaces to talk about sexual and gender identity. Passing the Healthy Youth Act is critical, and I will be a vocal advocate and work hard to ensure it passes.

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

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

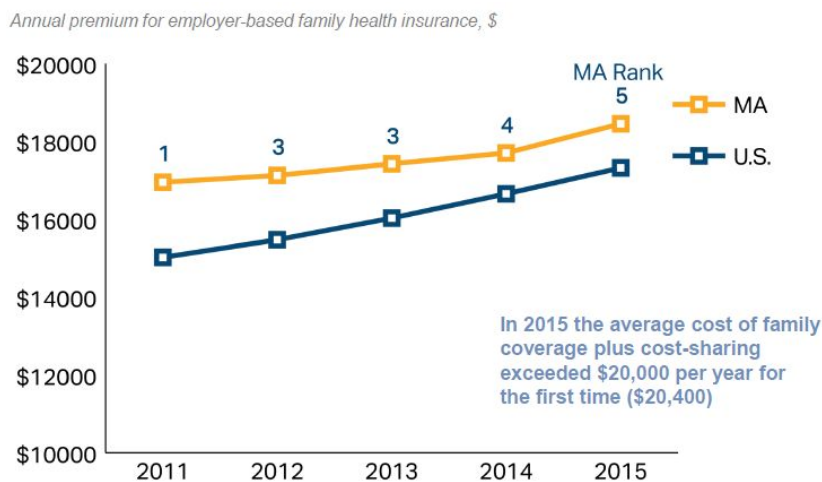
9. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** Would you support making tuition free at public colleges and universities?

**Sam Hammar: Yes.** Twenty years ago as a Florida resident, I went to the University of Florida for free. If they can figure it out, so must we.

## 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.*

**Sam Hammar:** I fundamentally believe that any human service should be delivered by organizations do not have to report a profit to shareholders. This includes providing healthcare to people. A single-payer system is my vision, and broadening the public option is how we get there. We already have a public option in MassHealth, and the Commonwealth already has a proven business model for delivering quality, satisfactory healthcare to constituents. We should open access to more individuals, so employees can decide if they purchase their employers insurance or the public option.

We need to guarantee reproductive healthcare access for all. I agree with NARAL, "access to affordable contraception is a basic human right, and is crucial for the economic empowerment of women and their families." We need to ensure that all who need it have access to available, safe, and equitable health care, especially those within vulnerable populations, including undocumented immigrants, those in poverty, and our trans siblings. The Massachusetts ACCESS Bill must have strong implementation.

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

**Sam Hammar:** While serving on the Melrose Commission on Women, I help develop and drive our legislative agenda to not only educate our community on women's reproductive health and rights, but also advocate on Beacon Hill.

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

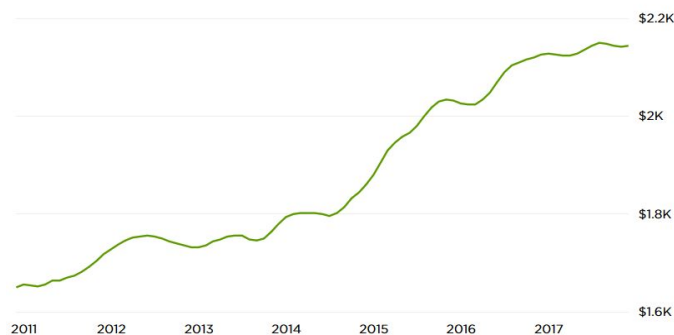


## E. HOUSING

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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?*

**Sam Hammar:** To say Massachusetts is facing a housing crisis is an understatement. Our young people can't afford to rent, our young families can't afford to buy, and our aging population is getting priced out of the communities they love. Housing supply has not kept up with rapidly growing demand and the resulting crisis is eating up incomes for both renters and owners while furthering the wealth gaps in our communities.

It's time for everyone in the housing industry and in our government to work together to solve this issue. If we want to seriously tackle our affordability crisis, we need to create stronger incentives to produce housing of any kind -- especially affordable units. Municipalities should be encouraged to form affordable housing trusts and to adopt inclusionary zoning, which requires all developments to set aside affordable units within the building. We also need to make it easier to build small -- not micro -- well designed housing units, as well as Transportation Oriented Development to increase density around transportation hubs. If passed, the Great Neighborhoods bill would include allowing for smaller

units that are better suited to seniors and younger folks, who are precisely the types of people we are struggling to house right now.

Homelessness is the outcome of a larger underlying issue. Those suffering from mental health, recovery, or economic insecurities each need their own approach to tackle this issue.

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

**Sam Hammar:** I have worked alongside housing colleagues at the City of Boston when advocating that more affordable units are much needed in new development. But it wasn't until I became a candidate that I have had the opportunity to voice my opinion around our state of housing in Massachusetts and policies to get us there.

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

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

b. *The Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

4. **Housing Preservation.** Currently, certain property owners who guarantee affordable rents have been incentivized by subsidized mortgages via the 13A program. However, many of the contracts under 13A are set to expire in 2019. Do you support giving cities and towns the authority to require such apartments to remain affordable?

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar:** Yes. We also we need to expand housing courts throughout the Commonwealth.

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?

**Sam Hammar:** Yes. We need solid data about the cost burden to make informed decisions. The state should create an eviction database to illuminate the scope of housing insecurity in Massachusetts. We should also offer tenants better access to attorneys in housing courts, which states like New York are already doing.

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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

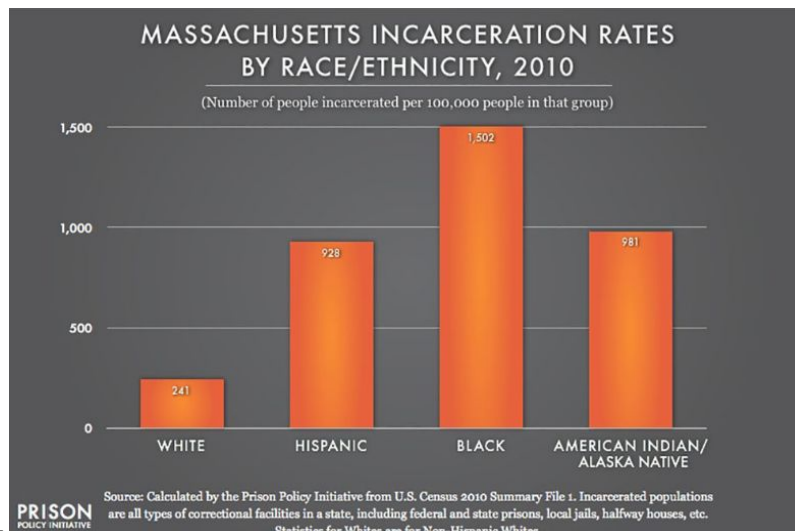
# F. RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

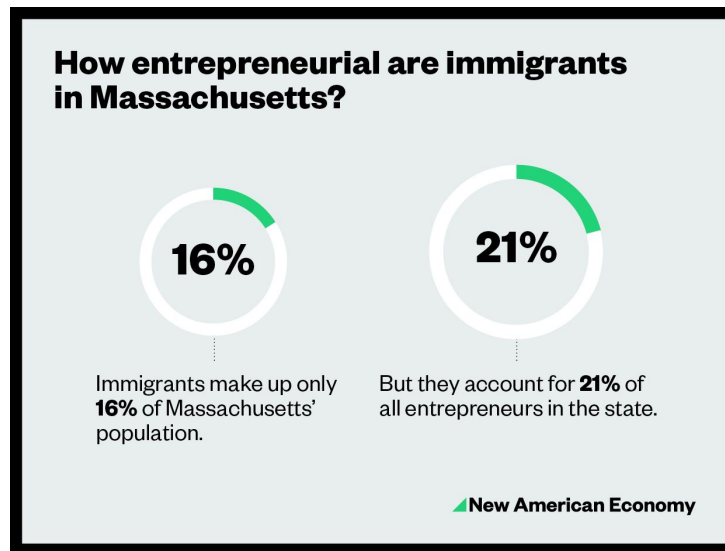
Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds. The social and economic costs of mass incarceration and the policies that created it, in particular, have put our aspirations of “justice for all”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

**Sam Hammar:** I believe in the power -- and potential -- of good governance. Whether it's providing access to healthcare or enshrining civil liberties, the government has a responsibility to protect its most vulnerable and marginalized populations, especially when society doesn't.

I am angry and heartbroken that we're still combating oppression based on sexual orientation, race, and socio-economic status in Massachusetts. We shouldn't have to defend basic human rights in 2018, but since we obviously have to, I'm ready to stand and fight like hell for equality in health, safety, dignity, and freedom.

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

**Sam Hammar:** I have directly worked on issues of wage gap discrimination. I have also participated in many community events, including Supporting LGBTQ Youth, Black Lives Matter, Open Mosque Day, Freedom for All training, and much more.

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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

5. *Mandatory Minimums. The landmark criminal justice reform bill passed earlier this year eliminated or reduced a number of mandatory minimums for drug-related offenses; however, it left in place, or*

*expanded, those related to opioids. The opioid crisis in Massachusetts is severe, but it will not be solved by doubling down on criminalization. Do you support eliminating mandatory minimums for opioid drug offenses?*

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: 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)?*

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

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

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

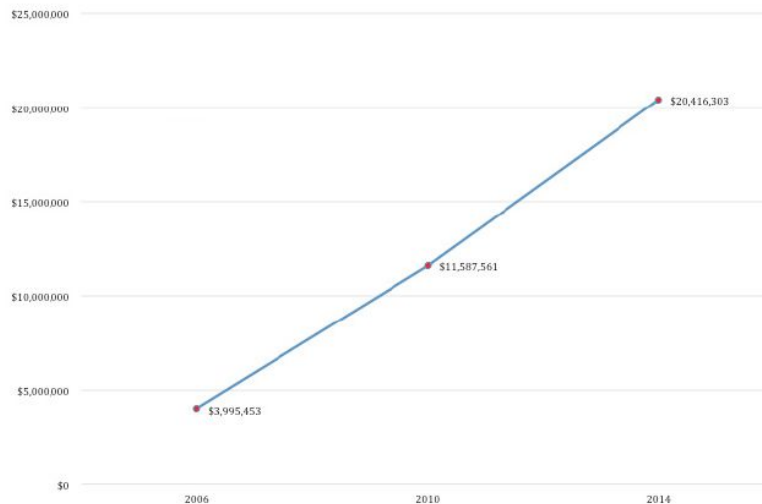
# G. GOOD GOVERNMENT/ STRONG DEMOCRACY

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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.*

**Sam Hammar:** I believe in people, and as result, I believe in government.

For our community to grow stronger, we must understand each other, where we come from and where we want to go. Strong government needs to look like the people we serve and representation of our diversity in Massachusetts is paramount. When the people become their own decision-makers, true priorities and urgency are addressed.

I believe in term limits. Without term limits, power becomes centralized to the top. When those in leadership yield as much power as in our current legislature, it further supports and strengthens the wrong power dynamic. When our elected official go to Beacon Hill, they often forget who has hired



them. We need challenging races for constituents to decide every two years who best represents them. If we only enable the status quo, we will continue to drudge through our current quagmire.

I believe and have worked hard for an open and transparent government where sunshine and access are not the exception, but the practice.

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

**Sam Hammar:** When in the Executive Office of Technology at the Commonwealth, I worked with a team preparing state agencies and municipalities on the Public Records Request Legislation.

As the Chair of the Melrose Democratic City Committee, I lead our issues and elections subcommittees on educating the public on candidates as well as early voting opportunities.

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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar:** 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"?*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

- a. *Election day voter registration*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

- b. *Automatic voter registration*

**Sam Hammar:** Yes.

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

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

d. *No-fault absentee voting*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

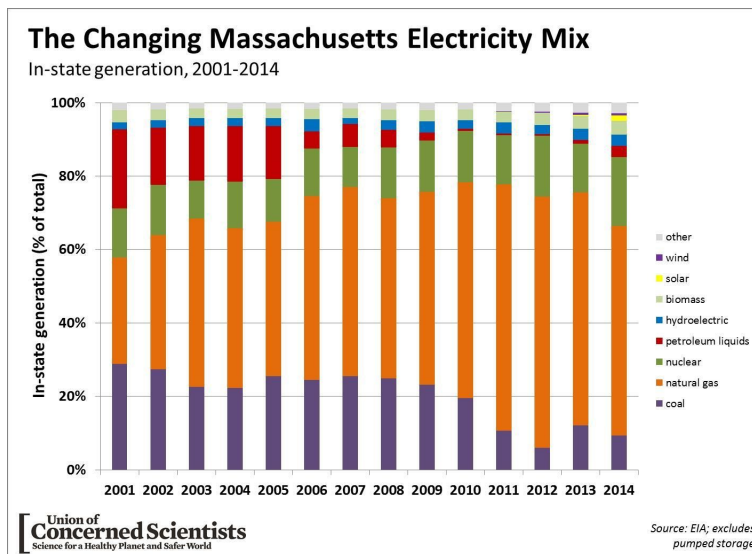
# H. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

*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.*

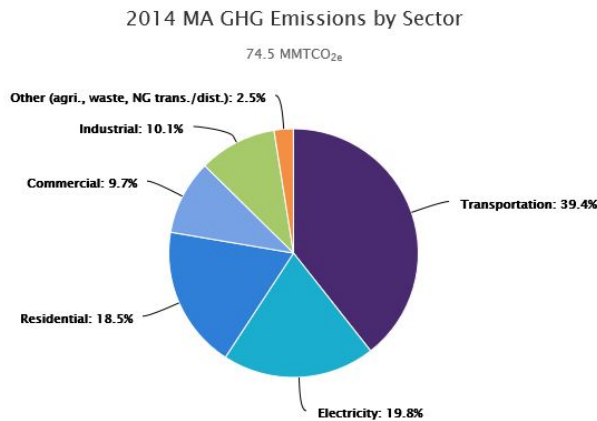
*Equity issues loom large, as low-income communities and communities of color are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters and bear the brunt of pollution. In 2014, Governor Deval Patrick signed an executive order directing all state agencies to devote resources to protect the health, safety, and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

**Sam Hammar:** In Massachusetts, we are at the forefront of the impact of Mother Nature. We must not only expedite our defense against rising waters, but we must also take bold steps again in proactively moving into 100% renewable energy use. The answers for how to do it have long been known. Our leaders have been too slow in action.

I enthusiastically and passionately support transitioning to 100% clean energy by 2050. We need to institute carbon pricing, increase our Renewable Portfolio Standard, be more aggressive with our energy efficiency investments, and finally push for higher standards on transportation emissions. We need to be bold if we are going to get the progress we and our children deserve.

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

**Sam Hammar:** When Boston's Chapter 37 Zoning code was instituted, I was working with the City's greentech economic development initiative. It was an exciting time and my role was to help attract and grow our clean building - process and material - companies within Boston. One success was being a small part, and big supporter of the formation of Greentown Labs.

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

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar:** 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?*

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

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

**Sam Hammar: Yes.** There needs to be a dedicated team to focus on Environmental Justice.

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

**Sam Hammar: Yes.** If we are going to make progress, we cannot go backwards.

8. **Carbon pricing.**

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

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

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

**Sam Hammar: 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?*

**Sam Hammar: Yes.** I also support the inclusion of municipal broadband as a service.

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

**Sam Hammar: Yes.**

11. **Regional Transportation Funding.** *Would you support legislation to allow municipalities to place a question on the ballot to raise revenue for local and regional transportation projects?*

**Sam Hammar: 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.*

**Sam Hammar:** I am committed to creating strong sexual harassment policies and reporting structure throughout state government. It is clearer than ever that the State House needs a culture change. Our leaders need to be bold and innovative in creating a safe, model workplace for all in the legislature. We have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere and mechanisms where State House staff and colleagues can safely report misconduct without the worry of repercussions or blame. Any and all allegations of misconduct in the workplace - within our government and especially with our elected officials - must be taken seriously. It is time for our leaders to put those who experience harassment and discrimination first, and I am committed to leading on this issue and cultivating this important culture change as a State Senator.

Thank you for your time and consideration.