

PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

2020 CONGRESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

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Candidate: Alan Khazei

Office Sought: Massachusetts 4th Congressional District

Party: Democrat

Website: www.alankhazei.com

Twitter: @AlanKhazei

Facebook: www.facebook.com/khazeiforcongress

Other Social Media: Instagram - @AlanKhazei

Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

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I. About You

1. Why are you running for office? And what will your top 3 priority pieces of legislation if elected?

I'm running for Congress in Massachusetts for several reasons. First as a parent, I don't want to be part of the first generation since the founding of our country to leave the country worse off to our children and grandchildren than our parents and grandparents left it for us. Second, because I believe that we are in the worst of times but also best of times for our democracy. Worst because Trump is an existential threat to our values, principles, ideals and pillars of our democracy. But best of times, because of the extraordinary new movement energy that has

emerged. I've been a movement leader, builder and activist my entire career and I'm inspired by the new energy. I've been on the outside building coalitions to get big things done in our nation, but now want to get on the inside, bust open the doors of Congress and bring this new movement energy in to break the logjam in DC. Third, I am a service person at my core. Serving in Congress is an extraordinary opportunity to make a tangible and daily difference in people's lives.

My top legislative priorities will be 1. Restoring the American Dream for all and dealing with income inequality, lack of opportunity and equality for too many people, lack of assets and confronting the high cost of child care, education, housing and health care. 2. Climate Change because it is an existential threat. 3. Bringing about fundamental democracy reform to once again make our democracy truly of, by and for the people. This will include getting the money out of politics, a Constitutional amendment to end Citizens United, total transparency for political donations, and public financing of elections; electoral reform to both make voting easier and ending voter suppression, eliminating the electoral college, term limits for the Supreme Court, major lobbying reform, gerrymandering reform and bringing about voluntary universal national service as a way to unleash the energy and idealism of young people to tackle pressing societal challenges, restore our sense of common purpose and show that we have more that unites us than divides us, and give all young people a jumpstart on the American dream through life changing benefits in return for their service. And if I can say a 4th, taking on the NRA and fighting gun violence which has become pervasive in our communities.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

As mentioned above, I've spent my life in service, thirty years, since I co-founded City Year with my best friend, Michael Brown from my law school dorm room. I've been a social entrepreneur and movement leader who has founded or co-founded multiple non-profits all with the mission of engaging more people in our democracy to bring about transformational change and tangible impact to improve people's lives. As a citizen leader, I've built the coalitions and resultant outside pressure and support to help pass three major pieces of federal legislation and I successfully led the effort to Save AmeriCorps in 2003 when Tom Delay tried to kill it. This was at a time when Republicans led the House, Senate and White House and was possible by mobilizing a grassroots movement that led to bi-partisan support. That important work saved the Corporation for National Service, a billion dollar agency that went from an 80% funding cut to a 50% budget increase. As a result more than 1.1 million people have served through AmeriCorps. I've worked with every Governor of Massachusetts since Gov. Mike Dukakis and every President since George H. W. Bush and especially closely with President Clinton's administration and President Obama's. I've been appointed to two bi-partisan federal commissions on service. As a result of all of this, I know how to get Washington to work and have demonstrated as a citizen the ability to make significant impact, even in the face of a government entirely controlled by the Republican party.

I've also learned that to solve any problem local, state or national you need both a grassroots movement and to engage grassroots leaders. You also need to bring together the four key sectors of our society: Non-Profit sector, Local, State and Federal Government, Private Sector and Education sector all undergirded by people's activism at the grassroots. I've done that repeatedly in building City Year and the other non profits I've founded and in moving legislation through Congress, or preventing a Republican Congress from eliminating the AmeriCorps program.

And as noted above, I've been engaged in the exciting new people-powered progressive politics through my leadership roles with the Women's March, March for Our Lives and the most recent non profit I founded Democracy Entrepreneurs. I believe this new energy is key to not only taking back our democracy but in building a new intersectional coalition that can help push us to a new progressive era in our country.

Finally, I've travelled to more than 40 countries in most parts of the world -- Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe and South America. So many of our challenges -- climate change, pandemics, income inequality, security etc -- will take global cooperation and solutions that I think it is important to have someone in Congress who has travelled and understands the world and how to build those bridges and coalitions.

3. What do you view as the biggest barriers to progressive policy on the federal level?

First, we have a government that is dominated by special interests and money. That is why I think democracy reform is essential. Second, we need to leverage the power of the people to break open the doors of Congress and break the logjam. I believe that with the right strategy we can achieve many of our progressive goals as long as we reinforce, tap and nurture this new energy and strategically leverage it to put pressure on the Congress to move legislation that strong majorities in the country want. For example, 80 percent of the country agrees on a package of gun safety legislation, 80% support DACA and a vast majority support a path to citizenship, vast majorities agree that our democracy has become corrupted and want to see reform, strong majorities agree that Climate Change is an existential threat, vast majorities agree that income inequality is a major issue, vast majorities agree that we need to bring health care costs down, should be able to negotiate with the drug companies to lower prescription drug costs, and need to protect people with pre-existing conditions, and the list goes on and on.

And with these systemic issues, we also have the most dangerous President in modern history, who is clearly corrupt and has no empathy, caring only for his own power and ego and a Majority Leader who also is focused on power as he showed with Merrick Garland, not even allowing a hearing, and not the basic norms of our Constitutional Republic. And the Koch brothers and others have spent 30 years to build a system to reinforce this.

This challenge energizes me because I am optimistic that with the new movement energy in our country and a strategic effort to build a new intersectional progressive coalition we can break the logjam in Congress. I have experience doing that and would be so excited to work with other leaders to make that strategy happen.

II. The Issues

Our questionnaire is based on our [Progressive Platform](#): Shared Prosperity, All Means All/Racial and Social Justice, Good Government and Strong Democracy, and Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection.

A. An Equitable Tax System

1. What does a progressive tax system look like? Which specific proposals would you advocate for?

There is a need for a much more progressive tax system in the United States, especially following the Trump administration's sweeping changes that basically benefited the top 1%. As it stands now, middle- and working-class families pay more than their fair share in taxes. First, taxes need to be raised on the wealthiest Americans and large corporations, in order to pay for increased spending on Healthcare, Infrastructure, Education, Housing, Child Care and National Service. The fact that corporations like Amazon pay \$0 in federal taxes is unfair and untenable. Specifically, the corporate income tax needs to be raised from 21% up closer to the high 20's, and the top income tax bracket needs to change from 37% back up to at least 39.7%. We also need to raise the Estate Tax, end stepped up in basis, end the deduction for carried interest and tax all income whether from work or investments at the same level. We should also have a higher tax bracket for income over 1 million dollars. I will be rolling out a comprehensive tax fairness proposal during the campaign, but these are some of my initial ideas.

B. Jobs That Pay a Living Wage

1. **Minimum Wage.** The gap between productivity and wages has grown dramatically since 1973. Moreover, the federal minimum wage remains stuck at \$7.25—what it was in 2009. Would you support legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour?
 1. And eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers?
 2. And index the minimum wage to inflation?

I wholeheartedly support legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. \$7.25 an hour is simply not a living wage. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020 prices on

average are 478.77% higher than they were in 1973. The fact that an individual is expected to spend nearly five times as much for the same goods, without a comparable increase in wage, is absolutely unfair and unjust. The minimum wage should be indexed to inflation. I also support eliminating the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers.

2. **Retirement Security.** With the decline of pensions and other defined-benefit retirement plans in the workplace, retirement is becoming more insecure, and seniors are having to work longer just to stay afloat. Would you support legislation to....
 1. Increase the benefits provided by Social Security? YES
 2. Raising the cap on earnings that are taxed for Social Security? (Currently, only earnings up to \$118,500 are subject to the payroll tax.) YES
3. **Paid Leave.** The US is the only industrial nation without paid family leave. Would you support federal legislation ensuring that workers can take up to 12 weeks of paid leave for a pregnancy, the birth or adoption of a child, to recover from a serious illness, or to care for a seriously ill family member?

Absolutely. The U.S. is far behind the other developed nations of the world in this respect. Paid family leave ought to be guaranteed by the federal government.

4. **Union Rights.** Unions play a key role in building a strong middle-class; however, unions have been under attack in recent years. Would you support the following efforts to strengthen the role of unions in our economy:
 1. Prohibiting "right-to-work" laws at the state level? YES
 2. Requiring employers to recognize a union when a majority of workers in a bargaining unit sign valid authorization cards? YES
 3. Prohibiting employers from interfering with unionization efforts, such as by compelling worker attendance at anti-union meetings? YES

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

As mentioned, my Great Grandfather, Augusto Mantini, worked the coal mines in Western PA and was inspired by John L. Lewis to fight for the coal miners union. My Uncle is a custodian in the local High School in Pennsylvania and thanks to his Union has a living wage, good quality health care for him and his family and a pension. Unions built the middle class in this country, we need to do more to allow workers to form unions so that many more people benefit from the wealth generation in our country.

C. Quality, Affordable Health Care

1. **Medicare for All.** Would you support the creation of a single payer/"Medicare for All" health insurance system in the country that would guarantee health care as a right?

As mentioned, my mother was a nurse anesthetist and a school nurse and my father was a general, oncological and vascular surgeon. I grew up in a service family dedicated to providing all people with health care. My dad treated all people regardless of their ability to pay him. When he retired we figured out that over the course of his career he had 20,000 patients, many whose lives he saved. I've also had my own direct, personal experience with the importance of affordable quality health care for all. My daughter was born with something called "tetralogy of fallot" which means she had four things wrong with her heart including a hole in her heart and a blocked valve. She had to have emergency heart surgery at six weeks of age. She then had to have another emergency surgery at age 13, when we were originally told she would be fine until age 18. We are very blessed in that we had good, affordable health care and access to Children's Hospital and she is doing totally fine now. She will still have to have procedures for the rest of her life, unless there is a medical breakthrough to use human tissue to replace her now cow valve. Children's and other institutions are working on that research. Without the protection for pre-existing conditions, she will not be able to get healthcare when she becomes an adult and will not be able to afford the life saving procedures she will need, as they are simply too expensive.

Because of my family experience, I believe that everyone should have quality affordable health care as a right.

I support building on Obama's Affordable Care Act and providing a "Medicare for all who want it" system. I support a strong public option that will allow anyone who wants to use that option instead of private insurance the chance to do so. And I strongly support subsidies for low income people so they can access the public option. The Affordable Care Act represented a significant step forward towards universal healthcare in this country ensuring more than 29 million people, a fight that goes back almost 100 years. It has been sustained despite many attempts to eliminate it, but it is still at risk as recent court cases show. I believe the Affordable Care Act ought to be fought for, built upon, expanded and improved. Just as was done with Social Security, which when it was first introduced covered too few people, but has steadily been broadened to cover everyone. More than 150 million people in our country have private health insurance. If they want to choose to give that up for a public option, I think that makes a lot of sense. But if we force people to leave their insurance, including Union workers who have bargained hard for strong health care plans and given up wages in return, we may lose the opportunity to build on the Affordable Care Act. I also think we need to focus on reducing health care costs. We can do that by allowing Medicare and Medicaid to negotiate much lower prescription drug costs with the drug companies, moving away from a payment system that incentivizes "heads in beds in hospitals" and one focused on treatment of illness to one focused on wellness and prevention, and we need to ensure there are strong treatment options for mental illness, anxiety and depression **as well as substance use** and take these health issues out of the shadows.

2. **Prescription Drug Prices.** Prescription drug prices in the US are consistently higher than in other countries. Which policies would you support to lower the cost of prescription drugs?

1. Allowing Medicare to negotiate prices with pharmaceutical companies?

YES.

2. Allowing patients, pharmacists, and wholesalers to buy low-cost prescription drugs from Canada and other industrialized countries?

YES

Absolutely. We have international trade for most other goods, there is no reason why private pharmaceutical companies based in the U.S. shouldn't have to compete with drug prices in other countries. Most consumer goods compete on a global market, drugs should too.

3. Allowing the federal government to manufacture lower-cost generic versions of prescription drugs when the market does not offer them?

Yes.

3. **Reproductive Rights.** Would you support repealing the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds to pay for abortion except to save the life of the woman, or if the pregnancy arises from incest or rape?

YES. Women should be able to choose what they want to do with their bodies and low income women need to have that right as well.

4. **Opioid Crisis.** An essential part of addressing the opioid crisis, safe consumption sites allow medical professionals to respond to overdoses and engage participants in medical and behavioral health services. Would you support the legalization of SCSs?

The opioid crisis needs to be dealt with as a health issue, not a criminal one. I support safe consumption sites because they allow health care workers access to patients addicted to opioids in a controlled environment. Treatment is much easier without fear of criminal consequences, both from a healthcare provider's point of view and an opioid user's.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

We need to be much more aggressive in confronting the Opioid Crisis. It is destroying people, families and entire communities. We need to hold the people accountable who helped create this crisis, as Atty General Maura Healy and others are doing, and we need a much more comprehensive approach in dealing with it. This can include service programs, such as ones in Gloucester Massachusetts, Nashua NH, or Kentucky, in which people who were themselves victims of Opioid addiction become counselors for people who are trying to fight addiction. And service people including Vista and AmeriCorps volunteers who help steer opioid victims to the

services they need. It also must include job opportunities for people suffering with Opioid addiction and a more empathetic approach in general. The Opioid crisis is very real in parts of the 4th district including Fall River and Taunton and I will make it a top priority to work with key leaders in local, state and federal government, health care, non profits, businesses and higher ed including institutions like Bristol Community College to develop a strategy to confront it.

D. Quality, Free Publicly Funded Education

1. **Education Equity.** More than six and a half decades out from the *Brown vs. Board* Supreme Court ruling, our public education systems remain highly segregated and unequal. Please name three policies you would advocate for in order to address this.
 1. School funding should be much more evenly distributed and increased in lower income, higher need communities as the recent State education law now requires (updating foundation budget). As the system exists now, wealthier zip codes have higher property taxes which in turn equals better schools. We need to have a more equitable system for paying for education, otherwise, higher quality education in more affluent communities, reinforces privilege and lower quality education in low income neighborhoods ensures the poor stays poor. Greater revenues will also yield higher pay for teaching and school staff (see below); communities across our district ought to be able to provide a living wage and benefits to enable high quality teacher recruitment and retention of a diverse set of educators especially staff of color.
 2. Funding for schools should not be tied to a base “cost” of educating each student. When the system is set up this way, funding is moved around as students are moved between different schools. The problem is that all students do not cost the same to educate and schools need to invest in infrastructure and core services that cannot accommodate wide budget fluctuations year to year. This system especially affects children who require special education programs, since these programs and services are typically more expensive than the cost of a traditional classroom education. Providing the same funding for a traditional student and a special-needs student exacerbates the gap between them. I am very familiar with this, as our daughter is dyslexic and we have had to fight hard for her to get the services she needs to achieve her full potential. Inadequate funding also exacerbates a significant achievement gap not only for students needing special education but also low income and African American and Latino students as well.
 3. Our society needs to significantly increase teacher compensation and the general respect we have for teachers and the teaching profession. If you ask people “who has had the most influence in their life outside of their parents or direct family members,” many people respond with a favorite teacher or more than one.

For me it was Mrs. O'Brien in third grade, Mrs. Edmunds in 5th Grade, Mr. Pero and Mr. Carty in 7th Grade and Mr. Lombard and Mr. Landry in 8th grade, who remains a family friend. Teachers are essential to helping students reach their potential and access the American Dream. Yet, too often, we don't pay teachers enough such that they themselves can achieve the American dream and afford a home, send their children to college and have a comfortable retirement. A society pays for what it values. We pay doctors, lawyers, consultants, tech workers, finance people and others much higher salaries than teachers. I would push for much higher teacher pay to six figure salaries as a way to encourage many more people to go into and stay in the teaching profession. I would also have special incentives to attract more educators and leaders of color and men into the teaching profession who serve as role models for our increasingly diverse young people.

4. I will push for universal voluntary national service with a goal of getting to at least one million young people serving full-time every year. Currently half of AmeriCorps programs work in education. And we have seen through City Year and other

AmeriCorps education programs, that young people in service can make a dramatic difference in the key "A, B, C's -- attitude, behavior and course performance" of keeping students, especially students from low income backgrounds in school and on-track. They also help relieve the burden on teachers of class sizes that are too high while providing important one on one or small group instruction for the students that need it the most. My goal would be to grow national service to the size that there could be an AmeriCorps member in every single classroom that needs one.

2. **Charter School Funding.** The NAACP has proposed a moratorium on public funds for charter school expansion until a national audit has been completed to determine the impact of charter growth in each state. Do you support such a moratorium?

I need to evaluate this proposal more thoroughly as I am more familiar with Massachusetts' charter schools than nationwide. I wholeheartedly support public schools and support their need to innovate and meet the varied needs of a diverse population. My initial thoughts are that we've now had a roughly thirty year experiment with charter schools and we should step back and evaluate how that experiment has worked and the impact on our education system as a whole. For example, I am concerned about policies that cripple the public school system such as funding charters in a way that takes money from regular public school budgets. It has caused a crisis that has been exacerbating some of the inequities they were designed to improve.

3. **Charter School Accountability.** Do you support requiring that charter schools comply with the same transparency and accountability requirements as public schools?

Yes.

4. **High-Stakes Testing.** Do you support prohibiting the use of standardized testing as a primary or significant factor in closing a school, firing a teacher, or making any other high-stakes decisions?

YES. As mentioned, my daughter is dyslexic. And both of my children are in public schools. We have gone too far with high stakes testing. Too much time is spent teaching students to the test. We are crowding out other important subjects such as civics, science, and the arts. And we are not spending enough time teaching our students to think creatively and problem solve instead of having them learn rote information. I am also opposed to using high stakes tests as an accountability tool. They should be used as intended to provide a measure of performance that educators can use to improve teaching and learning.

5. **Student Loan Debt.** Student loan debt is holding back the economy, as graduates are unable to make important long-term investments in their future. Presidential candidates have put forth various schemes to forgive student loan debt. Do you support doing so, and what would your ideal scheme look like?

I graduated from law school with student loan debt and was only able to start City Year because at the time I was able to defer all payments on my student loans for the first year after school. Also, my interest levels were much more reasonable than today's. Student loan debt now is over 1.6 trillion dollars and is crushing students and literally mortgaging their futures and limiting their options. I would do several things to reduce and forgive student debt.

1. I would fight for and expand the public service student loan forgiveness program which Trump and Betsy Devos are trying to eliminate. This program allows young people who go into public service to have their loans completely eliminated after ten years. I would strengthen and expand that program so that anyone who goes into public service can have their loans forgiven completely for each year they are in public service based on their income and the cost of living in their area. I do not support completely cancelling student debt for students who go into very high paying jobs such as investment banking, consulting, tech or finance and can afford to pay back their loans. But I do support completely forgiving student debt for young people who go into public service. This way their debt will not prevent them from going into public service work.
2. We should dramatically reduce student loan interest rates. Interest rates for banks have been close to zero for years, but student loan borrowing rates on average are around 6%. We should reduce the borrowing rate to the level of mortgage rates which are currently around 3.4 percent and not have any students paying such high interest rates.
3. As part of my national service proposal, I would increase the AmeriCorps Segal Post Service Award from the current level of \$6195 for each year of service to \$12,500 a year and index it for inflation. The average cost of community college is \$4864 dollars a year. This means that after one year of service, a young person could fully pay for two years of

community college and still have money left for all other school fees and then some. The average cost of a public university in state tuition is \$10,230, so one year of service would more than cover the cost of one year of higher education. The average student debt amount is currently about \$36,000 a student. This would mean that if someone chose to serve for three years, they could graduate completely debt free. Or if they served for two years, they would graduate with \$11,000 in debt a much more reasonable amount.

I believe we need to take important and dramatic action to reduce student loan debt.

Tuition-Free Higher Education. More and more jobs are requiring a college degree, but the cost of higher education has been growing faster than wages, contributing to a ballooning student debt burden. Would you support legislation to guarantee free tuition at public colleges and universities?

I believe Americans should have access to tuition-free higher education as a benefit of enrolling in a year of national service work through programs like AmeriCorps, the Peace Corps, or similar. As noted above, I would significantly increase the Post Service Award so that students can serve their way to a higher education.

Another proposal I will be releasing during the campaign is to unite the idea of “baby bond programs” with national service as a way to give every young person a jumpstart on the American dream and have real assets when they start their adult lives. Essentially I would take the current 529 college savings program and expand the purposes to make it an American Dream account. This means funds in that account could be used for classic American Dream things such as higher education, but also job training and certification, the down payment on your first home, start up funds to be a small business or non profit entrepreneur and savings for retirement. (The original GI Bill after World War II had purposes like this) I would also make this a lifelong account and allow use of the funds for lifelong learning. I am still working on the exact number, but I would have the the federal government invest at least \$10,000 in this account with the goal being that by the time the child is 19 the account has at least \$36,000 in it, enough to cover all student debt. Families could also contribute to the account as they do with current 529 accounts. But, for the student to access the \$10,000 invested by the federal government and all returns that have grown that amount, they first have to do a year of national service sometime between ages 18 to 28. The idea behind this proposal is that it would allow any young person who is willing to serve for just one year to jumpstart their life on the American Dream with real assets in the bank. It is like a bookend to Social Security. A big problem we have in this country is that too few people have any assets. Forty percent of the country doesn’t have \$500 in savings, so if they have some kind of small economic disaster such as their car breaking down, a medical payment, something breaking in their home, they can reach calamity. This proposal would help solve the asset problem for so many Americans. I would make all money in this account tax deferred as 529’s currently are and I would pay for it with the Estate Tax.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

E. Affordable, Decent Housing

1. **Tenant Rights.** Would you support legislation to establish a national just cause eviction standard, which would limit the grounds upon which a landlord may evict a tenant? YES

When I was in law school, I did legal aid work which included defending tenants who were at risk of eviction. From a federal standpoint, the balance of rights between tenant and landlord are extremely skewed towards the landlord. I support tenant rights because they will serve to level the playing field in the housing rental marketplace.

2. **Inclusive Communities.** Federal funding can be a major source of leverage in shaping state and municipal policy. Would you support legislation to tie transportation or housing funding to...
 1. Ending exclusionary zoning practices? YES

Exclusionary zoning practices are a vestige of the Federal Housing Administration and its red lining policies in the 1920s through 1960s. The fact that these policies are still allowed to exist is untenable and unjust. Tying federal funding to ending exclusionary zoning practices will help correct the vast inequality resulting from the inability of people of color to buy property for more than half of the 20th century. These inequalities still exist today, and help explain why the income gap between people of color and white people is so large in this country. Ending exclusionary zoning will help close that gap.

2. Repealing state prohibitions on rent stabilization policies?

A state has no business prohibiting rent stabilization policies in cities where they might be very popular. If a municipality votes to approve rent stabilization policy, it is a vast overreach of state authority to declare that vote invalid. As such, I would support tying federal funding to repeal of state prohibitions on rent stabilization.

3. **Public Housing.** Would you support the repeal of the Faircloth Amendment, which bans HUD from funding the construction or operation of new public housing units beyond the total that existed in 1999? YES

Affordable housing is a growing crisis in the 4th district and across too many parts of America. We must have a more innovative and creative approach and incentives to build many more units of affordable housing. This includes repealing the Faircloth Amendment as a first step. America has moved largely backwards on public housing at the federal level in the 21st century, and that lack of progress began with the Faircloth Amendment.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

I will be rolling out more proposals on this issue during the campaign.

F. A Fair and Efficient Criminal Justice System

1. **Ending Mass Incarceration.** The past few years have seen a growing recognition that the “tough on crime” legislation passed in the 1980s and 1990s has had a devastating impact on communities of color and has not improved public safety. Which of the following proposals do you support?

1. Legalizing marijuana?

Yes, I believe marijuana ought to be legalized at the federal level. However, I do think there needs to be strong regulation and oversight. Cannabis stores should not be located in neighborhoods near K-12 schools and the hours when the stores are open should be limited. There also needs to be provisions for security and traffic. The first cannabis store opened in Massachusetts is in Brookline Village near my home and its location is problematic on a number of levels. In addition, we need to ensure that the people who get the licences include people of color, as they have been most victimized by the war on drugs. Again, we have seen in Massachusetts that it has been too much of “an inside game” as to who gets the licences. Legalization must be approached with a focus on correcting the vast failures of the war on drugs. An important piece of any cannabis bill should include the release of people in prison for a nonviolent marijuana-related offense, as well as provisions protecting the nascent industry from the influence of corporate “big marijuana.” We should also make sure that marijuana is available for medicinal purposes.

2. Repealing mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses?

Yes. Mandatory minimum sentences haven’t worked. We have judges who should be able to use their judgment based on the facts of each case. Someone who has committed a nonviolent drug-related offense is presumably a very small threat to society, if any threat at all. We should not be throwing people in prison for these crimes. Doing so only contributes to America’s mass-incarceration problem, and exacerbates the issue of racial disparity in the criminal justice system.

3. Eliminating cash bail, so that no one is held in jail solely for an inability to pay?

Yes. Cash bail essentially puts a price on freedom, ensuring that those who can afford it will be able to get out of jail, and those who can’t will be forced to stay. Wealth should not be a precursor for imprisonment.

4. Abolishing the death penalty?

YES, I am opposed to capital punishment. And as we have seen, too many people on death row have later been proven innocent through DNA tests and other evidence that has emerged after their case has been tried.

5. Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which has been proven to have significant racial disparities ?

YES

6. Barring the federal government and state and local jurisdictions from contracting with private corporations to run prisons and detention facilities?

YES, we should not have private prisons in our country. They should be eliminated. We cannot and should not turn incarceration into an industry when we already have one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world.

2. **Prison Conditions.** In addition to having incarceration rates that far [outpace](#) those of other countries, the US is known for violating both domestic and international law in the conditions of its prisons. Which of the following steps would you support to emphasize the rehabilitative, as opposed to punitive, nature of the system and protect basic rights?

1. Preventing companies from charging prisoners unreasonable fees for banking and telecommunications services?

YES

2. Requiring that incarcerated individuals be paid for their work at a rate no lower than the federal minimum wage?

Yes. Forcing prisoners to work without pay is akin to slavery, especially with a prison population that is disproportionately people of color.

3. Restoring Pell Grant access to prisoners?

YES, it all comes back to the ideal of rehabilitation. Preventing prisoners from access to Pell Grants essentially prevents their access to education, and therefore their access to rehabilitation. How is one meant to restore their societal trust and values without any way to learn about them?

4. Limiting the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days, beyond which it is defined as torture by the United Nations?

Solitary confinement is a cruel practice. American prisons should not be in the business of abusing human rights, i.e. torture. Solitary confinement should absolutely be limited to 15 consecutive days, if not even fewer.

3. **Police Accountability.** Lax or nonexistent systems of accountability and perverse incentives at the federal, state, and local level, combined with a legacy of systemic racism, too often lead to law enforcement neither enforcing the law nor keeping the public safe. Which of the following steps would you support to promote a more humane, community-focused policing?
 1. Prohibiting the transfer of military weapons from the federal government to state and local law enforcement? YES
 2. Eliminating qualified immunity, which allows law enforcement to violate people's constitutional rights with impunity? YES

There is no point in having constitutional rights if agents of the state are able to infringe upon them.

3. Restricting the use of civil asset forfeiture by police departments and prosecutors' offices? YES

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

Prison rates in the US are the highest in the world. In 1974 our incarceration rate was around 350,000, today it is over 2.3 million and disproportionately affects people of color. We must take this on as a justice issue and civil rights issue for our times. I will be releasing during the campaign a comprehensive criminal justice reform plan.

G. A Humane Immigration System

1. **Comprehensive Immigration Reform.** The approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants in the US are important contributors to strong economies and strong communities. Due to political and economic instability abroad, as well as a labyrinthine and discriminatory immigration bureaucracy at home, this number could very well continue to grow. However, comprehensive immigration reform legislation has remained elusive in Washington. Which of the following policies would you support?
 1. The DREAM Act, which would allow certain US-raised immigrant youth to earn lawful permanent residence and American citizenship?

YES. Anyone who grew up in the United States ought to be provided a path citizenship. For many Dreamers, America is the only country they have ever known.

2. A path for undocumented immigrants to gain US citizenship?

I support not only a path for undocumented immigrants to gain US citizenship, but a much more expeditious and efficient system than the one currently in place. The United States is a nation of immigrants. As noted above, I am a son of immigrants. People used to immigrate here through Ellis Island in the thousands with no restriction. Immigration is our heritage.

3. Repealing the three-year, ten-year, and permanent bars of reentry for undocumented immigrants?

Yes.

4. Decriminalizing border crossing?

Yes.

2. **Upholding Rights, Ending Perverse Incentives.** Every day, we hear new unconscionable stories about how the US is treating immigrants at the border, fueled by both bad laws and lawlessness at the federal level. Our immigration system should reflect our values. Which of the following policies would you support?

1. Ending the practice of family detention?

Yes. We definitely should not be separating children from their parents and putting them in cages. This fundamentally violates who we are as a country and our ideals and values.

2. Ending the practice of family separation?

Yes. America has no right to separate children from their parents.

3. Ending ICE's daily bed quota?

Yes

4. Imposing a moratorium on the construction of new detention facilities?
YES, until we get a handle on what is happening on the border for sure.

5. Abolishing ICE?

I believe ICE is in desperate need of reform, I also think there is value in some level of border security and immigration control. Therefore, I do not support abolishing ICE. Rather, I would like to see the agency dramatically reformed.

3. **Ending Mass Deportations.** Would you support a moratorium on deportations until a comprehensive immigration reform bill is passed?

I need to study this issue more. As a son of immigrants, I am committed to building a coalition to resolve the situation of the DREAMERS and the 12 million undocumented immigrants in our country with a path to citizenship.

4. **Refugees.** In October of 2019, the number of refugees resettled in the US hit zero, and the Trump administration would like to keep it that way going forward, abandoning historic humanitarian commitments. What do you see as the appropriate number of refugees for the US to accept each year?

As the Statue of Liberty states, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." This is a beacon to people all over the world and it has built America with people who come here from everywhere. I need to study more what the right number of refugees should be, but as is true for our history, we need to be leading in resettling refugees not taking zero.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

H. A Diverse and Welcoming Society

1. **LGBTQ Rights.** Over the past several years, we have seen numerous states try to deny trans individuals the right to exist in public spaces as well as conservative lawsuits seeking to legalize discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. Would you support legislation to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Civil Rights Act of 1964?

YES, definitely. Sexual orientation and gender identity should be added to the Civil Rights Act. The government of the United States has no right to say that a group of people may not exist publicly. The Trump administration has changed the regulations and no longer includes gender identity or sexual orientation as discrimination under federal policy. This is leading a number of states to enact laws targeting the LGBTQ+ community. We must amend the Civil Rights Act to stop this practice once and for all and protect and honor members of the LGBTQ+ community. I will work hard to build the coalition to get this done.

2. **Reparations.** Would you support legislation to create a commission to study the impact of slavery on the social, political, and economic life of the US and propose appropriate remedies (such as HR40)? YES
3. **Sexual Harassment.** Would you support legislation to end the use of forced arbitration clauses in sexual harassment cases?

Yes. Forced arbitration should not be allowed to be used as a tool for sexual harassment and a lack of persecution in its wake.

4. **Gun Violence Prevention.** The US has the largest number of guns per capita in the world--and consequently one of the highest rates of gun deaths. For too long, the federal government has refused to play a constructive role in preventing gun violence. Which of the following proposals would you advocate for?

1. Reinstating the federal assault weapons ban?

Yes. These are weapons that were designed for war. A private citizen has no need for one.

2. Banning high-capacity magazine ammunitions?

Yes.

3. Requiring a license to purchase a gun?

Yes. No one should be able to purchase a gun without identifying themselves and providing proof that they know how to handle one safely.

4. Limiting the number of guns an individual can buy to one per month?

Yes. Anyone who feels they need a gun for hunting or protection does not need to buy more than one per month.

5. Repealing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which shields the gun industry from lawsuits?

Yes. The gun industry needs incentives to prevent the sale of their products to dangerous individuals. The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act undermines that responsibility. Every other industry is subject to lawsuits, the gun industry should be as well.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

As noted, I was involved in helping to build the Sibling March Network for March for our Lives. And March for Our Lives joined our Democracy Entrepreneurs coalition. I have also worked with Everytown for Gun Safety, Moms Demand Action and Mothers for Justice and Equality locally. I have seen the terrible impact of gun violence on our communities first hand through my work with City Year, Youthbuild and other organizations including The BASE, where I serve as a founding board member. I am totally inspired by the heroic young people leading this charge. I have a strategy to take on the NRA and get gun safety legislation passed using the same strategy and tactics I successfully used to not only Save but Grow AmeriCorps when the Republicans held the entire federal government and Tom Delay tried to kill it. If I get elected I am going to organize a non stop, round the clock people's hearing to end gun violence on capitol hill until we win. I know we can win, because 80% of the people agree on a whole package of gun safety measures.

I. Good Government and Strong Democracy

1. **Comprehensive Democracy Reform.** Will you commit to voting on HR 1, the For The People Act, as introduced in 2018? Among other things, HR1 (“For the People Act”) contains automatic voter registration, Election Day Registration, the expansion of early voting, the prohibition of partisan gerrymandering, and other vital reforms.

Yes. I am making Democracy Reform a centerpiece of my campaign. As noted, I was among the first Congressional candidates in the country 10 years ago to refuse to take special interest money from corporate PACs and Lobbyists, and I am doing the same in this campaign. I also co-wrote the business plan for Issue ONE seven years ago, a leading national democracy reform group. Issue One, Represent US and a number of organizations working on gerrymandering reform, lobbying reform, Voting Rights and ending Voter Suppression including the New Georgia Project (Co-founded by Stacey Abrams and Nse Ufot) and JOLT Texas, have joined our Democracy Entrepreneurs coalition. Congressperson JP Sarbanes, is a good friend of mine going back to law school and I am inspired by his determination and leadership on this issue and will co-sponsor HR 1 and help build the coalition to get it passed if I am elected. I’m also honored that Larry Lessig, one of our country’s recognized leaders on democracy reform and fighting corruption is supporting me. As is, Cong. Jamie Raskin, who is also a leader on these issues. In addition to HR 1, I want to eliminate the Electoral College and put term limits of 18 years on Supreme Court Justices. I also want to join a coalition for a constitutional amendment to end Citizens United. We won’t be able to take back our government or democracy or enact legislation we want until we reform our democracy.

2. **Ending Prison Disenfranchisement.** Currently, Maine and Vermont are the only states that provide full suffrage to the incarcerated. Do you support ending the disenfranchisement for those currently incarcerated?

Yes.

3. **Ranked Choice Voting.** Do you support the 2020 ballot initiative to adopt ranked choice voting for state, county, and (non-presidential) federal elections?

Yes.

4. **Campaign Finance -- Part I.** Do you support public financing of Congressional elections?

Yes.

5. **Campaign Finance -- Part II.** Would you support a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United decision and allow limits on corporate political spending?

Yes. (Sorry, I should have read further down on the questionnaire.) We need to get money out of politics. The Citizens United decision allows corporations and private citizens to spend unlimited amounts of money on political campaigns, evidently bending elections in their favor. I believe in an America where everyone has an equal say. Citizens United is the greatest threat to that equality and is destroying our democracy.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

J. Sustainable Infrastructure & Environmental Protection

1. **Green New Deal.** Do you support the concept of a Green New Deal? If so, what should it look like?

YES, we must take on the existential threat of climate change. The Green New Deal has importantly changed the debate on this issue and inspired so many, including young people from the Sunrise movement, to take up this cause. As a parent, I know that my children and many of their friends are rightly scared about climate change. I will be releasing a comprehensive plan to combat Climate change during the campaign.

2. **Transitioning to Clean Energy.** We need to rapidly decarbonize our economy if we are to keep global warming within safe levels. Which of the following policies would you support to accelerate that transition?

1. Setting a goal of 100 percent clean energy generation and use by 2035?
2. Putting a price on carbon emissions and investing the revenue in clean energy and green infrastructure?
3. Prohibiting new leases for coal, oil, and gas on all federal lands and waters?
4. Opposing any legislation that authorizes, or expedites the permitting or approval of, new fossil fuel pipelines?

I support all of the above policies. Scientists tell us that we really only have until 2030 before we start seeing some of the worst effects of climate change. Getting to 100% renewable energy by 2035 is imperative in mitigating some of these effects. Putting a price on carbon incentivizes polluting energy industries to reduce their emissions, and provides an economic boost to untaxed energy produced by renewable sources. Reinvesting that money into the clean energy economy only furthers the transition. Similarly, new leases for coal, oil and gas on federal lands and waters should be prohibited. The health costs of these industries far outweigh their benefits, now that we have a clean alternative in renewable energy options like solar and wind. And the clean energy economy can lead to a jobs revolution, including in parts of the 4th District like Fall River and Taunton where we could be making parts for wind turbines and solar farms. Why would we approve a lease for a new coal mine, when we know that putting a wind or solar farm in the area instead will provide the same number of jobs but better paying, and none of the health effects like increased asthma incidence and diseases such as black lung and lung cancer associated with coal? We wouldn't. Lastly, I similarly oppose any legislation that seeks to authorize the permitting of new fossil fuel pipelines. Doing so would be moving in the wrong direction. Instead of investing in pipelines, we need to be investing in the smart grid of the 21st century, to ensure efficient delivery of energy produced by wind, solar, and hydropower across the nation.

3. **Climate Emergency.** With rising temperatures and sea levels threatening significant harm to Massachusetts' coast, ecosystems, public health and well-being, do you support declaring a Climate Emergency to drive an aggressive response? YES

I do support declaring a Climate Emergency. There's simply no other phrase that accurately describes the situation the Earth is currently in. Sea level rise is predicted to displace upwards of 2 billion people by 2100, a whopping 25% of the Earth's population. The normal extinction rate for Earth during the Holocene is about 5-10 species per year. Currently, we're losing up to 150 **every day**. A lack of biodiversity on Earth would spell disaster for agricultural industries around the globe, and ultimately threaten the global food and water supply. So with our housing/land, food, and water all threatened by climate change, there's nothing to call the current climate crisis other than an emergency.

4. **Clean Water.** Would you support legislation to require natural gas drillers to disclose the chemicals that go into the ground during the hydraulic fracturing ("fracking") process and to close the so-called "Halliburton loophole," which prevents the EPA from conducting rigorous oversight?

Yes. Unregulated fracking is proven to threaten clean water in municipalities where it is done heavily. We've all seen the videos of people lighting their tap water on fire in homes near fracking wells. One can only imagine the amount of heavy metal and otherwise chemical contamination in that water, most of which results from fracking wastewater being injected into the ground and permanently stored there following its use. The fracking industry should not be

able to change the geology of the United States in such a way that threatens property security via increased earthquakes and water quality via contamination. Strong oversight is needed to ensure this does not happen. The clean energy economy can provide more than enough jobs for former natural gas well workers.

5. **Environmental Justice.** Would you support legislation to codify environmental justice into law; require federal agencies to address environmental justice through agency actions and permitting decisions; and strengthen legal protections against environmental injustice for communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous communities? YES

Environmental Justice is a key piece of any environmental legislation, and gets at the core of so many issues in American society. Fundamentally, the disproportionate siting of environmental hazards near low income and minority communities is tied to a failure of the democratic process. In the siting process in these communities, oftentimes public hearings are held during the day when most low-income residents have to be at work. Even when residents can make it to a meeting, literature is seldom provided in their native language and there certainly won't be a translator there. Environmental Justice issues are therefore a symptom of a system that disenfranchises minority and low-income citizens of this country. Any environmental legislation must include provisions ensuring these persons' ability to participate in the democratic process, especially when it comes to protecting their clean air, clean water, and property.

6. **Electric Vehicles.** Would you support legislation to phase out the sale of gasoline- or diesel-powered vehicles by 2030?

Yes. There is no reason not to move towards national adoption of electric vehicles. The technology and economic incentives already exist. Automobile manufacturers have already begun setting dates around 2030 by which they will convert their entire product line to electric vehicles. Why should this transition not be matched by federal legislation?

7. **Public Transportation.** What would be your top priorities for federal reinvestment in transportation and infrastructure if elected?

The United States needs to invest heavily in public transportation, and long distance high-speed rail and shorter commuter subway and rail systems in our major cities and communities. We need to fundamentally change the way we do infrastructure spending in our country from highways and the use of cars, from the Federal Highway Act during the Eisenhower administration, to more public transportation which is the current need in the 21st Century. We also need to invest in more buses and bus lanes, which is an affordable action we could take immediately. Moving in this direction will a) drastically reduce the amount of emissions generated by millions of cars on the road each year in this country, and b) eliminate the requirement in many cities of citizens to own a car in order to commute to and from work. There should be public alternatives that lure people away from and are in fact better than their cars.

We also need to encourage private businesses to provide incentives to their workers to use public transit as opposed to cars when they commute to work as the recent thoughtful series on transportation by the Globe detailed.

I applaud the leadership of Cong. Garcia, Pressly and Takano who have recently created the Future of Transportation caucus to develop a comprehensive new approach to infrastructure and transportation investment based on equity, access and sustainability. I will join that caucus if elected and work with them and others to develop a fundamentally new, 21st Century approach to public transportation and infrastructure investment. I will also work with leading organizations based here in Massachusetts such as Transportation for Massachusetts to build a coalition to get this new approach adopted.

Please use this space to share any other principles or proposals on this issue.

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.

As noted, I am deeply excited about the chance to serve the people of the 4th district as their Congressperson, especially at this critical moment in the life of our country and democracy. I am excited to be able to serve the people of the 4th District. I'm also so inspired by all of the new movement energy in the 4th District and our country, and see my role to be wind in their sails. I have been a service provider, activist, bridge builder, movement leader and democracy builder for my entire career. I believe that I have the experience, track record, strategy and network to be part of a group of leaders that can forge a new intersectional, powerful coalition that can lead America to a new progressive era that will make our country more equitable, inclusive and just, for all. Thank you for leadership and I would welcome the chance to meet with you in person.