

**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2020 CONGRESSIONAL
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**



Candidate: Angus McQuilken

Office Sought: US House Representative, MA-06

Party: Democratic

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Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

Questionnaire Responses (excepting sections labeled CONFIDENTIAL) will be published on our website.

I. About You

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

AM: I am running for Congress because there is important work to do in Washington that is not getting done, and because we need leaders at this critical moment in history that can get results. My top policy priorities are passing meaningful and effective national gun laws, taking urgent action on the climate crisis, healthcare access, higher education affordability, and economic recovery that is inclusive of all communities, with a long-term focus on investment in transportation and infrastructure.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

AM: I've spent the past nearly 30 years in a series of leadership positions, building and leading advocacy coalitions and successfully passing legislation that is making a difference in people's lives. I co-founded the Young Democrats of Massachusetts, and as Chair worked in coalition with other organizations to pass the Motor/Voter law to increase access to voting. As Chief of Staff to Senator Cheryl Jacques I worked in coalition to pass legislation that made college more affordable in Massachusetts, and played a leadership role in the campaign to secure marriage equality. As Vice President for Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, and as Chair of the Massachusetts Coalition for Choice, I worked in coalition to pass the emergency contraception law and the buffer zones law. As the co-founder of the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, I built advocacy coalitions that passed the nation's most effective gun violence prevention laws. This is the model for creating change that I will bring to my role as a member of Congress.

I've also spent much of the past decade as a state economic development official, as part of the founding executive team at the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, making me well prepared to advocate for Massachusetts' innovation-based economy.

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

AM: I think the biggest obstacle to progressive policy is special interest money in politics. The way to overcome this obstacle is through campaign finance reform, and through building broad coalitions of support that can out-lobby the defenders of the status quo.

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?*

AM: One of my first organizing jobs was working to pass a graduated income tax ballot initiative in Massachusetts as part of the Tax Equity Alliance of Massachusetts (TEAM). I believe that a progressive tax system is one that is graduated based on people's ability to pay/contribute. I would advocate to repeal Trump's tax cuts for the wealthy.

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.*
 - a. *Would you support legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour? **YES.***
 - b. *And eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers? **YES.***
 - c. *And index the minimum wage to inflation? **YES.***
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....*
 - a. *Increase the benefits provided by Social Security? **YES.***
 - b. *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?*

AM: YES.

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:*

- a. *Prohibiting “right-to-work” laws at the state level? **YES.***
- b. *Requiring employers to recognize a union when a majority of workers in a bargaining unit sign valid authorization cards? **YES.***
- c. *Prohibiting employers from interfering with unionization efforts, such as by compelling worker attendance at anti-union meetings? **YES.***

AM: I’m a strong supporter of the right to organize and bargain collectively, and I was proud to have the support of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and many union locals when I ran for State Senate in 2004.

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

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?*

AM: NO.

I support guaranteeing healthcare as a right, and support an affordable, high quality public option so that every American can access health insurance. I do not support prohibiting the purchase of private or supplemental health insurance.

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?*
 - a. *Allowing Medicare to negotiate prices with pharmaceutical companies? **YES.***
 - b. *Allowing patients, pharmacists, and wholesalers to buy low-cost prescription drugs from Canada and other industrialized countries? **YES.***
 - c. *Allowing the federal government to manufacture lower-cost generic versions of prescription drugs when the market does not offer them? **NO.***

I am open to learning more about proposal #3 and how that would work in practice. A solution to this problem should also include limits on co-pays and other out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs, and rebate reform to ensure that rebates make it to patients. Reforms need to be tailored so as not to stifle life sciences innovation, which is a core driver of the Massachusetts economy.

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?*

AM: YES.

I spent four years as the VP for Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, and served as Chair of the Massachusetts Coalition for Choice.

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?

AM: YES.

We need to move away from treating addicts like criminals and adopt policies that combat addiction by promoting connectedness and creating economic opportunity.

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

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.*

AM: I am a product of public education, both K-12 and public higher education. The Student Opportunity Act recently passed in Massachusetts is an important step forward. Massachusetts is going to need a major infusion of federal aid in order to keep the funding commitment contained in this legislation (and aid for our cities and towns will be necessary in order to avoid massive layoffs of teachers and other school personnel). I would work to ensure that Massachusetts receives economic relief funding from the federal government sufficient to maintain Massachusetts' commitment to education reform.

I would also propose a major investment in the affordability of our public higher education institutions, and propose legislation for student loan relief, including legislation to make it possible for recent college graduates to refinance student loans at competitive rates.

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?*

AM: YES.

My opponent, Seth Moulton, was a leading supporter of question 2 to expand charter schools in Massachusetts.

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

AM: 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?*

AM: YES.

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?*

AM: YES.

In addition to ensuring affordability of public higher education institutions, I would push for legislation to make sure recent college graduates can refinance student loans at competitive rates, and would support partial student loan forgiveness.

6. **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?*

AM: NO.

As a product of a public university (UMass Amherst), I would prioritize legislation to lower costs and restore affordability for our public higher education institutions.

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?*

AM: YES.

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...*
 - a. *Ending exclusionary zoning practices? YES.*
 - b. *Repealing state prohibitions on rent stabilization policies? YES.*
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?*

AM: YES.

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

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?*
 - a. *Legalizing marijuana? YES.*
 - b. *Repealing mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses? YES.*
 - c. *Eliminating cash bail, so that no one is held in jail solely for an inability to pay? NO.*
 - d. *Abolishing the death penalty? YES.*
 - e. *Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which has been proven to have significant racial disparities ? NO.*
 - f. *Barring the federal government and state and local jurisdictions from contracting with private corporations to run prisons and detention facilities? YES.*
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?*
 - a. *Preventing companies from charging prisoners unreasonable fees for banking and telecommunications services? YES.*

- b. *Requiring that incarcerated individuals be paid for their work at a rate no lower than the federal minimum wage? NO.*
 - c. *Restoring Pell Grant access to prisoners? YES.*
 - d. *Limiting the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days, beyond which it is defined as torture by the United Nations? YES.*
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?*
- a. *Prohibiting the transfer of military weapons from the federal government to state and local law enforcement? YES.*
 - b. *Eliminating qualified immunity, which allows law enforcement to violate people's constitutional rights with impunity? NO.*
 - c. *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.

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?*
- a. *The DREAM Act, which would allow certain US-raised immigrant youth to earn lawful permanent residence and American citizenship? YES.*
 - b. *A path for undocumented immigrants to gain US citizenship? YES.*
 - c. *Repealing the three-year, ten-year, and permanent bars of reentry for undocumented immigrants? YES.*
 - d. *Decriminalizing border crossing? NO.*

I think border crossing should be a civil offense.

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?*
- a. *Ending the practice of family detention? NO.*
 - b. *Ending the practice of family separation? YES.*
 - c. *Ending ICE's daily bed quota? YES.*
 - d. *Imposing a moratorium on the construction of new detention facilities? YES.*
 - e. *Abolishing ICE? NO.*

I would want to know what would be created in place of ICE as part of any legislation to abolish the agency as it exists today. I am also open to learning more on the family detention issue, but strongly oppose the Trump Administration's family separation policies.

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

AM:

I would support a moratorium on deportations of undocumented immigrants that are not violent offenders until a comprehensive immigration reform bill is passed.

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?*

AM: I don't have an arbitrary number in mind, but I do not support the Trump Administration's efforts to prevent refugee resettlement

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

AM: We have an international and moral obligation to participate in refugee resettlement.

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?*

AM: YES.

As Chief of Staff to former State Senator Cheryl Jacques, I played a leading role in the fight for marriage equality in Massachusetts.

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)?*

AM: YES.

3. **Sexual Harassment.** *Would you support legislation to end the use of forced arbitration clauses in sexual harassment cases?*

AM: YES.

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?*
 - a. *Reinstating the federal assault weapons ban? YES.*
 - b. *Banning high-capacity magazine ammunitions? YES.*
 - c. *Requiring a license to purchase a gun? YES.*
 - d. *Limiting the number of guns an individual can buy to one per month? YES.*
 - e. *Repealing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which shields the gun industry from lawsuits? YES.*

AM: I am the co-founder of the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, and I have spent much of my adult life working to ensure that Massachusetts has the most effective gun laws in the nation. I won't rest until we have meaningful and effective national gun laws.

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

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.*

AM: YES.

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?*

AM: NO.

I do support restoring voting rights upon release from prison.

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

AM: YES.

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

AM: YES.

I have given a presentation at an academic conference on a specific proposal for campaign finance reform, which is quadratic matching funds public : private. This system would amplify small donors while reducing the influence of big donors. It is based on a paper by Glen Weyl.

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

AM: YES.

Overturning Citizens United needs to be a high priority given the corrupting influence of special-interest money in our politics.

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?*

AM: YES.

I strongly support the Green New Deal framework, including setting of aggressive goals for phasing out carbon emissions, a framework for reaching those goals that includes a refundable carbon fee, and the establishment of a green economy. Massachusetts has the opportunity to lead the world in the development of a green economy through technology development, and we can create lots thousands of jobs in the process. One of my first proposals would be a major federal investment in climate-related research.

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

AM: Any carbon fee should have a refundability mechanism to protect low-income Americans.

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?*

AM: YES.

The climate crisis requires urgent and meaningful action, not half-measures and incremental steps

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?*

AM: YES.

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?*

AM: YES.

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

AM: YES.

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

AM: I have proposed a \$1 trillion investment in transportation infrastructure, as a strategy for economic recovery, reducing traffic gridlock and meaningfully addressing the climate crisis.

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

AM: I got my start in political organizing through the environmental movement while a student at UMass Amherst, through involvement in the Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MASSPIRG).

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.

AM: I have been building coalitions and passing progressive legislation in Massachusetts for nearly 30 years. I would be a proud member of the Progressive Caucus in the House, and would bring the coalition-building model I have used successfully for decades to my role as a member of Congress in order to bring about change.