

**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2020 CONGRESSIONAL
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**



Candidate: Seth Moulton

Office Sought: US House Representative, MA-06

Party: Democratic

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Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

I. About You

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

SM: I'm running to bring a new generation of leaders and new voices that force change in Washington. For too long, our country has been run by a handful of people who make decisions behind closed doors, where there's no debate and where new voices are not given the chance to rise. Since I came to Congress, I've promised to push for change, and I've kept my word. I intend to keep fighting for institutional change, so that the generation that's going to live with the consequences of failed policy decisions on everything from the Iraq War to climate change has a say in what happens next.

My top priorities in the new Congress are:

- Restoring America's reputation and place in the world after four disastrous years of Donald Trump, who has pulled us out of treaties like the Paris Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal. I'll do this by using my seat on the Armed Services Committee to build a new generation of arms, arms controls, and alliances.
- Improving access to quality mental health care for all Americans. We should treat mental health care like any other type of health concern. I'm going to build on my success in this term until we break the stigma around getting mental health help and everyone who wants mental health care can get it.
- Getting weapons of war off our streets and enforcing universal background checks. Since day one, I have used my voice, as someone who has carried a weapon in war and who has seen gun violence firsthand, to protect Americans from gun violence. I'm going to keep pushing for change.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

SM: I served four tours in Iraq—a war I disagreed with and spoke out against, but was proud to serve in so that no one had to go in my place. In Iraq, I led Marines as an officer, and saw firsthand the consequences of failed leadership in Washington. When I returned home, I ran for congress and defeated a nine-term incumbent with the mission of bringing a new generation of leaders to our government.

I'm also one of the few people in Congress with a degree in science, which has served me well during this pandemic and is part of the reason I signed onto the Green New Deal in its earliest stage. It's why I've worked so hard to protect our oceans, the lifeblood of my district's economy, and the people in my district who live near the ocean from the disastrous effects of climate change.

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

SM: The biggest barriers to progressive policy are a Republican-controlled senate and White House. That's why I built a PAC to recruit candidates who share our values and who can win in the tossup districts we need to take back to gain control of government. Once we have it, we need to change how Congress works, so more than a handful of people can make decisions in the open, not behind closed doors, so new voices in our party can rise and we can build a bench of new leaders, and so we can have debate before the American people.

If we want progressive change to happen, we need to build a coalition to get it done. I've worked hard with unique groups of people beyond their partisan leanings, groups like veterans or people with national service backgrounds who are united on issues like protecting the nation from gun violence.

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?*

SM: We need a new tax code—one that doesn't make rich people richer and poor people poorer. We need to pass democratic tax reform, which would close loopholes that are only used by the wealthy. It would stop people from paying lower taxes by sending their business overseas. We must equalize capital gains taxes, because you shouldn't pay lower taxes for sitting around than you do for working for a living. Even if we just enforced the current tax code, we could bring in \$47 billion over ten

years. But I want to go further. And we should use the money we make from that to make sure that our kids have a good education; to make sure you don't need to use a go-fund-me to get good healthcare. Because that's what our tax money should be used for. Not padding Amazon's income statement.

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.***

Yes, but it is also important to have some regional variation in minimum wage to allow higher-cost areas to have higher prevailing wage rates and lower-cost areas to receive the investment they need to boost their economies.

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?*

SM: 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.***

SM: I am a cosponsor of the Nationwide Right to Unionize Act.

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?*

SM: NO.

I support a public option, and I think we can do better than a plan designed in 1963. I don't want to force anyone off their private plan if they want to keep it.

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?* **NO.**
 - c. *Allowing the federal government to manufacture lower-cost generic versions of prescription drugs when the market does not offer them?* **YES.**

I think that instead of importing the pharmaceuticals from Canada we should instead import their model of negotiating prices. Importing drugs from Canada will only raise Canadian prices and force them to ban exporting to protect their negotiations. While I support any effort to curtail the high cost of prescription drugs, I am skeptical that a plan like this would work over the long term.

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?*

SM: YES.

There's no compromising on a woman's right to choose.

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?*

SM: YES.

I'm a full supporter of this and have been public on it. Check out this op-ed: <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/why-supervised-drug-injection-sites-make-sense>.

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

SM: Last August, I was proud to introduce the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act.

The bill would designate 9-8-8 as the three-digit national hotline for suicide prevention and mental health crisis. It would also authorize states to collect small fees in order to support crisis call centers, many of whom are experiencing record demand levels. It's critical that 988 be passed into law immediately to address the growing mental health epidemic in our country. Access to an easy-to-remember, mental health crisis line for Americans seeking immediate help is more important now than ever before. If your house is on fire, you don't have to go look up to the number for the fire station. You know to call 911. And if you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis, you should immediately be able to pick up the phone and dial 988 and be connected to help.

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.*

SM: I Inclusionary Zoning that accompanies federal investments should be a top priority for future economic development. Using federal dollars to not only invest in underserved areas but ensure that those places that receive federal investment are inclusive of all people through zoning reform. Doing this would promote mixed income communities and therefore address desegregation of our schools through desegregation of our communities.

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?*

SM: NO.

Charter schools must be held accountable to the same standard as traditional public schools. So I agree they should be studied to ensure that they do not pick and choose their students, do not pay substandard wages, and are overall contributing to the public school system rather than depleting funds and other resources that would go to traditional public schools. Charter schools are a place of experimentation in schooling and cannot threaten the foundational role of traditional public schools.

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

SM: YES.

Charter schools need to be held to the same standard as traditional public schools.

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?*

SM: NO.

Standardized testing offers a way to judge our education system, but it should always be viewed in context of a specific school, teacher, and student.

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?*

SM: NO.

I see the merits of student debt forgiveness plans, but my first priority is to address the needs of underserved Americans who didn't go to college. Therefore, I advocate we focus on skills training and community college first. As a member of Congress I have voted for \$10,000 in student debt relief as part of the HEROES Act, which would focus most of the assistance on the cases with most need.

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?*

SM: NO.

I support a National Service Education Guarantee that would provide an education benefit modeled on the GI bill in return for service to our country, including in programs like AmeriCorps and FEMA Corps.

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?*

SM: NO.

In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, I support a moratorium on evictions so that no one is kicked out of their home because of this crisis. Going forward I will look into a national just cause eviction standard, but it depends on the specifics of the proposal.

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? NO.*

SM: Rent control often has counterproductive effects on the cost of housing overall; just look at San Francisco. Thus I would not be for a nationwide law.

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?*

SM: YES.

As the recent proposals of the Biden campaign lay out, housing assistance should be extended to more Americans who qualify. This will require an increase in HUD spending to support these new entrants into the program.

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.*

SM: I was among the first in the delegation to support it.

- 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? YES.*

- d. *Abolishing the death penalty? YES.*

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

SM: I am strongly considering this, balancing victims' rights and public safety with the rights of incarcerated individuals. No standard should demonstrate significant racial disparities and we should be combating those disparities with significant criminal justice reform of many varieties including an end to fee-based policing and the promotion of community policing standards.

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

I supported the Obama Administration moves to phase out private prisons from the federal system and would support doing so again in the future.

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?*

SM: Where possible, yes, but not to the detriment of offering jobs to more inmates.

- 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.***

SM: I don't think this standard goes far enough and would support lowering it to 5-10 days.

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.***

Yes, except where local police departments purchase military weapons anyway and therefore support gun manufacturers.

- b. *Eliminating qualified immunity, which allows law enforcement to violate people's constitutional rights with impunity?* **YES.**
- 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?*

SM: This should be considered but there may be cases for exceptions to the ban.
 - d. *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?*
 - a. *Ending the practice of family detention?* **YES.**

SM: Low-risk asylum seekers should be released to the community pending immigration hearings. Holding people in detention and separating families is wrong — it permanently damages children through no fault of their own. We're better than that.

- 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?*

SM: This sounds like a good idea, but not to the detriment of the health and safety of detainees; a moratorium is dangerous policy for that reason.

- e. *Abolishing ICE? NO.*

SM: We should not abolish ICE — we should reform it. ICE should be focused mitigating security threats, not staffing and running child detention facilities.

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

SM: On mass deportations, yes.

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?*

SM: At least 110,000 per year, as the Obama administration planned for fiscal 2017.

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

SM: 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?*

SM: YES.

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)?*

SM: YES.

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

SM: 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.*

SM: I was a vocal opponent of Trump's transgender military ban, and have proposed a plan to restore benefits to veterans who were less-than-honorably discharged under "don't ask, don't tell."

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.*

SM: 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?*

SM: 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?*

SM: YES.

I am an original cosponsor of the Ranked Choice Voting Act.

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

SM: 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?*

SM: YES.

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?*

SM: YES.

There are two existential challenges that we're facing in this country right now: One is climate change. The second is that our economy is changing faster than ever before, and Americans everywhere are being left behind. The promise of the Green New Deal is that—if we do it right—we can solve both problems at once. We can have an America where hard work pays off and leave our kids a planet without an expiration date. A Green New Deal needs to be built around decarbonization, a carbon tax, and technologies like carbon capture—but it also needs to create jobs. Solar is already employing twice as many Americans as coal. Renewable energy as a whole is employing 3 times as many Americans as coal. And not only will the green new deal create jobs—it'll save us money. Because clean energy is already as cheap as fossil fuels, and it'll become even cheaper. The bottom line is that the GND should be based in science, be ambitious but achievable, and lead the world while growing the American economy.

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?*
- a. *Setting a goal of 100 percent clean energy generation and use by 2035?*

SM: The Green New Deal, which I cosponsored, sets a radically ambitious timeline for emissions reductions, including net zero by 2050.

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

SM: Except in cases where such a prohibition forces us to buy gas from less environmentally-sensitive sources, as was the case when the Commonwealth blocked the pipeline expansion in Northeastern Massachusetts, which raised energy prices for our poorest residents and drove us to import gas from Russia with huge consequences to national security and the Russian arctic.

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?*

SM: It depends, of course, what exactly that would achieve, but there is no question that we have a climate emergency today.

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?*

SM: 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?*

SM: YES.

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

SM: Only in conjunction with robust funding for next-generation transit and high-speed rail to give people who can't afford electric vehicles better options.

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

SM: High-speed rail, regional rail, and other environmentally-friendly, next-generation transportation solutions, not more subsidies for heavily-polluting highways and airports. I recently introduced a proposal for national high-speed rail that would create 2.6 million jobs over five years across the country and make high-speed rail a competitive option against road and air travel.

<https://www.wired.com/story/lawmaker-wants-fast-trains-rev-us-economy>

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

SM: Groups that offer endorsements are still working through that process. Here's a sample of the endorsements and accolades I earned in 2018:

2018 - Environmental Champion Award from Environment Massachusetts

2018 - Endorsed by the Massachusetts Sierra Club

96% Lifetime score from the League of Conservation Voters

100% Score from Clean Water Action for 2017-2018 Congressional session

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.

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