



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

statewide, grassroots organizing for progressive change in Massachusetts

2014 STATE RACES ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: 1/31/13

Candidate: Josh Monahan

Office Sought: 16th Suffolk House Seat (Chelsea, Revere, Saugus)

Party: Democratic

Web Site: www.joshmonahan.com and www.facebook.com/votemonahan

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO

Email:

Mobile Phone:

Home Phone:

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFO

Campaign Manager: Joe Curran

Campaign Manager Phone:

Campaign Manager Email:

Campaign Office Phone: (pending)

**RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES BY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 5:00PM, BY EMAIL ONLY
RETURN QUESTIONNAIRE AS (1) WORD FILE AND (2) PDF.**

E-mail completed questionnaire to deborah@progressivemass.com.

Please be in touch with Executive Director Deborah Shah with questions, at 917-922-7947 or by email.

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Please compose your answers directly in the document, underneath the question. Limit answers to 250 words or fewer. No attachments.

I. About You**1. Why are you running for office?**

Raised in Chelsea, I spent my early years in public housing, making my way through the public schools. The combination of my parents' hard work and my teachers' dedication gave me a fighting chance at achieving my dreams. I made my way to Harvard where I studied government and then eventually on to Suffolk Law's evening program. I have dedicated myself to improving communities – through my work with the City of Chelsea, later with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and eventually interning with the District Court in Chelsea.

I believe that I am a true democrat. I will advocate for programs that improve the quality of life for residents in Chelsea, Revere, and Saugus – and not just when it is politically convenient. The other candidates in this race have to rally a base in Revere that is increasingly conservative. On affordable housing, they have a NIMBY mentality. One candidate made it clear that her focus is on keeping the House seat for a select few in Revere. Instead of addressing problems of mental health or substance abuse, she is touting her beautification work for Revere Beach.

My networks span age groups, socio-economic classes, and ethnicities. I will have the most inclusive constituent base. I am focusing on earning votes. I am running for the people that don't wake up in a condo on the beach. I am running for the majority of people in this district, working-class folks, and men and women that aren't the lucky few with political power.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

My life and work experience as well as my education have prepared me to be the next Representative.

My life experience has prepared me to value affordable housing, unemployment assistance, funding for public schools, affordable health care, and generational equity in public policy.

My work experience has given me a significant background in municipal services and budgets, public safety (on a quality of life level such as youth and gang violence prevention and intervention; and on a resources level through managing large procurements of first responder and emergency management supplies), economic development, public health (understanding issues of AIDS/HIV and teen pregnancy as well as financial management of regional H1N1 Flu response grants).

My college education has prepared me to understand that any given issue can be viewed through a number of lenses and how to use those lenses to shape policy – social capital, psychology, economics, party politics, urban politics. My legal education and training has prepared me to understand current laws, their development and future, and their impact on society.

In my life, work and education I have strived to be a leader and an advocate – pushing myself to achieve and developing a strong voice for communicating my ideas and rallying support for causes.

3. What do you think is the proper role of government in Massachusetts residents' daily lives?

Government is a resource. It should provide essential services necessary for a healthy society – taxing and spending, public safety, criminal and civil justice systems, public health, public education, transportation and maintenance of public ways. It should provide opportunity – public housing, social-welfare support, investment in industry, jobs training programs, subsidized higher education, recovery resources for mentally illness and substance abuse. It should promote equity – across generations, ethnicities, and socio-economic classes.

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4. If elected, what would be your top three priorities?**1.) Quality of Life Issues:**

A. Public Education – Ensuring the funding and resources necessary to ensure every child is well served by the Public School Systems in Chelsea, Revere, and Saugus. Second

B. Public Safety – No individual should have to feel that they or their home are threatened by crime. Smart allocation of funding means not just putting more police on the streets, but also 1) ensuring our criminal justice system (both the District Attorneys' Offices and Public Defenders) is adequately staffed and funded, 2) additional funds for supporting opportunities for our young people, expanded summer jobs programs, GED programs, and jobs-trainings programs, 3) More funding for mental health resources and drug divergence programs that are accessible alternatives to criminal prosecution.

C. Transportation Equity – This is a broad category that involves 1) more equitable fares and service from the MBTA to the areas of highest demand on services, 2) reform/regulation of regressive car insurance burdens on policy holders in urban suburbs of Boston, and 3) Mitigating the growing traffic problems along the Route 1 corridor heading in and out of Boston between Route 16 and Route 60.

2.) Good Government:

A. Increased accountability and transparency with legislative agenda and budgeting

B. Strengthening OCPF criminal statutes and enforcement.

3.) Good Business:

A. Promoting growth in industries compatible with Massachusetts, including tech and life sciences.

B. Pairing tax-breaks with additional PILOT programs involving increased availability of internships for high school and college students, fellowships for graduated students, and enhanced public-private partnerships in growth areas.

C. Business accountability in guaranteed jobs, revenue, and local investment.

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II. The Issues

Please compose your answers directly in the document, underneath the question. Limit answers to 250 words or fewer. No attachments.

Our questionnaire is focused on economic justice and inequality, as outlined in our Shared Prosperity Agenda (forthcoming). We are interested in your overall philosophy and approach to the components of the Shared Prosperity Agenda, as well as your views on specific policy and legislation.

In each section, **Question 1** seeks your overall view, values, principles and priorities. You do not need to address each item embedded in these first questions; they are suggestions.

In each section, **Question 2** asks about your advocacy experience; you may leave it blank if appropriate—we do not expect candidates to have a record on every issue. Current or former elected officials: please outline your leadership roles, as opposed to simply your voting record.

Additional questions seek your position on specific policies and legislation. At a minimum, please answer “yes” or “no”; you may also provide an explanation of your positions, as appropriate.

A. Job Growth and the Economy

The Massachusetts economy has continued to grow and recover from the Great Recession, but the gains have not been shared equally. Poverty levels continue to increase, while the minimum wage loses value every year. Massachusetts now ranks 8th in the nation for income inequality.

1. Share your personal values and principles on job growth and the economy.
How can we improve the economy and economic security for all people? How do we grow the number of good paying jobs in the Commonwealth? How do you view wealth and income inequality, and what would you do about it, if anything?

We can improve the economy and economic security for all people by promoting investment in student achievement, public education and vocational training. It is key to keep both higher education and vocational training affordable and this can be accomplished through regulation as well as promoting alternatives to traditional set-year programs (Does college need to be 4 years? Do law school programs need to be 3 years? Who decides this and who grants them the authority to decide this?)

We must promote and invest in industries that create jobs for a broader range of our residents. From tech and life sciences, to manufacturing and the service economy we must be ready, willing and able to incentivize business relocation and expansion to Massachusetts.

Part of incentivizing relocation and expansion is making sure that companies believe their workers will want to work here – and that involves making sure our quality of life is competitive – stabilizing the cost of living, decreasing crimes, enhancing student achievement in our public schools, and of course, ensuring affordable housing.

I was raised in the projects – government subsidized housing. My parents struggled to save enough through multiple jobs to enable us to move out, and as they saved they were threatened with eviction for making too much – essentially a catch-22 when unsubsidized housing was still too costly for a family of 6. Democrats in Massachusetts have failed to address the need for social-welfare reform in a way that maintains the basic values of such programs. We have lost ground to conservatives and even a new young generation of middle-class moderates that are refusing to support social-welfare programs – building up straw men like drug-tests for welfare recipients or believing that multiple family housing over-burdens local schools and police resources. It’s poor shaming, it’s misguided, and it can’t be ignored for much longer without dire consequences for these systems when the next tax-payer revolt occurs (possibly sooner than we think).

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I will be a champion for social-welfare programs that are opportunities for the working-poor to save while still having the housing and other resources all families deserve. I will help shape the debate by focusing on real issues like opportunities for urban and suburban families to own their own homes, civic engagement, and programs that help families escape the cycle of poverty through financial literacy programs.

Optional/As Applicable: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on job growth and the economy (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).

As an employee with the City of Chelsea I was tasked with submitting an application to the MORE (Massachusetts Opportunity for Relocation and Expansion) program through the MOBD as well as managing specific Tax-Increment-Financing Agreements that were paired with the MORE application – the goal was to attract the expansion of a bio-pharma company that had already taken root in Chelsea. While the application was successful, and \$10M in infrastructure funds were heading their way to the City, the parent company pulled its financing from the bio-pharma and the project went under. I was devastated to lose the many jobs this expansion would have brought and the improvements to infrastructure along the Everett Avenue Gateway Corridor (right outside of Chelsea High School, the high school I graduated from).

Shortly after leaving the City of Chelsea, my work at MAPC involved creative solutions to municipal service provision. One project that I supported and followed was the development of the MetroWest Regional Housing Trust Fund, spearheaded by Jennifer Rait, which ensured 10 communities would have the resources, capacity, and personnel to continue to address issues of affordable housing. This benefits both tax-payers by easing municipal budget pressures and recipients of affordable housing in the area.

2. **Minimum Wage.** Do you support:
- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Raising the wage to at least \$10.50/hour: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Indexing automatic yearly increases to inflation: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Increasing tipped wages to 60% of the minimum wage: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

3. **Unemployment Insurance and Minimum Wage.** As of January 2014, the legislature is negotiating a bill that would pair an increase in the minimum wage with cuts to unemployment insurance. Do you ~~oppose~~ this effort?
- Yes No

4. **Earned Sick Time.** Do you support requiring businesses with more than 11 employees to provide earned, paid sick time to their employees?
- Yes No

5. **Job Creation and Standards.** A "Job Creation and Quality Standards Act" would require corporations that receive any kind of public benefits (grants, tax expenditures procurement contracts) to, in turn, pay a living wage (\$15 per hour plus benefits) to full-time employees. Do you support such legislation?
- Yes No
- I am open to discussion on this and would like to see what kinds of effects such a requirement would have on stunting job growth. If the effect would be negligible, I would change my mind – but something tells me this could end up stunting job growth at a time when Massachusetts has surpassed the national average for unemployment. Let's get our residents back to work in the next few years and then revisit this.

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6. **Employee-Owned Businesses.** Do you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts?

Yes No

7. **Co-ops, Benefit Corporations, Community Banks.** Do you support legislation that would encourage the formation of cooperatives and/or benefit corporations and the development of community banks?

Yes No

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B. Education and Workforce Development

Public education has always been a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. However, the soaring price of higher education over the last several decades has made access to this opportunity increasingly out of reach, at the very moment when higher education makes a greater difference to one's economic future. Meanwhile, powerful corporate interests have been steadily undermining public school teachers and unions and siphoning money from our public K-12 system.

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding public education and workforce training. *What value does public education and workforce development have in improving our economy as well as in addressing matters of economic justice? What measures should the Commonwealth take on these issues? You might address, for example, charter schools, school vouchers, standardized testing and federal programs like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top.*

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

3. **Achievement gaps.** What would you do to address persistent racial and economic achievement gaps in education?

4. **Universal Pre-K.** Do you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system?
Yes No

5. **Universal higher education.** Do you support a program that provides free, publicly funded higher education for every student who wants it?
Yes No

6. **Funding Structure.** Do you support changes to the Chapter 70 Education formula, including the Foundation Budget, to incorporate proper state funding for ELL students, Special Education students, transportation costs, charter school reimbursements to sending schools, and class size reduction?
Yes No

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C. Health Care

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health care insurance coverage. However, we still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, without necessarily achieving better health outcomes.

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

Health care should be a right in a civilized society. In a society that values all of its people, the idea that anyone should suffer from illness or injury without health care or be unable to heal due to the inability to pay for such care should be shocking. I believe a society that provides health care for its people will be better off for it, continue to grow and be competitive globally, and that health care for each individual benefits all members by strengthening community, decreasing future costs of care, and reassuring the value of each member.

I believe we should work towards as close to universal health care as is fiscally sound – that we need to move to systems that stop the rising costs of health care and provide more care to more people. I believe that doing so soon will prevent Massachusetts from being overwhelmed in future years by the costs of health issues that could have been treated or prevented today.

A system that is fueled by health and not sickness will be the most fiscally sound system. More access to preventative medicine and health education will be key to ensure sustainability for universal health care.

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

At MAPC I managed grants for Regional Public Health Coalitions, including regional response to H1N1 flu. I also participated in a study seeking to identify common public health concerns and risks across the communities of Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop (two of three are in the district in which I am currently running for office). Once identifying these common public health concerns, we shared this information with the City Manager, Mayor and Town Manager of the communities and encouraged regional responses. Currently MGH is also engaged with Chelsea and Revere on similar matters. These efforts seek to make sure that local and regional public health issues are addressed with shared programming when possible, allowing municipalities to group together and do more with less.

I believe local and regional public health agencies in urban areas play an important role in our current system and are underfunded.

3. **Single Payer and Public Option.** Do you support moving Massachusetts to Single Payer insurance?

Yes No

What role might a Public Option play, in your view?

There may be some value in having competition. The private sector might also find ways to decrease costs while still achieving improved patient outcomes that the public sector can learn from.

4. **Costs and Quality.** What steps would you take to lower health care costs while maintaining or improving health outcomes?

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See above.

5. **Mental Health.** What steps would you take to address the gap in affordable mental health services?

I believe there needs to be front-end investment in crisis resources and treatment. As someone with personal knowledge of the costs of unaddressed mental illness and lack of resources / alternatives for families seeking to help loved ones suffering from mental illness there is simply no substitute for providing support at the first sign of mental illness. It will increase the likelihood of successful management and decrease the stigma surrounding mental illness.

6. **Health disparities.** What steps would you take to reduce racial and income disparities in health outcomes?

Better access to health care (both preventative and treatment) and outreach programs to attract utilization of resources.

7. **Standards of care and cost.** Do you support establishing a state panel of experts (such as the Affordable Care Act's IPAB/"Independent Payment Advisory Board") to recommend high-value and cost-effective services?

Yes No

8. **Pharmaceutical companies.** Do you support prohibiting pharmaceutical companies from including direct-to-consumer drug advertising as tax-deductible expense?

Yes No

9. **Bulk prescription programs.** Do you support establishing a bulk prescription drug program that would provide lower cost prescription drugs for public employees?

Yes No

Do you support establishing this same program for *all* Massachusetts residents?

Yes No

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D. Housing

In the last ten years, the need for affordable housing has increased, while funds for affordable housing have decreased, federal and state. Currently there is a 10-year waiting list for a rental voucher, and the average rent for a two bedroom apartment requires a wage 50% higher than the median Massachusetts wage. Half of families in Greater Boston alone pay over 30% of their income in housing and utilities costs—and 25% of households pay *more than half* their income to housing. This is unsustainable. It has led to expanding economic inequality, increased homelessness, and damage to our economy, as talented workers often leave the state for less expensive regions.

1. Please share your personal values and principles regarding affordable housing.
How would you ensure that there is suitable housing for all who need it, within reasonable distance of job opportunities? How would you address the need to link housing, jobs and transportation? How would you tackle homelessness?

1) More funding and tax-incentives for the creation of affordable housing as TODs (Transit Oriented Development). 2) Vacant unit penalties (with exemptions for owner-occupied housing with 3 or fewer units) – revenue generated from this would go directly to vouchers to help end homelessness.

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

I worked with Chelsea City Manager Jay Ash on the appointment of members to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board. I worked at MAPC in a research and support role at the out-set of the MetroWest Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board – providing insight on structuring shared municipal services.

3. **Housing Authorities.** Governor Patrick has proposed consolidating the Housing Authorities to six regional authorities, from the current 242 authorities. The legislature appears reluctant to agree to this reform, in part because it would reduce local control. What is your position?

My hometown and community within the district I am seeking office for has been plagued with the Chelsea Housing Authority Scandal. Local control is the least of a community's concerns when corruption begins to create public distrust in valuable institutions. As a state, we cannot afford to have the public believe regional housing authorities are wasting tax-payer funds as the reactionary movement might lead to elimination of such programs.

The AFL-CIO Questionnaire makes it clear that they are opposed to regionalized housing authorities. I believe that their concerns may be addressed through a transparent system that values the longevity of certain employees and balances that with the need for regional oversight. The bottom line must be accountability to those receiving the services, the tax-payers and the residents of housing under the control and responsibility of the authorities.

4. **Affordable Housing.** What would you do to increase the number of affordable housing units in the State? What would you do to ensure that no low-income family has to spend more than 50% of their income on housing and related expenses; and that fewer than a quarter of families spending more than 33% of income on shelter?

Vacant unit penalties (with exemptions for owner-occupied structures with 3 or fewer units) the revenues of which would go directly to ending homelessness through vouchers.

I also believe affordable rentals need to be accompanied with financial literacy programs, subsidized savings programs, and fast-tracked first-time home-buyer programs for individuals seeking to leave

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public housing. The focus should be on providing transitional programs, not generational affordable housing without progress towards self-sufficiency. I pride myself not on my family's humble beginnings in the projects, but on my parents ability to work their way out of poverty and into the middle-class. I believe more legislators, voters, and housing developers can stand behind transitional housing.

5. **Temporary Housing Transitions.** What would you do to move homeless families and individuals out of motels and shelters and into permanent housing?

See above.

6. **Regulation Reform, Development and Preservation.** Would you support reforms to update our outmoded zoning, subdivision, and planning laws, in such a way as to encourage balanced development and land preservation?

Yes

No

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E. Revenue and Taxation

Because of income tax cuts and the effects of the recession, Massachusetts has lost nearly \$3 billion in revenue over the last 12 years. We now collect less revenue than 21 other states, and our tax revenue is below the national average. Since 1982, local aid has dropped 58%. Cuts to the moderately progressive state income tax has meant increasing reliance on fees, sales, gas and property taxes, exacerbating the overall regressiveness of our revenue. Regressive taxation strains low- and middle-income families, and reduced revenue collection curtails our ability to invest in vital infrastructure.

1. What principles do you bring to considerations of state revenue and tax reform (individual and corporate)? *How should we raise more revenue to adequately fund our communities for the future?*

I believe the last rounds of local-option taxes have served our communities fairly well during the recession. I believe there should be an expansion of local-option taxes to put the responsibility on municipalities to increase revenues without having to increase property taxes.

We should seek an amendment to allow for a graduated income tax with protections for the middle and lower wage earners and increase taxes on capital gains and investments. This should occur over the next few years, and not during the same year so as not to cause an exodus of upper-tier wage earners and investors from Massachusetts. We also need to ensure that there is no reactionary tax-payer revolt by emphasizing the need for revenue to address the Commonwealth’s infrastructure and ability to reinvest in education.

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

N/A

3. **Tax Rates for Upper Incomes.** Do you support increasing income taxes on the wealthiest residents of Massachusetts?

Yes No

4. **Automatic Tax Decrease Triggers.** Do you support halting the automatic decrease in state tax when Massachusetts state revenues grow four quarters in a row?

Yes No

5. **Capital Gains.** Do you support increasing the capital gains tax (with safeguards to protect seniors)?

Yes No

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6. **Progressive Taxation.** “An Act to Invest in Our Communities” was designed to raise significant revenue while making our tax code more progressive, but it has not passed the legislature. Would you support a renewed effort to pass this or similar legislation?

Yes No

7. **Corporate Tax Breaks.** Do you support eliminating or substantially reducing corporate tax breaks?

Yes No

Do you support repealing or significantly reducing the Film Production Tax Credit?

Yes No

8. **Clawbacks and Transparency in Corporate Tax Breaks.** Do you support increasing corporate tax break transparency and clawback provisions?

Yes No

9. **Graduated Income Tax.** Would you support a state constitutional amendment creating a Massachusetts progressive income tax?

Yes No

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IV. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please compose your answers directly in the document, underneath the question. Limit answers to 250 words or fewer. No attachments.

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.

When another candidate in the 16th Suffolk House Seat race talks about a “critical time” for communities – these are hollow words – she is using this rhetoric to evoke some form of urgency from her voting base when her campaign and her candidacy thrives on the status quo. I am a true democrat; I will be a vocal advocate for affordable housing, investment in public education and job growth, improvements to our health care system that will benefit more residents, and the active pursuit of revenue sources that will help municipalities continue to provide essential services and resources for residents.

There is a Republican in this race. He is banking on igniting a reactionary voter base, and, given the overall District’s voting tendencies in recent elections, he has a chance at attracting more independents to the republican conservative base in Revere and Saugus on April 1st.

I will work hard to ensure each voter knows what is at stake here for the working-class, for the diverse communities within the District, and for the future of programs that serve to raise-up the residents of Massachusetts. With Progressive Mass behind my campaign – we can send a message that the status quo won’t cut it for Chelsea, Revere, and Saugus – that the momentum gained by reactionary conservatives can be trumped by the large numbers of people that value opportunity and resources – that we care for our brothers and sisters not because it is required, but because it is the right thing to do.