



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

statewide, grassroots organizing for progressive change in Massachusetts

2014 STATE RACES ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: 1/29/14
Candidate: Dan Hunt
Office Sought: State Representative
Party: Democrat
Web Site: www.DanHunt.org

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO

Email:

Mobile Phone:

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFO

Campaign Manager: Wes Ritchie
Campaign Manager Phone:
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Campaign Office Phone: 617-262-1020

**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.

CANDIDATE:

OFFICE:

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?

I am looking to continue the proud tradition of strong, progressive legislative leadership at the State House representing the 13th Suffolk District. I have spent my career working on behalf of the people of Massachusetts, with a focus on the Dorchester neighborhood where I grew up and still live today. I'm an attorney experienced in public policy and the legislative process, and I have been to every corner of the Commonwealth advocating for parks, implementing economic development initiatives, and strategizing with local groups and civic leaders to improve our quality of life.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

As a project analyst at the Massachusetts School Building Authority, I helped responsibly channel public monies to the construction of new public schools including Boston's Orchard Gardens, Mildred Avenue, Bruswick Garden and the Jeremiah Burke. While working on the Legislature's Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, I partnered with private businesses, state agencies, and organized labor to help guide Massachusetts through the recession. Most recently, in almost three years at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, I have played a lead role in drafting, supporting and implementing several major pieces of legislation, including an improved mechanism for retained revenue to channel addition funding to maintain our parks. I have also shepherded dozens of local infrastructure projects through state and municipal review, including new investments along the Neponset River Greenway.

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

Government must focus on lifting up the most vulnerable amongst us and make our communities stronger and safer through the creation of economic opportunity. I was raised in a family that placed a huge value on public service. My mother has been a nurse for 40 years and my father has spent his 40 years in the health care sector, primarily focusing on access to care for under-served populations.

4. If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

I will focus on improving our schools, creating access to jobs and economic opportunity and making our communities safer.

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II. The Issues

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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?

Wealth and income inequality are huge problems here. We need to make government work for everyone, and that means creating economic opportunity for the most vulnerable in our communities. I would support efforts to reevaluate revenue generation to make sure that revenue is generated fairly from those who can afford it most.

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

While working on the Legislature’s Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, I partnered with private businesses, state agencies, and organized labor to help guide Massachusetts through the recession. Most recently, in almost three years at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, I have played a lead role in drafting, supporting and implementing several major pieces of legislation, including an improved mechanism for retained revenue to channel addition funding to maintain our parks.

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3. **Minimum Wage.** Do you support:
- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Raising the wage to at least \$10.50/hour: | Yes |
| Indexing automatic yearly increases to inflation: | Yes |
| Increasing tipped wages to 60% of the minimum wage: | I would review specific legislation. |
4. **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
5. **Earned Sick Time.** Do you support requiring businesses with more than 11 employees to provide earned, paid sick time to their employees?
Yes
6. **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?
I would have to look at the legislation before taking a position.
7. **Employee-Owned Businesses.** Do you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts?
Yes
8. **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

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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.*

I'm a product of the Boston Public Schools and a graduate of Boston Latin Academy. I know that not all children will go to an exam school or have the same options that I did growing up. It's why I'll work to ensure that every child in the district and across the Commonwealth has access to a quality education that provides them with the building blocks to succeed later in life. I support investing in Pre-K and early education so our children are prepared for their first day of kindergarten.

I will fight to make sure that every community has a good school - an essential anchor to a strong and successful community - so parents have close to home options for their children. Expanding access to quality neighborhood schools, will help our children thrive and build stronger communities.

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).

I have worked at the Massachusetts School Building Authority where I helped modernize public schools in inner cities across the state.

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

I believe in investing in early education and in programs like an extended school day that will help all students excel. I also believe in afterschool programs that provide new opportunities to students. I would work with experts, school leaders and my colleagues to address this issue – I believe it is a foundational issue for economic success later in life. I support greater investments and targeted investments that are targeted at closing these gaps.

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

5. **Universal higher education.** Do you support a program that provides free, publicly funded higher education for every student who wants it?

Yes

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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

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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.

My family has been deeply involved in healthcare for years and I'm passionate about increasing access to quality care for all. I believe health care is a right and I will fight to make health care more affordable and to increase access to quality 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).

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

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

I'm open to proposals to advance this. I think there's a lot of work to be done legislatively in order to make single payer/public option a reality in Massachusetts.

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

Early intervention to reduce ER visits and increasing technology to reduce duplicate visits to doctors and health facilities.

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

Create parity with insurers for mental health services.

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

Work to create quality access to health care in communities that are traditionally underserved.

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

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

I'm open to proposals to this effect.

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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?

We need to increase housing stock that fits into existing neighborhoods in Boston and I support efforts to do that.

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

I supported foreclosure reform efforts while chief of staff to the committee on Economic Development in the Legislature.

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?

I support this reform.

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?

I would work with my colleagues to make sure that all families who need housing can afford housing.

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

I would support funding for temp to perm housing.

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

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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 bring a belief that all parties should be at the table for a discussion on taxes, and that we must explore all sources of revenue and savings in order to provide the services that so many residents rely upon.

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).

I've worked to advance the bottle bill and I will continue to support this effort.

3. **Tax Rates for Upper Incomes.** Do you support increasing income taxes on the wealthiest residents of Massachusetts?
Yes
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?
No.
5. **Capital Gains.** Do you support increasing the capital gains tax (with safeguards to protect seniors)?
I would have to read specific proposals on this issue

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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

7. **Corporate Tax Breaks.** Do you support eliminating or substantially reducing corporate tax breaks?
I support a complete overhaul of this system and I’m open to proposals on this issue.

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

No. I support a cap and reviews of the credit.

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

Yes

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

Yes

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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.

I am proud to be supported by progressive organizations like MassEquality. I also have the support of Linda Dorcena Forry. I would be honored to be endorsed by Progressive Mass and I hope to earn your endorsement so that I can continue the progressive leadership of Mayor Marty Walsh.