



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

statewide, grassroots organizing for progressive change in Massachusetts

2014 STATE RACES ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: 2/3/14
Candidate: Roy Avellaneda
Office Sought: State Representative/2nd Suffolk District
Party: Democrat
Web Site: RoyforRep.com

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO

Email:
Mobile Phone:
Home Phone:

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFO

Campaign Manager: Jefferson Smith
Campaign Manager Phone:
Campaign Manager Email:
Campaign Office Phone:

**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: Roy Avellaneda OFFICE: State Representative – 2nd Suffolk District

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?**

To put myself in a better position to continue what I have been doing for most of my adult life: Effectively fighting for the best interests of my community as a public servant.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I am a lifelong resident of Chelsea. My parents, Vicente “Tito” and Isabel Avellaneda, arrived in the US in 1970 from Argentina in pursuit of the American Dream. In 1976, they founded Tito’s Bakery, where our family has worked very hard for over four decades. Tito’s is now a Chelsea landmark and I’m very proud of our service to the community.

As a result, I have maintained a steadfast and passionate commitment to public service and to entrepreneurship. Following in my parent’s footsteps, I started my own business, Isabel’s Café, in 2000, and served as Executive Director of the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce. At the same time, I also joined the Chelsea Planning Board. In 2003, I obtained my MA Real Estate license and began a career in brokerage and development. At the same time, I ran successfully for Chelsea City Council -- first as district councilor, then later won the citywide Councilor At Large race, and was elected President of the City Council by my peers.

Currently, I’m a Program Manager at the Mass Dept. of Transportation (MassDOT) Office of Real Estate & Asset Development, as well as a top-producing broker with Weichert Metropolitan Boston Real Estate. I’m also a member of the Chelsea Licensing Board and Chelsea Community Trust Fund. I’ve coordinated campaigns for President Obama, Governor Patrick, Senator Warren, Congressman Capuano, and State Senator Sal DiDomenico.

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

Just about everything one needs to know about how important I believe government is to the daily lives of Massachusetts residents is exemplified in my own personal commitment to public service. I’ve been a member of the Chelsea Planning Board, and I’ve been elected to public office in Chelsea 5 times, 4 times citywide. I served on the Chelsea City Council for 10 years – so I have a record. It’s one thing to have a point of view, to say that you support this or that progressive policy – but I’ve actually taken real votes on real policy impacting real people. In Chelsea, I, not only supported, but drafted resolutions for, sponsored, voted for, and helped pass The Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and a law making Chelsea a Sanctuary City. I’ve also worked extensively in two sides of government – first, in the legislature as a legislative aide to former Senator Jarrett Barrios, and currently for the Governor in the Department of Transportation. So I know how the wheels of government turn, and I know how to get things done. But I also graduated from Babson College with a degree in business, I’ve been the Executive Director of the

Chelsea Chamber of Commerce, I opened my first business, Isabel's Café, at the age of 26, and for the last 8 years I've been a top producing real estate broker helping buyers, sellers, and developers navigate and prosper in one of the most challenging real estate environments we've ever seen. So I also know how to operate a business and what it takes to be successful in business. Our next state representative should have the kind of perspective and qualifications that can only come from extensive experience in the public sector AND the private sector. I have that experience, those qualifications, and that perspective. I believe we need more of all of those things on Beacon Hill. Both government and the private sector play a crucial role in the good and bad of what happens to Massachusetts residents every day. But to get more good than bad, more success than failure, it's the relationship between the two that really matters. We need a lot of work here, and we need elected officials who have experience in both to achieve the right balance. Nothing is more important to the future of this state and this country than getting this right.

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

- Jobs, Economic & Community Development & Revitalization
- Economic, Political, and Environmental Justice
- Civil Rights, Immigrant and Minority Issues (In-State Tuition in particular)

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?

I believe strongly that we need to support lower and middle income workers to improve the overall economic situation for all Massachusetts residents. That is why I support raising as well as indexing the minimum wage so it keeps up with the cost of living. I believe also allows for more room at all income levels for better paying jobs, shrinks the income gap and provides for better economic security for our workforce.

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).

I recently acted as a private citizen but respected member of the Latino community supported efforts for the unionization of workers at a Chelsea wholesale bread manufacturer both by speaking to workers in support of a vote and by picketing. While I was a city councilor, I picketed with labor union members at the Hyatt Hotel to denounce the use of out of state non union construction workers that were being paid below prevailing wages.

3. **Minimum Wage.** Do you support:

Raising the wage to at least \$10.50/hour:	Yes	No
Indexing automatic yearly increases to inflation:	Yes	No
Increasing tipped wages to 60% of the minimum wage:	Yes	No

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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 No
5. **Earned Sick Time.** Do you support requiring businesses with more than 11 employees to provide earned, paid sick time to their employees?
 Yes No
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?
 Yes No
7. **Employee-Owned Businesses.** Do you support legislation to foster and develop employee ownership of businesses in Massachusetts?
 Yes No
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 No

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.*

One of my primary concerns is access to early childhood education and care. Quality child care and early education are a proven investment in our children's future and provides an important baseline of support for working families. I believe that we must make high quality early education available to all working families by providing vouchers to low income families to put toward child care. Furthermore, we must make investments to expand pre-school and after school programs. I also believe that we must stop the chronic underfunding of public institutions of higher education. Investments throughout the state must improve in order to adequately prepare our young students for careers in a very diverse number of fields in our economy. Therefore, I support increasing funding for public higher education that establishes a stable and predictable funding stream.

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?

I would support, sponsor and advocate for legislation that funds early childhood education and child care, lower the K-3 class sizes, allows for more special education funding, renovates and replaces aging buildings, fully funds remedial and after school programs and provides mentors to new teachers.

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

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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

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.

We must have adequate health care options for residents of all ages, income levels and abilities, I'm proud that Massachusetts leads the nation with 93.7% of our residents currently possessing health care coverage. However, I do support the creation of single payer health insurance that is public administered and guarantees access to health care. I also believe that better access to reproductive health services and mental health care not only would provide better overall outcomes to patients, but would also lower health care costs throughout the Commonwealth. I would support making these options universally available for health care subscribers.

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 No

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

See above.

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

See above RE: reproductive and mental health services.

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

See above RE: reproductive and mental health services.

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

I support the creation of single payer health insurance that is public administered and guarantees access to health care.

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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

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.

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?

I have sponsored home rule petitions for the creation of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in Chelsea and worked on the passage of legislation as a legislative aide to allow local communities to adopt it by local legislative vote.

I will work to keep homes affordable by increasing the supply with a broad mix of Transit Oriented Development that includes micro units and family sized units that are not solely aimed for luxury housing market. I worked with other housing advocates in lobbying the Patrick Administration to place the Chelsea Housing Authority in state receivership until a new Board of Housing Commissioners was appointed when there was misuse of funds and illegal activity by the former executive director.

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

See above

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 firmly believe that we should be doing everything that we can to reform the Housing Authorities in Massachusetts according to Gov. Patrick's plan

2. **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?

We must provide more housing units by creating a new housing bond bill. If elected, I will support an increase of at least 50% in the investment we are making to build more housing units and ensure that we are consistently driving the costs down for low-income families.

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

The Commonwealth must invest in more in housing vouchers and better service options for homeless individuals, while also making more capital investments in constructing affordable with the cooperation of housing authorities.

4. **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

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.

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?*

Many of our tax cuts for the past twenty years has gone to the wealthiest individuals. I believe that raising the income tax from 5.25% to 5.95% while increasing the personal exemption to hold down increases for low and middle income families.

1. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on revenue and taxation (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).
2. **Tax Rates for Upper Incomes.** Do you support increasing income taxes on the wealthiest residents of Massachusetts?
 Yes No
3. **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
4. **Capital Gains.** Do you support increasing the capital gains tax (with safeguards to protect seniors)?
 Yes No

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5. **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

6. **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

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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.