



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

statewide, grassroots organizing for progressive change in Massachusetts

2014 STATE RACES ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: 2-3-2014
Candidate: Dan Ryan
Office Sought: State Representative
Party: Democrat
Web Site: DanRyanforRep.com

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO

Email: DanRyanforRep@gmail.com

Mobile Phone:

Home Phone:

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFO

Campaign Manager: Micah Telegen

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.

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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?

My life's work has been dedicated to public service and my community. My wife Kara and I are raising our family on Essex Street, one street over from the house where I grew up. We understand firsthand the challenges people face raising a family in an urban environment. We have experienced the uncertainty of the public school lottery and the anxiety surrounding exam school testing. I will bring my experiences as a husband, a father and a kid from the neighborhood to the State House.

My dedication to public service will not stop at the Tobin Bridge. If elected, I will be a tireless advocate for both Charlestown and Chelsea.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I have a lifetime of experience dedicated to public safety and community:

- Worked as District Representative to Chelsea and Charlestown for Congressman Mike Capuano.
- Former Teen Center director and program coordinator for the Healthy Charlestown Coalition at the Charlestown Boys & Girls Club.
- Member of the Ward 2 Democratic Committee, Bunker Hill Associates, and auxiliary member of the Abraham Lincoln Veterans Post #11.
- Board member of the Charlestown Boys and Girls Club.
- Founding Co-Chair of the Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition through the Center for Community Health Improvement at MGH.
- Former member of Charlestown Community Center Council and Charlestown Neighborhood Council.

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

I believe Government plays an important role as a proactive participant in society. When working properly, government can level the playing field so that all rungs of the economic ladder have at least a notion of a fair shot of success.

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

As State Representative, I will focus on:

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- Increasing access to high-quality education from Pre-K through post-Secondary
- Creating healthier communities by tackling major public health issues including ensuring that all Massachusetts residents have access to quality affordable healthcare that covers all necessary treatments.
- Working to make government more inclusive and accessible at all levels.
- Enhancing local business districts in Chelsea and Charlestown through collaboration, ensuring that there are good paying jobs with benefits like earned sick time and paid leave.

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?

Massachusetts has a flat rate income tax. A graduated income tax is more progressive. This tax could go a long way to ease the burden for families even more impacted by raising the sales tax, a regressive form of taxation.

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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 worked with a group of union families in my neighborhood to help them secure two BRA parcels that were slated for development.

Through partnerships at the city and state level, we were able to turn two parcels into 100% affordable owner occupied townhouses for families.

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

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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.

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.*

As a product and a consumer of the Boston Public Schools system, I know firsthand the importance of having access to high-quality education. These educational opportunities should be offered from Pre-K through post-secondary.

With all of the great educational institutions in the Commonwealth, PILOT payments from universities and teaching hospitals should be more specifically targeted towards improving access to education.

1. *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).

As a staff member of the Charlestown boys and girls club, I worked with MGH to develop drop-out prevention programs within Charlestown High school and the Edwards Middle school. We used health center funds to place social workers in both of these schools to act as guidance counselors/truant officers for the school department.

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

I grew up in a poor to working-class community. I witnessed how the economy effects the achievement gap. I will work to change the conversation from *whether* a student will go to college, to *where* they will go to college. We need to fundamentally change expectation from birth through early adulthood.

3. **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

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

Yes No

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5. **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.

Working for Congressman Capuano, I was on the front lines of the healthcare debate. I am an advocate for the single-payer system which would not only improve access to healthcare and lower costs, but would increase workforce mobility.

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

Please see above. Additionally, I worked through the Charlestown Boys and Girls Club with Partners Health Care and MGH to expand access to care to underserved populations.

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?

Please see above.

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

Until we achieve a single payer government sponsored option, the business community needs to keep the promise they made post-World War II and continue to fully fund employer based healthcare. I also believe to work, health insurance must be not for profit as it was originally intended.

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

Mental health services should be covered like any other health service. I believe there should be more school-based mental health services and that our prison system can be doing much more. The short term costs of mental healthcare in prisons pales in comparison to the long term costs for warehousing inmates.

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

Aside from universal healthcare, better jobs offering better benefits would allow people access to more healthcare options.

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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

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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.

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 experienced gentrification in my neighborhood. I strongly believe that there needs to be a variety of housing programs to make urban housing realistic for multiple housing levels.

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 a group of union families in my neighborhood to help them secure two BRA parcels that were slated for development.

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Through partnerships at the city and state level, we were able to turn two parcels into 100% affordable owner occupied townhouses for families.

1.

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 would be open to any proposals that streamline management so that more resources go directly to the residents and their housing needs. This includes using my experience at the federal level to discuss better ways to make use of shrinking federal housing dollars.

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 audit tax credits given to developers to make sure they are still being used as intended. I would also like to explore the regional formulas used to determine what is 'affordable' for certain areas.

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

Stopping developers from opting out of building affordable units and building more family centered housing is essential.

3. **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?*

As I stated earlier, Massachusetts has a flat rate income tax. A graduated income tax is more progressive. This tax could go a long way to ease the burden for families even more impacted by raising the sales tax, a regressive form of taxation

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).

Working with Congressman Capuano, our office has been on the forefront of the great tax debates that have occurred on the national level.

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.

As an avid reader of BlueMassGroup, I must say that the post entitled ‘Time for Big Goals’ was spot on. I found myself nodding along to each point made. Many of my answers to these questions reflect all of the thinking in that post.

I ask for the endorsement of Progressive Massachusetts because I know the following that your group has -- not just the number of people, but the level of engagement of your members.

I hope to earn your endorsement, because to do so would be a validation of my own work for progressive causes over the past 20 years.