



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

statewide, grassroots organizing for progressive
change in Massachusetts

2014 STATE RACES ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: February 7, 2014

Candidate: Maura Healey

Office Sought: Attorney General

Party: Democratic

Web Site: www.maurahealey.com

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO

Email:

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CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFO

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**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.

*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 running for Attorney General because my experience, drive, and vision for the office make me the strongest candidate to protect the public interest and advance the well-being of all residents. As a division and bureau chief in the Attorney General's Office, I have been on the front lines fighting for fairness, equality and justice, and will lead using the skills I have acquired throughout my career as a lawyer, advocate and prosecutor.

My vision for the office is built on three clear priorities:

- **Standing up for individuals** by protecting consumers, fighting for civil rights, equal pay, environmental protection, fair labor protections, rooting out fraud and abusive practices, and ensuring access to health care, including mental and reproductive health. I will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live, work and raise a family in Massachusetts.
- **Safeguarding communities** by working to reduce gun violence, protecting children, tackling drug addiction and addressing the root causes of crime and instability in our neighborhoods through advocacy, prosecution and working with local law enforcement, municipalities, community and civic groups. We can make our communities safer and stronger by supporting criminal justice reform.
- **Leading an office guided by our shared progressive values: Fairness, accountability and innovation.** As Attorney General, I will protect taxpayers and work productively with businesses to support economic development and healthy communities. I will fight for a level playing field by ensuring businesses and government agents play by the rules. Our next Attorney General must be proactive and use all the tools at her disposal to address emerging challenges for our state and residents.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

My legal experience, particularly in the Attorney General's office, my demonstrated leadership and management record, and my passion and vision for public service make me the best candidate.

I understand the authority and responsibility the Attorney General wields, having served as both a division and bureau chief during my seven-year tenure in the Attorney General's Office. I have approved, led, initiated, supervised or handled hundreds of investigations and enforcement actions across the areas of civil rights, consumer protection, health care, environmental protection, insurance and financial services, not-for-profit/public charities, fair labor, and utilities. I have also worked directly with cities and towns, state agencies, district attorney's offices, police departments and organizations and stakeholder groups across the state on AGO-related matters and I am the candidate best prepared on day one to most effectively lead the state's largest public law firm.

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Leading is something that I have done my whole life, as the oldest of five children, as captain of all of my teams through high school and college, and as a leader in the Attorney General's Office. I know how to motivate and inspire people, and I know how to build the most effective and forward-thinking teams of attorneys and staff to ensure that Massachusetts has the best Attorney General's Office in the country.

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

First and foremost, the role of the government is to serve the people, and to protect the most vulnerable among us. During my tenure in the AG's office, I oversaw staff who handled hundreds of complaints from residents every day and worked to address problems large and small. I worked hard to ensure that staff were there to help however they could in as many situations as possible. The role of an Attorney General also includes ensuring that both government and businesses play by the rules and that the rules are reasonable, predictable and fair. When unscrupulous bosses cheat workers out of wages or polluters ignore environmental protections, we are all harmed. Government must ensure that the rules are followed so that individuals and businesses that play by the rules can grow and thrive.

I believe that our government can help change the way people view a problem or an issue. As Chief of the Civil Rights Division, I led and won a case that changed the lives for gay and lesbian people here and across the country. I fought to ensure we approached the subprime lending crisis not just as a consumer protection issue, but also as a civil rights matter because certain predatory lending practices had a disparate impact on borrowers and communities of color. A blind student's inability to use educational technology wasn't for me simply a disability rights issue, it was a matter of fairness and economic mobility. Protecting our environment is also a matter of public health. Standing for common sense criminal justice reform strengthens communities and protects taxpayers. Our job in government is to actively frame public policy to better serve people.

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

My top three priorities are (1) standing up for individuals; (2) safeguarding communities; and (3) leading an office that is guided by our shared progressive values: fairness, accountability and innovation.

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?

Addressing economic inequality and improving access to opportunity must be at the heart the Attorney General's agenda. This means thinking expansively about civil rights, consumer protection and criminal justice responsibilities. And it means that every resident of the state must be able to access the basic building blocks of a civic society – education, health care, housing, transportation, employment, and a safe neighborhood. While some may not consider transportation to be a civil rights issue, there are racial disparities in commuting times and public transportation is often unavailable to our lowest-paid night workers. When a workplace is inaccessible, so is a job. When a struggling family is further set back by an unaffordable loan with hidden fees, a predatory for-profit school, medical debt or unpaid wages, we all lose. An Attorney General can directly help close the economic inequality gap by taking on these sorts of unjust practices.

Because lower-income borrowers were more likely to receive subprime loans, the impact of the lending crisis has been hard felt in the poorest neighborhoods. We have cleared out bad actors making those loans but more work remains to ensure communities are rebuilding equity.

Low-income families will remain in poverty if their breadwinners continue to face revolving incarceration. We need to invest in new approaches and programs focused on prevention, stabilization and treatment, with a particular focus on addressing mental and behavioral health as well as addiction. We also need to ensure that those incarcerated receive life skills, education, job-training or other training to help them succeed when they are released.

1. *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 Chief of the Civil Rights Division, I brought the first civil rights case by a state against a subprime lender to hold it accountable for charging similarly-situated minority borrowers more for the same mortgages. I oversaw the landmark HomeCorps program that has worked directly on behalf of distressed homeowners to get banks to modify thousands of mortgages to affordable levels and to stop nearly 1,000 unnecessary foreclosures, and I chaired the state's foreclosure impacts task force. I also oversaw teams that brought cases for predatory lending, unfair debt collection practices, non-payment of wages, unlawful evictions, and unfair insurance practices, and against for-profit colleges that deceptively marketed to students (many of them low-income women and veterans) all looking to climb up the ladder. All of these are cases were directed at getting relief for people who have been taken advantage of financially. I also studied the impact of CORI and credit scores on the ability of people to gain meaningful employment.

Because people with disabilities are disproportionately low-income and are subject to unnecessary barriers in education and employment, I led efforts to make schools and technology accessible. I also successfully

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defended the state's racial imbalance law that allows school districts to voluntarily integrate as a means of closing achievement gaps and worked with the state and districts to improve learning opportunities for English-language learners.

2. **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: | Yes |

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?

I oppose efforts to pair an increase in the minimum wage with cuts to unemployment insurance.

4. **Earned Sick Time.** Do you support requiring businesses with more than 11 employees to provide earned, paid sick time to their employees?

Yes. Requiring sick workers or the parent of a sick child to report to work risks their own health as well as the health of co-workers and customers and places the worker in an untenable position of choosing between the health and well-being of herself or her children and the job she needs to care for her family.

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?

I support efforts to ensure that people who work are paid a living wage but I cannot commit to this without a full analysis of the proposed legislation and its impact on employees, employers and our economy.

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

Yes

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.

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.*

Public education is the surest pathway to broader, shared economic opportunities.

My four brothers and sisters and I all went to public schools K-12, my mother was a school nurse and my father a high school history teacher and coach and president of our local teachers' association. We need to support public education to ensure that more children have access to high quality education so they succeed in school and build careers.

We need an education system that is committed to helping every child build a productive future that is responsive to the modern economy at all levels. Our children are tomorrow's workers, parents and leaders and we need to do all we can to prepare students to succeed and thrive in these responsibilities. This takes investment in children, wraparound support services, paying our teachers and investing in our classrooms. I also strongly support state and local efforts to partner with the business community to reach out to work with schools and support paid internships, mentoring and other enrichment opportunities. We need all our students to be trained to move into jobs in those and other sectors of our economy, such as our bio-tech, high-tech and health care industries. A student's zip code should not define his or her education and workforce prospects and we must work to ensure that all students, regardless of race, income or ability have the opportunity to maximize their potential.

An Attorney General must also ensure that businesses have the appropriate regulatory support to help them create and support jobs and that consumers have a public advocate for fairness and transparency in the process.

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).

The Massachusetts Constitution provides a constitutional right to an education. The Attorney General must protect and enforce that right. While in the Attorney General's Office, I successfully defended the Lynn Public School's voluntary integration plan and the state's racial imbalance act following two U.S. Supreme Court rulings. I also oversaw the Attorney General's implementation of the state's anti-bullying law, which better ensures that students are able to receive an education in a healthy environment. This included working directly with legislators as they drafted the law, advising the state education department on guidelines and regulations, and working with schools and educational personnel as they put new policies and

procedures into place, handling and supervising bullying complaints in the AG's office and assisting in the AG's anti-bullying commission hearings and report. In addition, I led the office's achievement of a nationwide settlement with Apple, Inc. to make its educational platform accessible to persons who are blind or print-disabled. I also oversaw matters on behalf of children with disabilities who needed public accommodations in school and worked with state officials on addressing the needs of English-language learners. I am committed to ensuring that predatory, for-profit schools cannot prey upon students seeking educational advancement. Many of these schools promise big results but leave our students with mountains of debt and worthless certificates or degrees. I have worked on enforcement cases and proposed regulations to address this emerging issues for our state.

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

Many factors contribute to persistent racial and economic achievement gaps. These include lack of basic access to health care, nutrition, mental health resources, safe and stable housing, parental income status and employment, domestic violence and trauma, and language barriers. All of these must be addressed with a combination of enforcement of laws, advocacy, funding and leadership. In addition, another factor that warrants attention is school discipline and the linkage between school discipline and incarceration. I will use all of the tools of the AG's office to address these issues.

1. **Universal Pre-K.** Do you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system?

Yes. Every credible study of the last 10 years has confirmed the truth that early child education is the vital foundation for K-12 success. The word gap alone between middle class preschoolers and children in poverty is in the millions years before kindergarten. Every dollar spent on pre-K programs is recovered many times over in higher earnings and reduced spending on social services and criminal justice.

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

I support making high quality, affordable higher education available to all students. That is one of the reasons I am committed to shutting down predatory for-profit schools that target low-income communities and families and steer them away from community colleges and other learning institutions.

3. **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?

I have not studied the proposed changes to the Chapter 70 formula sufficient to state an opinion at this time.

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.

I believe that every resident of our state deserves affordable, high quality health care. This includes ensuring parity for mental health services.

The Attorney General's Office has oversight of health care companies, insurance providers and hospitals and also has oversight of proposed health care mergers and other proposed changes to Massachusetts' important health care market. It is critical that we protect patients' ability to access quality, affordable 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*).

As Chief of the Public Protection & Advocacy Bureau, and Chief of the Business & Labor Bureau, I oversaw five divisions that directly work on health care issues – the Health Care Division (insurance coverage and consumer protection issues and coordination with DPH, the Health Policy Commission, the Connector and other agencies); the Antitrust Division (overseeing all proposed mergers or acquisitions by hospital systems and insurance companies); the Not-for Profit Public Charities Division (oversight of hospitals and insurers); the Fair Labor Division (focused on health care worker wage and hour issues); and the Medicaid Fraud Division (focused on patient care and neglect cases and Medicaid fraud). In my time, I supervised and approved investigations, enforcement actions, and the publication reports on health care to provide transparency and information to policy makers. I also participated in the Health Disparities Council.

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

I support every individual and family having access to quality, affordable health care without regard to what their employer provides.

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

As Attorney General, I will use the office's authority in the areas outlined above, as well as our powers to combat waste and abuse to ensure that our dollars are being invested in quality, affordable health care. I will ensure that the Attorney General's Office continues to be a resource to lawmakers, health care experts and advocates by requiring transparency and ensuring that all parties have access to information necessary to evaluate health outcomes and the drivers of escalating health care costs.

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

First, we need to achieve parity for mental health services. This is a civil rights issue. Failure to address these issues or to have in place a system that permits people to receive treatment and care for mental health, destabilizes families, removes breadwinners from householders, leads to increased substance abuse, violence and crime.

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

We need to make access to affordable, quality health care a priority for every resident. That requires examining the gaps in coverage in communities of color and carefully scrutinizing any efforts that might curtail health care choice and competition. I will also enforce laws appropriate to eliminating or reducing disparities.

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?

I support engaging health care experts in improving the quality of health care and lowering costs, but I am not familiar enough with this specific proposal to state an opinion.

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

I support bulk purchasing programs that lower the cost of prescription drugs, but I am not familiar enough with this proposal to state an opinion at this time. I look forward to learning more.

D. Housing

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?*

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.

No person in Massachusetts should be homeless, and no child should go without safe and affordable housing. Housing, jobs and transportation are interrelated issues. Housing needs to be near transportation so that people can get to work. People need to get to work to afford housing. I will build upon successful programs like HomeCorps and the Abandoned Housing Initiative to make sure we are doing all that we can to make affordable housing available to all who need it. I will also enforce 40B and other laws intended to make sure that we have affordable housing.

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

I have personally handled or overseen the enforcement of fair housing laws in hundreds of cases. Most of these involved rental housing and including cases where landlords, real estate agents or property managers unlawfully denied rental opportunities to people who wanted to use a housing, rental or transitional voucher. These cases often resulted in vindicating the rights of these victims, including getting them restitution and housing. I have also led cases against predatory mortgage lenders and banks that stripped equity from homeowners around the Commonwealth and wreaked havoc on the economy and housing market. Finally, I helped design and then oversaw the AG's landmark HomeCorps program that has kept thousands of families in their homes with modified loan payments and avoiding foreclosure. Another subset of families have been helped by that program with transitional assistance payments through to help them avoid homelessness.

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 support efforts to increase government efficiency and eliminate waste in government but need to study this issue more to state a formal position.

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?

As head of the AG's Civil Rights Division, I fought to help families stay in their homes and avoid foreclosure and fight discrimination against those on public assistance. I strongly support efforts to increase the number of affordable housing units in the state but need to study this issue more.

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

I support programs that move homeless and housing insecure individuals and families into permanent housing but I need to study the issue more to develop policies on how to do this.

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

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?*

Ensuring that every Massachusetts resident has access to opportunities requires that our state be willing to invest in education, infrastructure, housing, job training and support services. If we do not have the resources needed to live up to those commitments, then I will work with the next governor and the legislature to support needed reforms.

There is clear income inequality in our state and our country. As Attorney General, I will work to ensure economic justice for all our citizens and strongly support a progressive tax system, including a progressive state income tax.

I believe that a review of our tax system should be comprehensive and do not believe that decisions about capital gains, the film tax, corporate tax breaks and others should be made in a one-off fashion. However, I am committed to engaging in the discussion with state agencies, the governor and the legislature, about how different changes to the tax code would help us better live up to the commitments we make to our residents.