



PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

statewide, grassroots organizing for progressive change in Massachusetts

2014 STATE RACES ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Date: Feb 3, 2014
Candidate: James Arena-DeRosa
Office Sought: Lt. Governor
Party: Democrat
Web Site: launching jad2014.com

CANDIDATE CONTACT INFO

Email:
Mobile Phone:
Home Phone:

CAMPAIGN CONTACT INFO

Campaign Manager: we have a team for now please contact Rebecca Dresner
Campaign Manager Phone:
Campaign Manager Email:
Campaign Office Phone: 617-356-7342

**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?**

People are losing faith in their government but I still believe it can be a positive force in our lives. I have spent my life advocating for communities and leading agencies - and want to take that knowledge (United Farm workers/Local and State Government/Oxfam/Peace Corps/ Regional Administrator for USDA in the Obama Administration) and make a difference. I still believe in community and the prospect of collective action and just feel we need someone who not only says the right things (*my guess is for Lt Gov not a huge difference*) but I have lived it and will always remember where I come from.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

The Lt. Governor is the potential CEO of the state. I have run a 12 billion dollar government enterprise - yet I have also worked at the grass roots level with Finance Committee in my town, state government, Oxfam and Peace Corps. My heart will always be in the community but I am comfortable in the corridors of power. At USDA I negotiated with governors and cabinet secretaries, testified before legislators, worked with mayors and municipal leaders through the regions as well as ngo and business leaders. I can lead at the highest levels but will always listen to the community.

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

I believe in an activist government but leadership is galvanizing the government, private and non profit sectors to sectors to work together. Public Service was a noble endeavor when I was growing up (JFK) and can be again. I was asked to speak to some students about public service as a career. I started by reminding them how important government was in their lives and took them through an entire day from the time the turn on the water in the morning to when they turn of the light at night - and all the ways government has impacted our lives.

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

The Lt Gov serves the Commonwealth by being advocate for communities in Massachusetts to the state and federal government. Who is going to bring the voice of the people to Beacon Hill? I have done that my whole life and will do that as Lt. Governor - and see this as my top priority.

It is also a chance to play for the longer term and contribute to the future of Massachusetts and I see 3 key issue areas where I can contribute:

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- Ending Hunger while creating jobs in the local food economy

We have a real opportunity here. Sad that 1 in 4 residents of Massachusetts still need food assistance help from the programs I ran at Agriculture. We have learned so much about how the food we eat impacts our health - and by promoting better nutrition and healthy lifestyles we could save the Massachusetts economy billions of dollars in long term health care costs. With the current focus on fresh, local, healthy food we also could be creating thousands of jobs for the local food economy by providing the right kind of support to our small farms, CSAs, local fisherman, and local processors (the rules are all written for the corporate giants and we need to keep fighting). Related - we rank 48th in the county for school breakfast and by promoting universal breakfast for every elementary classroom in Massachusetts our kids will do better in school, have less problems with discipline and will do better on those standardized tests. Hunger is hidden yet pervasive in Massachusetts - food pantries throughout the state are oversubscribed and my wife runs the senior center and she and her colleagues statewide know of seniors who choose between medicine and food. Massachusetts leaves half a billion dollars in already appropriated federal food funds on the table that in addition to meeting hunger and nutrition could be going to other critical needs.

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- Promoting the Education of the Whole Child

Too much focus on the MCAS - we need to embrace a more classical approach to education that incorporates arts, multi-cultural education, sports, civics and financial literacy). We should be teaching our children to think and engage in 21st century culture not bind them to the purgatory of the MCAS. And sometimes improvement over time is more important than the absolute scores. As an educator (pt faculty at Brandeis Heller I value inquiry - collaboration - questions - problem solving) not teaching to a test. Besides - even the jobs in emerging industries (bio tech/life / etc. are only partially the core technology) the business is built around a host of skills). Also - as someone who sent thousands of American volunteers to Africa, Asia, Latin America cultural competency is going to be a critical life skill as Massachusetts continues to change.

- Work for Economic Justice

As a former SEIU union member I'd like to see more fairness in the economy - I will support the increase in the minimum wage - but will advocate for a Living Wage (which I see as a long term proposition which is going to take us a long time but it is worth the fight). If you work full time you should be able to take care of your family.

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James Arena-DeRosa

Lt. Governor

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 am a big "foundational" person. Politics too often is about the next election. Leadership is about generational responsibility. I cannot think about jobs without thinking about health and education.

As Lt. Governor I am thinking about jobs 10-15 years from now and how I can help and what that will require. The state has an abysmal record on school breakfast (48th in the country) - yet every mom and dad, school nurse and teacher in America knows a hungry child cannot learn. This impacts kids health their ability to learn school outcomes - job prospects. I am pledged to pursue and fight for universal breakfast in every elementary classroom in Massachusetts. That would have a huge positive effect.

I do think we need to work toward a living wage - but there are so many inconsistencies in our current government policies this needs a comprehensive approach. Our scientists tell us what is good to eat - but the government subsidizes something different - and then McDonalds trains it new works to get food stamps - which to me is just corporate welfare (of course we want those families to eat - but why should government cover that wage gap)

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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).

SEIU union organizer - at Oxfam worked for economic justice in a number of locales in eth US and around the world - supported minority farmers in their efforts o get fair treatment for government support -

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: | Yes |
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?
Yes **No** (I support the concept of living wage - and I talk about it - and we need to get there - but society must approach and do this in a comprehensive manner for it to succeed and so everyone benefits. There is not one magic solution. I like and support the idea here and agree and believe that corporations that receive gov benefits should give back but I would want to understand all the details and nuances and how exactly this would work and who it would impact)
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.*

Government has a responsibility to educate every child. I am not adamantly opposed to experiments as long as every child is eligible to participate (i.e. I am against cherry picking the best students to start a charter school - but not charter schools themselves - if you want to send your kids to private school so be it - but I am against giving vouchers for private schools that would still make the total cost prohibitive for most students). As noted elsewhere - I am ok with testing to see where we stand - but education should not be held hostage to the MCAS.

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).

While on Finance Committee I supported the tax override that we needed here in my community to support education. Not only did I go on record in support but we hosted learning events at our home, actively campaigned for passage of the override.

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

I go back to my foundational issues - if poor kids show up to school hungry or don't eat well during vacation or summer - they are already behind before even start!! And I do think the way MCAS is used it hurt the poor kids - again I don't mind testing to see where things stand - but I am more interested in their progress not an absolute score. I also think #4 is key here because again it gives kids a good start. And it isn't always about the \$ but achievement gaps are usually linked more closely to poverty and not race (making it doubly hard for poor communities of color). I do think a multi-cultural approach to education can help here - we all need to see heroes that look a little like us when growing up.

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

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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 (I support the concept but we'd need to look at the funding mechanisms and expectations - what will students give in return - a year or two of service - AmeriCorps - City Year - Peace Corps)
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 (in general yes - and as a Finance Committee member I noted the importance of these funds - but we are living in Massachusetts based on boundaries drawn 300 years ago - some areas of the state need to explore more efficient regional approaches so students and educators can get what they need)

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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 is a right

we need a single payer system that preserves some patient choices

WHERE IS THE FOCUS ON PREVENTION!

one of my issues - we lose \$250 billion a year national on nutrition related health issues

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

For the last several years I have promoted more focus on prevention and universal school breakfast in my dialogue with governors, mayors and state leaders - - but one of the reasons I am running is to elevate these issues which I don't have gotten enough attention.

3. **Single Payer and Public Option.** Do you support moving Massachusetts to Single Payer insurance?
Yes (but at this juncture I think we have to see how the HCA plays out over the next few years and give it a chance
4. **Costs and Quality.** What steps would you take to lower health care costs while maintaining or improving health outcomes?

WHERE IS THE FOCUS ON PREVENTION!

5. **Mental Health.** What steps would you take to address the gap in affordable mental health services?
6. **Health disparities.** What steps would you take to reduce racial and income disparities in health outcomes?

so much of this comes back to appropriate staffing and access - we still have it backwards where the \$ always will cover emergency services and hospitalizations but not preventative consultations and visits. e.g. Rich kid/Poor Kid both are obese and need an anti-lipid regimen - insurance pays \$2000 a month. Rich Kid/Poor Kid - borderline struggling with weight. Pediatrician wants to send kid to a nutritionist - insurance pays 0 - which kid do you think still goes to the nutritionist at parents costs of \$75 a visit and which one doesn't get the guidance and support (true story - bad policy)

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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
8. **Pharmaceutical companies.** Do you support prohibiting pharmaceutical companies from including direct-to-consumer drug advertising as tax-deductible expense?
Yes **No** (I'd want to understand your concern with this - advertising is generally considered a legitimate business expense. If there are abuses or deceptive approaches we should stop those)
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?

Yes

CANDIDATE:

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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.

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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?*

basic housing is a right and it is startling when you consider the \$ spent to hotel people (we supported some home deliveries of food for people temporarily located in hotels) vs. investing in permanent housing. It is a long term structural issue and I did at one point work a little in real estate with people who worked for affordable housing early in my career - but I don't consider myself an expert but I imagine you would have my support on critical issues we'd need to bring to the fore.

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

this is an area I'd like to learn more about if I am elected Lt. Governor

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 like the idea of regional problem solving but a not sure taking away the local authority is the best approach.

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

\$ is not the only factor but it is part of it we just have to allocate more resources here - (if mortgage companies want home buyers to only to spend a third of income on housing that should be our goal)

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?*

in general I support a progressive tax code
we have delayed too many important investments
more \$ needs to go to local aid (I have seen it in local gov)-

but it isn't just about raising more revenue - we have to look at cost savings in how we run large government programs. Sometimes the lack of investment and foresight hurts. My team had to make a \$30 million claim against Massachusetts because of of poor decisions in the past and not updating their IT systems. Fortunately we negotiated a reinvestment vs. a fine but many systems need an upgrade so we can step back and see where best to invest precious financial and human resources.

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).

While on Finance Committee I supported the tax override that we needed here in my community to support education. Not only did I go on record in support but we hosted learning events at our home, actively campaigned for passage of the override. This gave us more \$ to work with for other key community priorities.

3. **Tax Rates for Upper Incomes.** Do you support increasing income taxes on the wealthiest residents of Massachusetts?
Yes (in general I support the concept that those more able to pay should contribute more to society)
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 (I think the context is critical - what are the current needs of the state - maybe some years we could - it depends - I'd rather have the conversation than make it automatic)

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5. **Capital Gains.** Do you support increasing the capital gains tax (with safeguards to protect seniors)?
No but I don't to drop them either (revenues seem to be on a good track - let's talk first about how we invest those available resources)
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?
Yes No (this is case by case - I Am tired of tax breaks just running up huge profits. I always thought we should approach this the other way. The right argues that corporations through their munificence will take a tax break and invest it in jobs - the left says they just line their pockets. I would do an after the fact tax break in some targeted instances (i.e. you make the hires/you invest in green technology/ you work toward a living wage etc. you get the break - and then we'll look back downstream)
- Do you support repealing or significantly reducing the Film Production Tax Credit?
Yes No (I want to see the numbers)
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.

We are just launching so I hope you will keep an eye eye on our campaign. At every stop on the campaign when I speak to crowds we have been able to recruit volunteers for the campaign - so I really believe these issues are resonating.

I have had a few preliminary press chats and one meeting went well but at the end the reporter asked : "But James - doesn't every politician say they want to feed poor kids and take care of the elderly". I said "I suppose they do - but ask them if they've been in public service all these time - have they done it? I am running to further some critical work that needs greater attention."

Last - with the federal shutdown there was a time when I was the only one in the region keeping our programs running - I wanted to leave my job sooner to run but felt an obligation to stay. Plus as a non-profit guy for most of my life there are life's realities.

Like many people - my wife and I are in the middle of our life time horizon. We worry about our parent's health care, we worry about our kids not being saddled with huge college debts - we worry about the cost of living. Some friends asked why give up a secure job - what will happen to you? But the question I ask is what will happen to all the people I have met along the way if I don't run. I am running for Lt. Governor because I believe we live in extraordinary times that requires our sacrifice and the very best of what we have to offer the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and I believe it is time.

James Arena-DeRosa