The Creative Economy in Massachusetts needs a champion in the Corner Office on Beacon Hill!

"I was fortunate to have parents who valued the arts, when I was growing up. Ever since, I have seen the arts not as a luxury but as a necessity." – Martha Coakley

I was born and raised in North Adams, Massachusetts, an industrial city that fell on hard times after the closure of Sprague Electric in the 1980s. When the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art opened in the same industrial space in 1999, it led a renaissance in the city. Since then, North Adams has become a hub of the creative economy in western Massachusetts, creating jobs and driving investment in the community. Arts and culture are critical economic drivers in Massachusetts, but they can also empower us, educate us, and show us new ways to look at the world around us.

The creative economy drives economic growth: it accounts for 10.2% of the overall Massachusetts economy, supports 100,000 jobs, and generates $1.2 billion of direct investment into the Commonwealth every year. Of equal importance, the arts enhance learning in our schools, expand creativity and have the potential to enrich all of our communities. It is critical that our next governor embrace both elements of arts and culture in our Commonwealth – leveraging the economic benefits of the creative economy, and ensuring that everyone has access to the resources that will inspire and enrich our communities. My vision is to integrate policy planning for arts and culture into all areas of state government. As Governor, I will be committed to:

- Explore establishing a new cabinet position tasked with driving a comprehensive policy agenda related to the creative economy, and which fosters collaboration across agencies dealing with economic development, education, housing, and transportation.
- Use the office of the Governor to showcase the cultural resources of Massachusetts and enhance our status as an arts destination, in order to promote travel and tourism within the state, attracting visitors from across the country and around the world.
- Collaborate with leaders from the business community and the creative economy to protect intellectual property rights and strictly enforce fair labor standards, ensuring that all artists are compensated for their work in an appropriate fashion with fair wages.
- Support small creative businesses with a range of measures including greater access to working capital, less regulatory complexity and lower healthcare costs.
- Work with the legislature to double the funding for the Massachusetts Cultural Council ("MCC") to provide stable funding for the 6,000 non-profit organizations across the Commonwealth currently served by the MCC.
- Build on Governor Patrick’s strong support for the Cultural Facilities Fund – investing in capital grants that leverage private sector and foundation funding.
- Promote expanded learning opportunities and facilitate a shift from STEM to STEAM, whereby programs designed to enhance science, technology, engineering and mathematics would include the arts.
- Use arts education to address social issues, particularly for the disadvantaged among us. Promote and support local community centers, like the Bird Street Community Center in Dorchester, which provide workforce development and arts education for at-risk youth.

We need a champion for the Creative Economy in the Corner Office to ensure that Massachusetts is a great place to be a creative business and a great place to be an artist. We need a champion for the arts who understands the potential of the arts to enrich our lives and strengthen our communities.