

**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2018 CONGRESSIONAL
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**



Date: July 15, 2018

Candidate: Rufus Gifford

Office Sought: U.S. House of Representatives – MA-3

Party: Democrat

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Email questions to elections@progressivemass.com.

Questionnaire Responses (excepting sections labeled CONFIDENTIAL) will be published on our website.

I. About You

1. Why are you running for office? And what will your top 3 priorities be if elected?

I am running to restore the trust between people and their government. It wasn't that long ago that people were inspired by the work of our government; we must get back there if we hope to pursue a bold, progressive policy agenda for our country, including aggressive action on climate change, a big infrastructure package, and comprehensive immigration reform.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I have served at the top levels of government and the top levels of politics. As a senior aide to President Barack Obama for 10 years, I was part of the team that helped passed the Obama agenda, including the Affordable Care Act. Then, as U.S. Ambassador to Denmark under President Obama, I worked to build international coalitions, address climate change, and pursue people-to-people diplomacy. I know firsthand what a powerful force for good our government can be, and am proud to have played a part in some of the tremendous progress we made over the past 10 years. Now, as that progress is being threatened, my experience makes me the most qualified to go to Washington and make a difference on Day 1. I believe in the system, know the system, and want to breathe new life into the system.

II. The Issues

Our questionnaire is based on our [Progressive Platform](#): Shared Prosperity, All Means All/Racial and Social Justice, Good Government and Strong Democracy, and Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection.

Each section begins with an open-ended question about a plank in our platform. The subsequent questions will be mostly yes/no questions. In such cases, your response should begin with YES or NO. You are welcome to expand beyond just YES/NO to further elaborate on your position, but please keep answers < 150 words.

A. An Equitable Tax System

1. What does tax justice mean to you? What would a fair tax system look like?

Tax justice, to me, means that everyone pays an equitable amount based on their income, that corporations and the top 1% pay their fair share and do not benefit disproportionately from tax breaks and loopholes that enable them to pay lower effective tax rates than middle class families.

2. **Financial Transaction Tax.** Would you support legislation that imposes a tax of a fraction of a percent on transactions done by Wall Street firms and stock traders?
3. **Capital Gains Tax.** Would you support taxing capital gains and dividends at ordinary income rates for households with income over \$250,000? **YES**
4. **Corporate Tax Avoidance.** Would you support legislation to tax corporations on all of their profits, ending the current practice that allows US corporations to avoid paying taxes on overseas profits? **YES**

B. Jobs That Pay a Living Wage

1. What is the role of Congress in creating good-paying jobs? In which sectors do you see the most potential?

I believe the federal government can set the conditions for robust economic growth by investing in priorities like education, transportation, and housing. The federal government can also offer expanded financial support and technical guidance to small businesses, which play such an important role in creating jobs in our communities.

One sector I think has the potential to be enormously impactful in the 3rd District – which has a tremendously rich manufacturing history – is green jobs. As Massachusetts begins construction of the nation’s first offshore windfarm and continues to expand renewable energy sources, many of the component parts that go into renewable energy generation continue to be produced elsewhere – those parts should be being manufactured right here in the 3rd District, creating thousands of union jobs that pay a living wage. I have released a green jobs plan with detailed policy proposals to achieve that.

2. **Minimum Wage.** The gap between productivity and wages has grown dramatically since 1973. Moreover, the federal minimum wage remains stuck at \$7.25—what it was in 2009. Would you support legislation to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour? **YES**
 - a. And eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers? **YES**
 - b. And index the minimum wage to inflation? **YES**
3. **Job Guarantee.** Would you support legislation to create a federal job guarantee? If so, what would it look like?

I believe we should remain focused on investments in education and sustainable economic development that enable every prospective worker in our economy to obtain a good job that pays a living wage.

4. **Retirement Security.** With the decline of pensions and other defined-benefit retirement plans in the workplace, retirement is becoming more insecure, and seniors are having to work longer just to stay afloat. Would you support legislation to....
 - a. Increase the benefits provided by Social Security? **YES**
 - b. Raising the cap on earnings that are taxed for Social Security? Currently, only earnings up to \$118,500 are subject to the payroll tax. **YES**
5. **Paid Leave.** The US is the only industrial nation without paid family leave. Would you support federal legislation ensuring that workers can take up to 12 weeks of paid leave for a pregnancy, the birth or adoption of a child, to recover from a serious illness, or to care for a seriously ill family member? **YES**
6. **Paid Vacation.** The US is the only industrial nation that does not require employers to provide any paid vacation time. Would you support legislation requiring employers to provide employees at least two weeks of paid vacation time? **YES**
7. **Union Rights.** Unions play a key role in building a strong middle-class; however, unions have been under attack in recent years. Would you support legislation like the Workplace Democracy Act that prohibits “right-to-work” laws and requires employers to recognize a union when a majority of workers in a bargaining unit sign valid authorization cards? **YES**

C. Quality, Affordable Health Care

1. What do you see as the role of the federal government in health care? What are the most important next steps to build upon the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act?

I believe health care is a right. I believe our first priority must be defending against Republican efforts to roll back critical portions of the ACA, as evidenced by the Administration’s recent decision to end risk-sharing payments that helped enable individuals with pre-existing conditions to obtain affordable coverage. I worked hard with President Obama and members of his administration to pass the ACA, and I saw firsthand how much of a difference it made for the millions of Americans who were suddenly able to access high-quality, affordable care. We must protect it. Ultimately, I believe we must move towards a Medicare-for-All model that ensures affordable, universal health care coverage.

2. **Medicare for All.** Would you support the creation of a single payer/“Medicare for All” health insurance system in the country that would guarantee health care as a right? **YES**
3. **Medicaid.** Would you oppose any effort to add a work requirement to Medicaid? **YES**
4. **Medicare.** Would you oppose any effort to increase the means-testing of Medicare? **YES**
5. **Drug Price Negotiation.** Would you support legislation requiring the federal government to negotiate the price of Medicare prescription drugs with pharmaceutical companies? **YES**

6. **Access to Prescription Drugs.** Would you support legislation to reduce monopolies for brand-name drugs and help generic competitors come to market more easily? **YES**
7. **Reproductive Rights -- Part I.** Would you oppose any legislation that seeks to roll back a woman's fundamental right to choose an abortion as set out in *Roe vs. Wade*? **YES**
8. **Reproductive Rights -- Part II.** Would you supporting legislation to repeal the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds to pay for abortion except to save the life of the woman, or if the pregnancy arises from incest or rape? **YES**

D. Quality, Free Publicly Funded Education

1. What role should the federal government play in guaranteeing high-quality K-12 education for all students? In guaranteeing access to affordable higher education?

As I have travelled around the district, I've heard from educators, parents, and students about the importance of federal resources to support both K-12 and public higher education. I believe it's critical that the federal government increase its investment in K-12 public education, in order to ensure that all students – especially those from under-resourced communities – are able to access a world-class education.

Specifically when it comes to higher education, I believe we need to expand avenues to support student loan borrowers, including allowing borrowers to refinance, increasing enrollment in income-based repayment plans, and expanding public service loan forgiveness programs. We also need greater federal investment in public higher education to close the gaps left by declining state investment.

2. **Race to the Top.** The Race to the Top program, created in 2010, was a competitive grant program for school districts that incentivized public school districts to adopt performance-based evaluations for teachers and to increase the number of charter schools. How would you evaluate the success of the program?

I fully support greater funding for K-12 public education, as well as efforts to incentivize new approaches that better meet the needs of students and educators. However, I believe the emphasis on standardized evaluation under RTTT partly contributed to "teaching to the test," which actually limited flexibility for educators and didn't adequately reflect the many different factors impacting the ability of students to learn.

3. **Achievement Gap.** Since 2005 alone (13 years of K-12 education), Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which provides funding to states and districts to improve education for disadvantaged students, has been underfunded by \$347 billion. Would you support legislation to fully fund Title I? **YES**

4. **Special Education.** When Congress first passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal government promised to pay 40 percent of the cost of educating students with disabilities. That promise has not been kept, with federal funding standing at just 15.7 percent. Would you support legislation to fully fund IDEA? **YES**
5. **Student Loan Debt.** Student loan debt is holding back the economy, as graduates are unable to make important long-term investments in their future. Senator Elizabeth Warren has filed legislation to allow those with outstanding student loan debt to refinance at current, lower interest rates. Would you support such legislation? **YES**
6. **Tuition-Free Higher Education.** More and more jobs are requiring a college degree, but the cost of higher education has been growing faster than wages, contributing to a ballooning student debt burden. Would you support legislation to guarantee free tuition at public colleges and universities? If so, how should such a program operate?

I support making public colleges and universities tuition-free and/or debt-free for students who need financial assistance

E. Affordable, Decent Housing

1. What role do you believe the federal government should play in guaranteeing affordable, decent housing for all?

Affordable, safe housing is critical to improving public health and expanding economic opportunity. I believe the federal government should expand funding for rental assistance programs, as well as home ownership initiatives that provide low- and middle-income families the ability to build wealth by purchasing a home.

2. **National Housing Trust Fund.** The National Housing Trust Fund was created in 2008 as part of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act to complement existing federal funding sources for affordable housing. Would you support legislation to increase funding for the National Housing Trust Fund? **YES**
3. **Tenant Rights.** Prior to the passage of the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (PTFA) in 2009, tenants were often required to move with as little as a few days-notice. However, the PTFA expired in 2014. Would you support legislation to reauthorize such tenant protections? **YES**
4. **Foreclosure Prevention.** Would you support legislation to strengthen requirements for and increase oversight of Federal Housing Administration mortgage servicers so that every homebuyer with an FHA mortgage is given a fair chance at avoiding foreclosure? **YES**

F. A Fair and Efficient Criminal Justice System

1. What role can Congress help deliver on the promise of “liberty and justice for all”?

Congress can pass legislation to establish a framework for our criminal justice system that prioritizes interventions for court-involved youth, expands the use of drug courts, addresses the worst impacts of the war on drugs, and dismantles the prison-industrial complex. However, addressing our criminal justice system is only one element of true reform – we must also take a comprehensive approach to identifying at-risk individuals – especially in low-income and minority communities, who are disproportionately represented in our incarcerated population – and expanding opportunity to divert individuals before they become court involved.

2. **Marijuana Legalization.** Do you support removing marijuana from the list of controlled substances, making it legal at the federal level? **YES**
3. **Mandatory Minimums.** Do you support the repeal of mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses? **YES**
4. **Bail Reform.** Do you support the elimination of cash bail, so that no one is held in jail solely for an inability to pay? **YES**
5. **Private Prisons.** Would you support legislation to bar the federal government and state and local jurisdictions from contracting with private corporations to run prisons and detention facilities? **YES**
6. **Federal Parole System.** The abolition of the federal parole system in 1984 has played a large role in the rise of mass incarceration since the 1980s, as prisoners are now required to serve at least 85 percent of their sentence. Would you support legislation to reinstate the federal parole system? **YES**
7. **Price Gouging.** Would you support legislation to prevent companies from engaging in unfair practices and charging prisoners unreasonable fees for banking and telecommunications services? **YES**
8. **Solitary Confinement.** Do you support limiting the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days, and eliminating the use of solitary confinement for at-risk populations, including pregnant women, LGBTQ people, those with mental illness, and those under age 21 or over age 65? **YES**
9. **Police-Community Relations.** Recently, the US House of Representatives passed a bill to create a *federal* penalty of up to 10 years for assaulting a police officer. Such laws already exist on the books in states, and there is no lack of prosecution (some might even argue that such charges are used as a cudgel against protesters). The ACLU, NAACP, Southern Poverty Law Center, and other civil rights groups criticized this bill for pushing a statistically unproven “war on cops” narrative and threatening to do further damage to police-community relations. Would you oppose such legislation?

10. **Militarization of Police.** Would you support legislation to prohibit the transfer of some of the military weapons from the federal government to state and local law enforcement? **YES**
11. **Data Collection.** Would you support legislation to require police departments and states to collect data on all police shootings and deaths that take place while in police custody and make that data public? **YES**
12. **Racial Profiling.** Would you support legislation to ban racial profiling by law enforcement? **YES**

G. A Humane Immigration System

1. What does “comprehensive immigration reform” mean to you?

“Comprehensive immigration reform” to me means establishing immigration policies that are in line with our values and that provides a pathway to citizenship to undocumented immigrants. Any reform should reestablish and remember that the United States is a beacon of opportunity and a safe haven for those facing persecution.

2. **Border Militarization.** A border wall, as proposed by Trump, would be an economic, environmental, and humanitarian disaster. Would you categorically oppose any legislation that includes funding for such a border wall?

I am 100% opposed to a border wall. But if a bill came before Congress that had some small amount of funding for a border wall in exchange for, say, significant infrastructure funds for the 3rd district, or universal health care provisions, or other progressive priorities, I would be realistic and recognize that politics is about prioritization.

3. **DREAM Act.** Would you support the DREAM Act, which would allow certain US-raised immigrant youth to earn lawful permanent residence and American citizenship? **YES**
4. **Path to Citizenship.** Would you support legislation that creates a path for undocumented immigrants to gain US citizenship? **YES**
5. **Keeping Families Together.** Would you support legislation to repeal the three-year, ten-year, and permanent bars of reentry for undocumented immigrants?

Not enough information. Unclear if this is inclusive of those deported for violent crimes, for whom I would not support allowing reentry.

6. **Protecting Immigrant Families.** Over the past few years, ICE has adopted policies that are particularly harmful to children: the practice of detaining women and children when they cross the border despite legal obligations to place families with children in the least restrictive setting possible (family detention), and the practice of separating parents and children (family separation). Would you support legislation to end both of these practices? **YES**
7. **ICE Bed Quota.** Would you support legislation to end ICE's daily bed quota, which requires the detainment of 34,000 immigrants? **YES**
8. **ICE Detention Centers.** The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) have consistently found that ICE detention facilities undermine the rights of the individuals being held, as sexual abuse, medical negligence, and insufficient access to counsel remain rampant. (A) Would you support legislation to impose a moratorium on the construction of new ones? (B) Would you support a review of private detention centers and the termination of contracts with repeat human rights violation offenders? **YES**
9. **ICE.** ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), is a fairly new federal agency, birthed in the post 9/11/2001 restructuring of the Department of Homeland Security. Since its start, ICE has operated under a harmful and erroneous paradigm: that undocumented immigrants *ipso facto* pose a fundamental security threat. Over time, ICE has operated in an increasingly unconstitutional matter, embracing practices that, according to judges, "shock the conscience" and have received condemnation from the United Nations. Would you support the elimination of the current agency in favor of a more humane alternative? **YES**

H. A Diverse and Welcoming Society

1. What do you believe are the most important factors in building an inclusive community, and what role can Congress play in advancing them?

I believe it is critical that Congress be more reflective of the diversity of our nation – including more members who are minorities, members of the LGBTQ community, women, and indigenous people. Representation in Congress ensures that there will be a bulwark against efforts – like those the Trump Administration – to roll back advances that have been made and attempts to prevent future progress.

2. **LGBTQ Rights.** Over the past several years, we have seen numerous states try to deny trans individuals the right to exist in public spaces as well as conservative lawsuits seeking to legalize discrimination against LGBTQ individuals. Would you support legislation to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the Civil Rights Act of 1964? **YES**

3. **Sexual Harassment.** Would you support legislation to end the use of forced arbitration clauses in sexual harassment cases? **YES**
4. **Indigenous Rights.** Would you support legislation to ensure that tribal cultures and sacred places are federally protected? **YES**
5. **Gun Safety.** A welcoming society is one in which people feel safe. Would you support the reinstatement of the federal assault weapons ban? **YES**

I. Good Government and Strong Democracy

1. What does democracy mean to you?

Democracy, to me, is a system of equal representation that is committed to lifting up everyone, particularly the least fortunate in our society.

2. **Diversity in Leadership.** How can the Democratic Party better work to improve a pipeline of young and diverse candidates for elected office and party leadership?

I believe we should be intentional about creating sustainable pipelines by actively recruiting and training young and diverse candidates for office, supporting organizations dedicated to increasing the diversity of our elected officials, and taking steps to remove money and resources as a significant barrier to entry in politics.

3. **Ethics.** What do you see as the role of Congress vis-a-vis the Trump presidency with regard to ethics enforcement?

I believe Congress represents an essential check on the President and must take seriously it's responsibility for holding Trump and the members of his administration accountable to the American people. That is part of the reason it is so critical that Democrats take back Congress in 2018 – because Republicans so far have appeared unwillingly to act as a real, committed watchdog when it comes to this Administration.

4. **Voting Access.** Would you support legislation to...
 - a. Require states to provide same day registration? **YES**
 - b. Require states to offer automatic voter registration through the Registry of Motor Vehicles and other agencies as appropriate? **YES**
 - c. Make Election Day a federal holiday? **YES**
 - d. Prohibit states from adopting discriminatory laws that require select photo identification in order to vote? **YES**

5. **Voting Rights Act.** Would you support restoring the “pre-clearance” formula under the Voting Rights Act, which extended protections to minority voters in states and counties with histories of discrimination, as well as further expanding the law? **YES**
6. **Prisoner’s Rights.** Would you support legislation to prohibit states from taking away the franchise from anyone because of a criminal offense? **YES**
7. **Citizens United.** Would you support a constitutional amendment to overturn the Citizens United decision and allow limits on corporate political spending? **YES**

J. Sustainable Infrastructure & Environmental Protection

1. The current administration in Washington has overturned, or is seeking to overturn, a number of Obama-era environmental regulations, setting the US up for years of just playing catch up. What are your top priorities on environmental protection? How can the US avoid falling even further behind?

I believe we need to defend against the Trump Administration’s efforts to dismantle and undermine the Environmental Protection Agency, which monitors and enforces a range of critical environmental rules and regulations. Without oversight by the EPA, corporations and other polluters are allowed to continue destructive practices largely unchecked.

We also need to take immediate action to reduce the progress of climate change, which represents a real and present danger to our national security. We are already seeing the impact of climate change in the form of more extreme weather, more frequent drought, and changing ecosystems. We need to both adapt existing infrastructure to these new conditions, and identify longer term solutions to slow the warming of the planet.

2. **100% Clean Energy.** Would you support legislation to put the US on a pathway to replacing fossil fuels with 100 percent clean energy generation and use by 2035, with support for transitioning workers? **YES**
3. **Carbon Pricing.** Would you support putting a price on carbon emissions and investing the revenue in clean energy and green infrastructure? If so, how should such a pricing scheme operate?

Yes. There are a number of proposals for how to best implement carbon pricing, and I am open to different options, but I believe that any funds generated by a new carbon fee should be reinvested in our communities.

4. **Keep It in the Ground -- Part I.** Would you support legislation to prohibit new leases for coal, oil, and gas on all federal lands and waters? **YES**

5. **Keep it in the Ground -- Part II.** Would you oppose any legislation that authorizes, or expedites the permitting or approval of, new fossil fuel pipelines?

I am personally opposed to efforts that threaten our natural resources, such as pipelines. However, if a certain city or town wants it, and it is economically beneficial, I believe they should have that discussion. All cases should be treated on a case by case basis. We need to carefully scrutinize all projects, and they should only be pursued if the local community supports it.

6. **Clean Water.** Would you support legislation the to require natural gas drillers to disclose the chemicals that go into the ground during the hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) process and to close the so-called “Halliburton loophole,” which prevents the EPA from conducting rigorous oversight? **YES**
7. **Environmental Justice.** Would you support legislation to codify environmental justice into law; require federal agencies to address environmental justice through agency actions and permitting decisions; and strengthen legal protections against environmental injustice for communities of color, low-income communities, and indigenous communities? **YES**
8. **Fuel Efficiency.** Would you support legislation to increase fuel economy standards to 65 miles per gallon by 2025? **YES**
9. **Public Transportation.** Would you support greater investment in public transportation? **YES**
10. **Science and Policy.** Would you oppose any effort to restrict the ability of federal policymakers from incorporating peer-reviewed science in the decision-making process around new environmental regulations? **YES**

K. US in the World.

1. **Foreign Policy.** What are the principles and priorities you would bring to discussions of US foreign policy?

As someone who served as a U.S. Ambassador, I believe in strong, values-based foreign policy, and know the force of good American leadership can be in the world. My foreign policy principles are as follows:

- **Elevating the role of diplomacy and development alongside defense as key pillars of our national security.**
- **Tackling international challenges through coalitions, international cooperation, and multilateral institutions, guided by the principle that we are stronger when we stand with partners rather than acting unilaterally.**
- **Executing a values-based foreign policy, whereby the principles of justice, tolerance, freedom, and democracy are infused throughout our international strategy.**

- **Standing up for human rights and civil society around the world, especially in repressive regimes; standing up for LGBT rights, women’s rights, and the rights of minorities.**
 - **Aiming to mitigate human suffering caused by armed conflict and natural disasters, through generous humanitarian assistance and support to the world’s neediest.**
 - **Preserving a balance between soft and hard power, and using all the tools of American soft power (cultural, diplomatic, and financial) alongside hard power to achieve our long-term strategic aims.**
2. **Trade.** Will you oppose any trade deal that allows corporations to sue governments in private tribunals, that fails to include binding requirements to implement both the Paris climate agreement and adopt living wages, or that otherwise fails to support a clean environment, healthy communities, and good union jobs?

I support trade agreements that include strong labor and environmental protections -and will insist upon such agreements in Congress - and will work to identify appropriate strategies for addressing disputes between companies and state actors.