

# PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS 2018 CONGRESSIONAL ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE



**Date:** 7/15/18

**Candidate:** Juana Matias

**Office Sought:** U.S. House of Representatives

**Party:** Democrat

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*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 for Congress because working people aren't getting their fair share and they deserve someone in Washington who will fight for them because they know what it's like to grow up in a working class family and work hard to achieve the American Dream. I was raised in the district and have devoted my life to serving its communities – as a social worker, a legal advocate defending children from deportation, and now an elected representative. As a Latina and an immigrant who grew up in a working-class family, I know first hand the anxieties and difficulties that many families here face. I also know what was made possible for my family because of our welcoming community, good public schools, and hard work. My parents were able to build better lives for me and my siblings by working blue-collar, factory jobs and building toward owning their own small business.

If elected to Congress, I plan to break a status quo that's leaving too many working people behind, and we do that by creating economic opportunity and security.

First, that means ensuring every American has access to quality education. I'm a product of Haverhill's public schools, and I know I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the public-school teachers who believed in me and my ability to succeed, no matter the barriers I faced. When my family and I settled in Haverhill, we lived in public housing. And we often worried about how we'd make ends meet and put food on the table. But public schools gave me and my brothers a shot, so I'm a firm believer that a great public school can be the best vehicle out of poverty that our country offers.

But it's not just k-12 schools. We need to offer universal pre-k too. We need to make sure that if you want to go to college and you're willing to work hard, it won't saddle you with decades of debt – a problem I know all too well. And we should make sure that community colleges and other technical training opportunities are free, well-funded, and ready to give every young American a passport into the future, just like my brothers, who went to Northern Essex Community College/NECO (Depending on audience) and now have successful careers.

I'm also really concerned about health care, because having economic security also means not being one health crisis away from financial ruin. We've made incredible progress because of President Obama, but we're at risk of moving backwards. In 2018, there should not be a debate about whether health care is a privilege or a right. This, too, is personal for me. After decades of hard work, a few years ago my Dad got pancreatic cancer. He passed away nine months later, but we were blessed that he had MassHealth, because if he didn't, those last nine months with him would have been a lot shorter. And even then, we had to haggle with MassHealth about whether or not this or that treatment was covered.

No family should have to worry about affording the treatment to save a loved one's life. No one should worry that a sudden illness will force you into bankruptcy or out of your home. No one should spend those last precious moments with someone worrying about health care costs.

## 2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I immigrated to the United States at the age of five and was raised in Haverhill. My father spent more than 17 years at Polartec in Lawrence as a machine operator, and my mother worked for Central Metal Finishing as a precision finisher. I got her first job as a papergirl for the Lawrence Eagle Tribune when I was 11. My family worked hard, played by the rules, and were able to achieve their dream of sending me to college.

Through scholarships, loans, and part-time jobs, I paid my way through college and law school. I graduated from the University of Massachusetts-Boston and earned a law degree from Suffolk University Law School in 2014.

My family's hard work and perseverance inspired me to commit to community service. I've served as a case worker to families and children in Lawrence, Lowell, and Haverhill, and as a Justice Americorps Legal Advocate defending children from deportation.

In 2016, I defeated an anti-choice, anti-LGTBQ career politician to become one of the first Latinas ever elected to the Massachusetts Statehouse where I have lead the way on the Safe Communities Act, been a champion for ensuring access to safe reproductive healthcare for all, and have been a tireless advocate to ensure every child has access to a great education.

## **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?

A tax justice means that every American is paying his or her fair share back to society, and that we prioritize progressive measures to help those in need—not padding the pockets big corporations. In Congress, I will fight against Republican measures like last year's tax plan. I would advocate eliminating tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans and revamping our tax code to be more progressive.

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?

Yes. In addition to its important purpose of requiring Wall Street to pay its fair share, a financial transaction tax could disincentivize high-stakes, speculative trading, thereby making the economy less volatile.

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?

Congress can both create economic conditions that spur private sector growth and create good-paying jobs itself through programs like infrastructure grants. The Trump administration and Republicans, despite their rhetoric, have neglected America's infrastructure. A plan to revamp America's infrastructure would strengthen our economy and create good-paying jobs. Congress also has a role in regulating private sector employers to ensure that all American workers earn a living wage.

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?
  - a. And eliminate the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers?
  - b. And index the minimum wage to inflation?

I support all of these positions, and I have co-sponsored \$15 minimum wage bills in the Massachusetts legislature.

3. **Job Guarantee.** Would you support legislation to create a federal job guarantee? If so, what would it look like?

Yes. All Americans deserve access to a job that mandates a \$15 minimum wage, and comes with benefits such as health care, paid family leave and child care. A program such as this could leave it to local governments to determine the kind of jobs they want or need. As mentioned above, an infrastructure stimulus package could provide many jobs under such a guarantee, as could a renewed commitment to clean energy jobs.

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. I have co-sponsored paid family leave legislation in the Statehouse and consider it critical legislation for families.

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. In the post-*Janus* age, it is more important than ever to defend collective bargaining rights and do everything possible to foster environments where our unions can thrive and continue to function as the strong advocates for workers we need them to be.

### **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 it is a fundamental responsibility of our government to guarantee access to affordable healthcare to all Americans. In the House, I would vote to preserve the ACA and would fight tooth-and-nail to combat and reverse the Trump administration’s efforts to whittle away at the critical healthcare access so many have come to depend on through the ACA.

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. Healthcare is a right.

4. **Medicare.** Would you oppose any effort to increase the means-testing of Medicare?

I would oppose Republican efforts to means-test Medicare, which are meant to deny what is a right. At the same time, as a Democrat guided by justice, I strongly believe that the government should prioritize funding programs that work best for those most in need.

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?

The federal government must guarantee to all Americans an education that allows them to reach their full potential as members of society. It should especially seek to close achievement gaps that have long harmed low-income children and children of color. That means intervening to protect children's right to a quality education when that right isn't being met—which also requires measuring student outcomes. The government should also help students afford higher education and protect students from predatory loans.

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 would evaluate Race to the Top's success by looking to the outcomes for students—things like graduation rates, academic proficiency, and college attendance and completion.

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?

Yes, I would support legislation to guarantee free tuition at public colleges and universities. I also think higher education should be *debt-free*. Education is a public good and a right—we must create common-sense policies that make it affordable for all Americans. The government should commit to a robust financial aid program that allows all students to graduate without incurring debt.

### **E. Affordable, Decent Housing**

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

The federal government should expand and enforce anti-discrimination policies in the Fair Housing Act, expand programs that fight chronic homelessness, provide assistance to first time

home-buyers, create a low-income housing tax credit, and expand the availability of rental subsidies for the lowest income households.

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”?

We must reform the criminal justice system with an eye toward safe and healthy communities, not simply punishment. We cannot allow private prison companies to profit off of incarceration at the expense of our society as a whole. Congress should pass laws creating more transparency and accountability in the criminal justice system.

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?

I would prioritize legislation to support prisoners’ rights and bring more justice to the criminal justice system.

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?

The United States must be an open society. Comprehensive immigration reform means creating pathways to citizenship for those in our country, recognizing the moral imperative of welcoming immigrants, and abolishing ICE and family detention.

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?

Yes.

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?

Yes.

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 and 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?

Congress must protect the civil rights of *all* people in the United States. An inclusive community is one in which difference is celebrated, all people are provided the education they need to succeed, immigrants are welcome, women are free from discrimination and harassment, and the criminal justice system is oriented toward serving healthy communities.

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 means that all people have a *tangible and credible* say in their governance—that government is for and by the people, not special interests or big corporations.

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?

We must support a diverse group of candidates for state and local office. The Party must commit to mentoring these candidates, and should prioritize diversity in its candidate recruitment efforts.

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

Congress must keep Trump accountable. It is our duty to investigate his ethics abuses and make the case to voters that there *is* a better, more ethical alternative.

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?

I would support expanding the law. The federal government should guarantee voting rights in all jurisdictions, especially those with histories of discrimination.

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?

We must restore Obama-era regulations, commit ourselves to clean energy and clean jobs, and rejoin the Paris Agreement. Several states, including Massachusetts, have banded together in effective cap and trade programs that the federal government should emulate.

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.

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?

Yes.

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?

I would support efforts to make the United States more fuel-efficient.

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?

I believe that the United States must show its leadership to the world through cooperation and diplomacy, not showmanship and force. The Trump administration’s retreat from international

agreements and obligations weakens the United States. As in domestic policy, I would prioritize justice in foreign policy.

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?

While I would provide proper consideration to any trade deal before me, in general a deal would need to abide by all these principles to earn my vote.