

**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2018 CONGRESSIONAL
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**



Date: July 22, 2018

Candidate: Mike Capuano

Office Sought: Representative, 7th Congressional District

Party: Democrat

Website: mikecapuano.com

ActBlue Fundraising Link: mikecapuano.com/donate

Twitter: twitter.com/mikecapuano

Facebook: facebook.com/mecapuano

Other Social Media:

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 know that with Donald Trump in the White House, it is more important than ever to resist, to fight, and to win. That's why I'm running for reelection, so that I can continue to be a strong and effective voice against the attacks coming out of this White House on all the values we treasure as Americans. And I know that once we do defeat Donald Trump, we'll be able to make real progressive progress, from Medicare for All to college affordability to a comprehensive immigration reform bill. With my experience and progressive leadership, I know that these proposals can finally become a reality, and I'm ready to fight to make sure they're put into law.

This November, Democrats have a strong chance to take back the House, and when we do, I can put my experience to work holding Donald Trump accountable and passing a truly progressive agenda. I believe the combination of my record of standing up for our values and my experience successfully winning fights for progressive priorities shows exactly why I can be such an effective fighter for the 7th district: I don't deliver for Wall Street, special interests, party leadership, or big corporations. I deliver for you. I'll never back down from a fight and I'm not going to let Donald Trump and his conservative allies stop us. I'll always be on your side.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I've been a fighter for working families my entire life. I've lived in this district my entire life, and I've seen first hand the need to fight and organize to bring change to our communities. I first got involved in public life when I realized that I couldn't take my kids to our neighborhood parks because they were covered in broken glass and had no working equipment. I realized we needed to do better for our communities, and I began my career as a fighter for those left behind. Since then, I've worked to stand up for progressive values like Medicare for all, college affordability, and comprehensive and humane immigration reform, while also working to deliver for my district, improving transit equity and securing funding to increase affordable housing, so that families like mine can afford to stay and live in their neighborhoods.

I know that under this current administration, some of our toughest fights are ahead. Donald Trump's racist and extreme agenda require us to do more than vote against him. They require us to fight back. That's why I've introduced legislation halt all family deportations until a policy is in place to make sure that families are reunited and will not be separated at the border again. It's why I voted to begin impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump twice. And it's why from

Day One, I refused to lend legitimacy to his presidency when I was one of several House members to skip his inauguration.

We're in the fight of our lives. And I love a good fight for the right values. That's why I'll never back down from standing up to Donald Trump or supporting a progressive agenda, no matter who stands in our way. The stakes are too high for us to give up the fight, and I'm proud to lead the 7th district in standing up for what we believe in.

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 means that everybody pays their fair share. Too often, the wealthiest in our society are the ones who are able to pay the lowest tax rates, hiding behind loopholes, along with their conservative allies working to slash rates for the ultrarich. I believe a fair system is one in which those at the top pay a higher rate than those at the bottom and those in the middle. Tax justice means closing loopholes and establishing a progressive tax system that ensures those who can afford to pay the most do so, while those struggling to get by aren't burdened with higher tax rates.

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

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 must work not just to create jobs, but create meaningful, well-paid work for all Americans by investing in our workers. I believe that we can see tremendous growth across our economy if we're willing to put in the resources to make sure every worker has the chance to succeed at a job that pays a fair wage with decent benefits.

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?
Yes
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?

The next step is building a Medicare for all system so that all Americans can receive quality health care coverage. Health care is a right, not a privilege, and that’s why any next steps must begin by making sure that everyone is covered and has access to quality health care through a single payer system.

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 - in fact, I am an original member of the newly created Medicare for All Caucus.
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?

The federal government should make sure that school districts have the resources they need for our children to succeed and should be supporting traditional public schools, not trying to dismantle them. We should also make sure that college is affordable for all students, and that we are actively trying to help those paying for college, instead of trying to raise interest rates on their student loans and make their debt burden impossible to pay off.

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 have been a longtime supporter of teachers and teachers unions in my district, which is why I was endorsed by both the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Massachusetts AFT, and the National Education Association. I believe that any education reform plan including Race to the Top should focus on how we can support teachers and the work they do everyday in our public classrooms. I also believe there can be NO successful education reform without the input and support of classroom teachers.

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 have signed onto the College for All Act to make community college free for all students and to make four year colleges free for middle and working class students. This bill is the House counterpart to Senator Sanders' college affordability bill in the Senate.

E. Affordable, Decent Housing

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

I believe that housing is not a privilege, it is a right. The federal government should work to ensure families have access to affordable housing options. I have been a long time proponent of greater affordable housing, securing \$30 million to rebuild the Whittier Street housing development in Roxbury to create more affordable units and passing legislation to support victims of foreclosure as well as non-single family housing.

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?

I am an original co-sponsor of the Permanently Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act of 2017 to permanently authorize these protections.

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 work to reform our criminal justice system and make sure that our criminal justice serves not just as a system for mass incarceration, but as a way to merit out true justice. We can only do this if we're willing to confront the problems of the tough on crime policies of the 1990s and address the serious changes that must be made to achieve a system that works for everyone.

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?

It depends - when solitary confinement is used to protect vulnerable individuals from the general prison population, I think that is necessary.

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?

Along with 161 other Democrats and all members of the Massachusetts delegation, I voted yes on HR 5698, the Protect and Serve Act. It did not impose additional penalties, it simply codified existing laws.

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 means reforming our immigration system in a way that is fair and provides a pathway to citizenship for the millions of undocumented immigrants already in the United States. It also means getting rid of some of the most draconian parts of our immigration enforcement, and reforming immigration law enforcement organizations. And above all, it means stopping the horrific practice of separating families, as well as protecting this country’s DREAMers. Before any other actions are taken, we must ensure that these groups are protected under our laws.

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?
I support restoring prosecutorial discretion in imposing bars.

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. In fact, I recently filed the Reunite Separated Families Act, which would halt the deportation of families at the border, and require immediate family reunification.

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?
No. The policies ICE enforces must be changed, not the agency responsible for enforcing them.

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?

Marginalized communities must be empowered. Throughout my time in Congress, I've worked to make sure that my staff reflects the diversity of my district,

which I believe is crucial to ensuring that our communities are treated fairly and given the time and the resources they need to thrive. Building an inclusive community is about more than just votes. It's also about how you act. I've taken actions to make sure that my community is inclusive and equitable, investigating discrimination in transit and pushing to make sure that funds in my district go to those who need them most, so we don't just have more infrastructure but equitable infrastructure. I've fought for inclusion my entire career, and I'll keep fighting for it in Congress.

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 guaranteeing the full participation and civic equality of everyone in our society. I will always fight for laws that allow everyone equal participation and representation in their government; that to me is the heart of what democracy is.

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?

The Democratic Party should always make sure that we operate in an inclusive and diverse way. I am proud of my work to help younger candidates making a first run for a seat and I will always stand up for an inclusive and diverse Democratic Party. In fact, I am proud to acknowledge that two former Capuano interns are running for the United States House of Representatives.

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

Congress should provide better oversight of the Trump administration, which is why it is so vital that Democrats take back the House this November. Once we take back the House, we can actively investigate Trump's numerous conflicts of the interest and his unethical behavior across the board. Currently, we cannot even take this simple and appropriate action.

4. **Voting Access.** Would you support legislation to...
- Require states to provide same day registration?
Yes
 - Require states to offer automatic voter registration through the Registry of Motor Vehicles and other agencies as appropriate?
Yes
 - Make Election Day a federal holiday?
I feel there are better ways to encourage voting, such as extended and easy early voting and keeping polls open for two days.
 - 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 that the most important aspect of environmental protect should be safeguarding our existing natural resources and ensuring that communities vulnerable to climate change and ecological impacts are protected. We must remember

that the environment is not just a singular issue; it affects nearly everything, and protecting the environment is something that will matter more to future generations than perhaps anything else we do.

If we want to move forward on climate policy, we must work to reverse Trump's irresponsible environmental policies by holding him accountable in Congress and codifying clear and explicit environmental protections into law. If he won't act for our environment, then we must do so for him.

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 - I do not believe permits should be granted legislatively.
6. **Clean Water.** Would you support legislation 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?

The United States is in a crisis. We must resist President Trump's crude bellicosity, and his desire to conciliate with dictators and tyrants yet pick fights with our staunchest and best allies. It is imperative that we repair our alliances with our traditional democratic allies in order to advance the cause of peace, international equality, fair economic growth and security. To that end, we must uphold international environmental conventions, support victims of violence and war, rely on negotiation and multilateral diplomacy rather than threats, view arms reduction as a legitimate goal, treat all sovereign nation-states as equals and have respect for international law.

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?

Yes