



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2020 LEGISLATIVE
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Date: 5/18/2020

Candidate: Rob Consalvo

Office Sought: State Representative, 14th Suffolk

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OVERVIEW

We view our questionnaire as an educational resource, for both candidates and voters, on progressive approaches to the issues. It provides candidates the opportunity to address a number of important issues beyond the surface talking points, which progressive voters find extremely valuable when making a decision.

Our Questionnaires starts with an "About You" section and ends with an opportunity for you to include additional remarks beyond what we asked.

The bulk of our questionnaire is focused on the issues outlined in our [Progressive Platform](#), which also inform our [Legislative Agenda](#). We are interested in your overall philosophy as well as your views on specific policy and legislation.

Each section features charts or graphs (with links to sources) that illustrate one or more facets of the issue under discussion.

We encourage you to expand your answers beyond "yes/no" in the additional comments space provided on the form, but please keep answers < 150 words.

Issue Subsections:

- A. Revenue and Taxation
- B. Jobs and the Economy
- C. Education
- D. Health Care
- E. Housing
- F. Racial and Social Justice
- G. Good Government and Strong Democracy
- H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

*Our questionnaire is comprehensive and will take time to complete. Please develop your answers in a separate document before inputting them into the submission form.
(progressivemass.com/questionnaire)*

I. About You

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

RC: I am running for State Representative because I believe that government is, and always will be, about helping people and making a difference in the lives of others. It's about making sure that government works for all people, not just some of the people. As the State Representative for the 14th Suffolk District, I will work collaboratively to make sure we are ready to deal with the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. I will be a champion for education so that all of our students are prepared for college, career and life. And, I will work tirelessly to preserve and protect public open space, now and for generations to come.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

RC: I have a strong and proven record of public service and helping others. I am proud to have served for 12 years as a progressive member of the Boston City Council. I began my career working for Senator Edward M. Kennedy and learned many of the progressive values from him that I still hold dear today. In addition, I've worked at the State House and continue to serve today working in Boston City government. Experience matters and it matters now more than ever. I will bring my commitment to public service, my wealth of experience in government and my ability to build bridges and coalitions to the State House every day to fight for the residents of the 14th Suffolk District.

3. What do you view as the biggest obstacles to passing progressive policy at the state level?

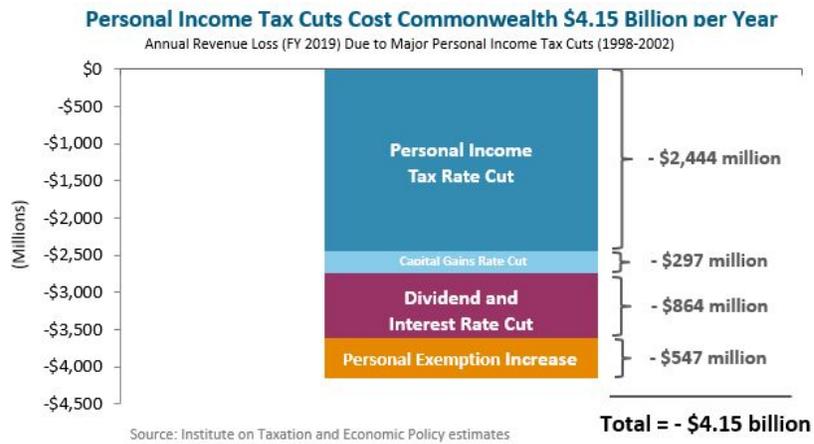
RC: Right now the greatest challenge facing the advancement of any meaningful policy agenda is the ongoing fallout and impending financial implications stemming from the COVID-19 public health crisis. It is imperative that we keep our fellow residents safe, especially the most vulnerable members of our community who we know are most susceptible. Jobs have been lost, revenue will be diminished, and the strain of diminishing resources will be felt at the municipal level. All legislation will need to be thoughtfully analyzed through a recovery lens that prioritizes safety and an equitable economic recovery. The complexity of the COVID-19 situation reaffirms the importance of building diverse coalitions of stakeholders capable of providing a comprehensive perspective on each of the policy questions that come before us. As a former aide to U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, I know firsthand the importance and the benefits of building broad coalitions in which feedback is valued, respected, and incorporated into a plan that is both equitable and effective.

II. The Issues

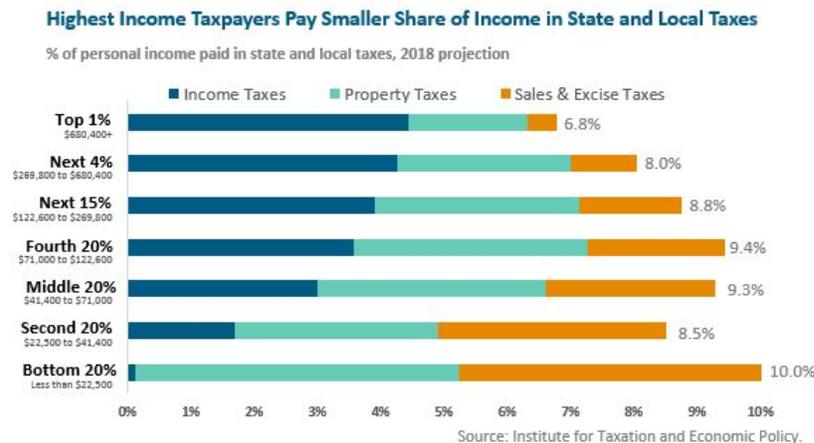
A. Revenue and Taxation

Between 1977 and 2016, Massachusetts [reduced state taxes](#) by more than all but two other states. Because of income tax cuts enacted between 1998 and 2002, Massachusetts loses over \$4 billion in tax revenue *each year*--\$4 billion that is not invested in our roads, bridges, schools, parks, and services, all of which have historically been part of why MA is a great place to live. Such cuts to the state income tax have meant increasing reliance on fees, as well as sales, gas, and property taxes, exacerbating the overall regressivity of the system. Regressive taxation strains low- and middle-income families, and reduced revenue collection curtails our ability to invest in vital infrastructure. It also restricts legislators' ability--and willingness--to pass new and visionary legislation, as there is a continual shortage of funds for existing priorities.

Declining revenues have meant drastic cuts, limiting our ability to invest in our communities and future economic stability.



Massachusetts state and local taxes are regressive.



- 1. Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: As a former 12 year member of the Boston City Council. I have worked on budget issues large and small and understand the budget process on the City and State level. I have participated and voted on 12 City of Boston budgets as well as I have Chaired the Committee on Ways and Means on the City Council working closely with the Administration, City Councilors, State Representatives and Senators, as well as community leaders and community stakeholders, to produce a thoughtful, balanced budget on behalf of the residents of Boston. I have served on local boards such as the YMCA, WriteBoston, Ethos and others and know first hand the impact city and state revenues have on local organizations' ability to thrive and survive. In the era of COVID-19, we need to be thoughtful as to how the pandemic will affect state and local budgets and what that impact will have on the ability to provide critical, needed services to our constituents while protecting those who need these services the most.

- 2. Corporate Tax Breaks. Corporate tax breaks cost Massachusetts more than \$1 billion in foregone revenue each year. Companies can secure access to such tax breaks due to political connections whether or not the promised benefits ever materialize. Which of the following accountability steps would you support?**
 - Collecting and publicly disclosing information about the benefits to the state from any tax break?
 - Repealing any tax break that does not provide the intended benefits in a cost-effective manner?
 - Establishing sunset dates for all tax breaks so that they must come up for periodic review?

RC: I believe that these types of matters should come up for periodic review.

- 3. Fair Share. Would you support a constitutional amendment to increase the income tax on income over \$1 million by 4% (Fair Share Amendment, sometimes referred to as the "Millionaire's Tax")?**

RC: YES.

- 4. Progressive Revenue.** Massachusetts will not see new revenue from the Fair Share Amendment until 2023, but we have unmet needs now (and will still even with the Fair Share Amendment). Which policies would you support to make a more progressive tax code?
 - Raising the corporate minimum tax for larger companies? (The corporate minimum tax is currently only \$456.)
 - Imposing a tax on the portion of corporations' US profits that are shifted to offshore tax havens?
 - Raising the corporate tax rate from 8% to 9.5% (where it stood in 2009)?
 - Raising the tax on long-term capital gains from 5% to 8.95%, in line with states like New York and Vermont?
 - Levying a modest tax on university endowments greater than \$1 billion?

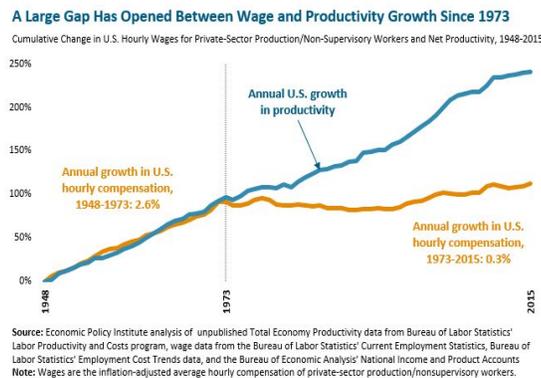
RC: With or without a world-altering public health crisis, the need for progressive tax reform would have been clear. In the wake of COVID-19, it is even more critical. All of the concepts outlined here are worthy of ample consideration. As a legislator, I would commit to giving these proposals and any other proposals thoughtfully and strategically designed to ensure adequate revenue and continued growth strong consideration. Through a thorough hearing process and transparent dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, I will be better positioned weigh the impact of these much needed reforms on the interests of the residents of the 14 Suffolk.

B. Jobs and the Economy

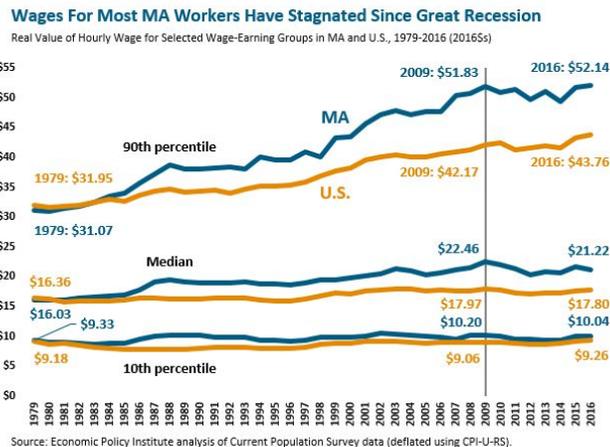
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which strain wages. A strong economy depends on strong wages, as workers spend and help local economies thrive. Although the recently passed minimum wage increase will eventually lift the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, this is [still not a living wage](#) for many.

In recent decades, unions have been under attack. However, unions played -- and continue to play -- a pivotal role in creating a strong middle class. With weaker unions (or no unions at all) come weaker social and economic rights and an imbalanced economy.

Productivity has grown significantly since the 1970s, but it is not being reflected in higher wages.



Wages for most MA workers have remained stagnant since the Great Recession.



1. **Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

2. **Fair Wages. Do you support eliminating the subminimum wage for tipped workers in support of one fair wage?**

RC: YES.

3. **Wage Theft. Do you support holding businesses responsible for the wage violations of their subcontractors when the work they do is substantially connected to the company's operations?**

RC: YES.

4. **Overtime. Would you support updating MA's state overtime law to restore overtime pay protections to low- and moderate-income salaried workers when they work more than 40 hours a week?**

RC: YES.

5. **Fair Scheduling. Many workers in the service sector face irregular working hours, making it difficult to plan for other life events. Do you support providing workers the right to 14 days advance notice of hours and the right to request specific hours without retaliation from the employer?**

RC: YES.

6. **Unions. Since the 2010 election, a number of states have rolled back the collective bargaining rights of public workers as part of a well-funded, nationwide assault on unions, led by wealthy, conservative donors. Would you oppose any effort to roll back the collective bargaining rights of state or municipal employees?**

RC: YES.

As a Boston City Councilor, I have been a staunch ally of our Labor movement and have worked in close partnership to advocate for literally hundreds of measures that advanced and protected workers and families. I am opposed to any measures that would weaken Massachusetts labor laws and roll back hard-won collective bargaining rights. We must also provided that we are able to appropriately craft legislation in a way ensures the continuation of essential and critical services upon which our various communities rely.

7. **Mandatory Arbitration. Would you support legislation to prohibit the use of mandatory arbitration provisions in employment contracts, i.e., requirements that an employee forfeit the right to sue the employer for discrimination, nonpayment of wages, or other illegal conduct?**

RC: YES.

As matters of transparency, fairness to consumers and workers' rights (especially the lowest-paid and most vulnerable workers), and the right to seek redress in our justice system, I support the prohibition of mandatory arbitration provisions in employment contract situations, with the exception of instances where a victim asks for one.

C. Education

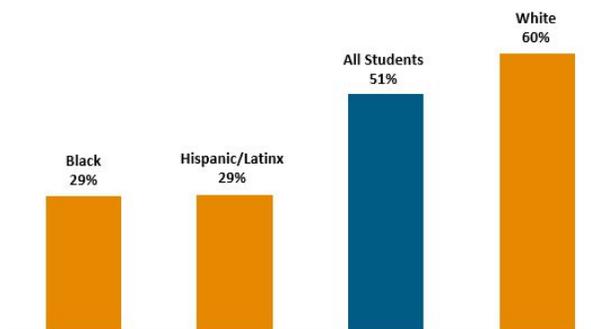
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country. Powerful corporate interests are promoting false solutions and working to undermine public schools, teachers, and unions. These groups invest millions of dollars to promote the expansion of privately run charter schools, which siphon money from our public K-12 districts while largely excluding students with the greatest needs. Costly, mandated standardized test results are used to label schools as “failing” and justify these privatization schemes.

Most of the [fastest-growing occupations](#) require education beyond a high school diploma, but Massachusetts has been disinvesting from public higher education for the past two decades. This has led to higher tuition costs, putting students at risk of long-term debt or making higher education out of reach for them entirely.

Massachusetts has significant achievement gaps reflective of resource gaps.

Massachusetts Has Significant Achievement Gaps for Youth of Color in 4th Grade Reading

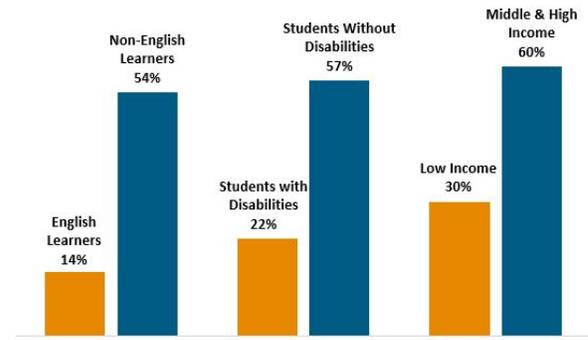
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

Massachusetts Has Significant Achievement Gaps for Disadvantaged Youth in 4th Grade Reading

Share of Mass. 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Category

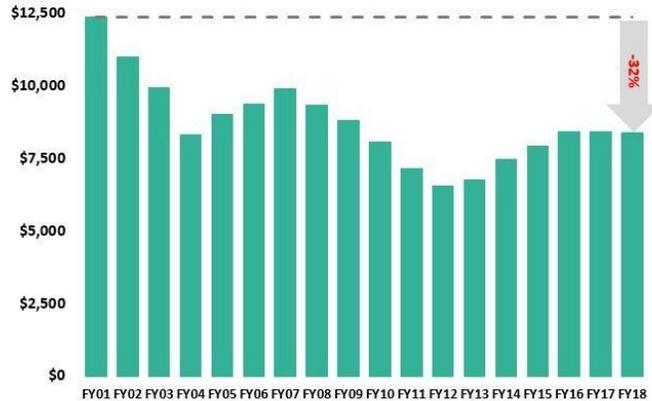


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

Massachusetts has been disinvesting from higher education and shifting the cost burden onto students.

Per Student, MA Has Cut Higher Ed Funding by 32 Percent Since FY 2001

State spending on higher education per resident student, FY 2001-2018 (2018\$)



Note: FY 2007 total is adjusted downwards to account for the fact that significant funding during this year was for capital investments that supported activity during other fiscal years.

- 1. Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

- 2. Universal Pre-K. Do you support creating universal, free Pre-K, accessible to any resident of Massachusetts, integrated into the public school system?**

RC: YES.

This is something I supported strongly as City Councilor and was able to work on as a member of the Superintendent's executive team at the Boston Public Schools.

- 3. Equitable Funding. In 2019, Massachusetts updated its 25-year-old education funding formula and committed to \$1.5 billion more in investment in public schools. How will you make sure the state follows through with this promise?**

RC: The Education Reform Act of 1993 contemplated the convening of a commission to review the foundation funding formula within the first decade after the original law was passed. Unfortunately, the work to analyze and ultimately modify that funding formula took much longer than anticipated. As an administrator in the Boston Public Schools, and the parent of three BPS students, I know firsthand how the inequities of the state's funding system disproportionately affect the state's largest district, which proudly educates students with greatest needs in all of the Commonwealth. As a legislator, I would be a steadfast advocate for an appropriate and equitable approach to both chapter 70 funds and charter school reimbursement. Boston kids face the greatest challenges, and they need our support. By holding the administration accountable for a fair share of funding and zealously championing the cause of public education, I will strive to expand educational opportunities for the students of the 14th Suffolk and all of Boston.

- 4. Standardized Testing. Do you support a three-year moratorium on the high-stakes uses of standardized testing? (High-stakes" uses include high school graduation, teacher evaluation, and assigning ratings to schools.)**

RC: NO.

The school closures related to the COVID-19 public health crisis require a thorough analysis of how we support and what we expect from our schools. Before committing to a moratorium of an arbitrary duration, we need to develop a comprehensive strategy to bridge the gaps that will inevitably have developed due to the extenuating circumstances of the 2019 – 2020 school year (which will be potentially exacerbated through further disruptions in the 2020 -2021 school year). In developing that strategy, we will need to make sure that the administration of testing of any kind is fair to all students regardless of background or need. Developing this strategy will take time, but the guiding principles in my work on this issue will be an unyielding commitment to equity and access to excellence for all students.

5. **Charter Schools. In 2016, MA voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public school districts.**
- a. Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? **YES.**
 - b. Would you support legislation to bring greater accountability to charter schools by requiring them to adhere to the same disclosure and disciplinary standards as public school districts? **YES.**

6. **Sex Education. Do you support requiring public schools that teach sexual health education to provide age-appropriate, medically accurate information that is inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities and includes the effective use of contraception?**

RC: YES.

7. **Higher Education Access. Do you support granting in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students?**

RC: YES.

Massachusetts already allows DACA students to pay the in-state tuition rate, and it makes sense that other undocumented students, brought here by their parents and meeting the proper academic requirements, also pay the in-state tuition rate for our public colleges and universities. An uneducated workforce benefits no one and costs everyone; a well educated workforce benefits us all.

8. **Debt-Free College. Do you support making tuition (and mandatory curriculum fees) free at public colleges and universities?**

RC: YES.

COVID-19 is challenging the traditional higher education experience as colleges and universities move to virtual learning or students opt to delay enrollment decisions. These changes will ultimately impact the cost of education as higher ed will learn to adapt to a different type of consumer demand. We have one of the best public higher education systems in the country that will become even more sought-after as an affordable, top tier education due to the devastating effects of COVID-19. We should explore all ways to make public and private higher education more accessible and affordable especially for those financially impacted by COVID-19 through free or reduced tuition, increased student aid, and other curriculum and workforce training measures so that students are prepared on graduation for the jobs that will be essential for restoring the Massachusetts economy. Investments in our students combined with targeted investments in our public higher education system will ultimately help expedite our return to the new normal.

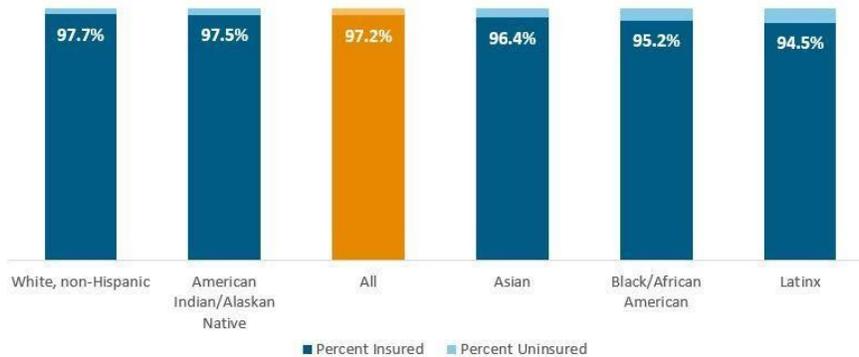
D. Health Care

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health insurance coverage, with [97% of the state](#) having health insurance. But until that is 100%, we haven't reached truly universal coverage or tackled critical barriers to accessing care. Disparities in insurance coverage and health care access continue to exist along income, racial, and education lines. Premiums continue to rise, and high deductibles mean that many do not get the health care they need -- or suffer from long-lasting debt if they do. We still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, but without necessarily achieving better health outcomes.

We have yet to achieve truly universal coverage, with continued disparities along racial lines.

Barriers to health insurance coverage remain for some

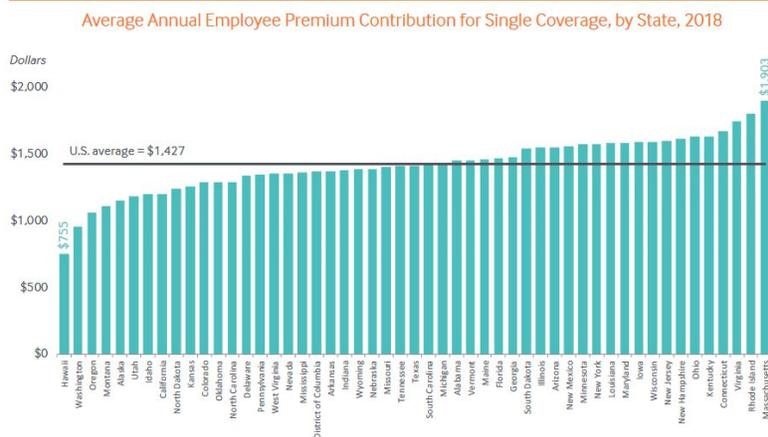
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey.

*Note: Use particular caution when considering the American Indian/Alaskan Native data, because of small sample sizes. This chart does not include Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander because the sample was too small and therefore was not included in the Census Bureau's data.

MA has the highest health insurance premiums in the US.



Note: Employee premium contributions are for insurance policies offered by private-sector employers in the U.S.
Data: Medical Expenditure Panel Survey--Insurance Component (MEPS-IC), 2018.

1. **Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

2. **Single Payer. Do you support enacting a single payer health care system in Massachusetts, which would guarantee health insurance as a right?**

RC: NO.

Every American deserves access to affordable health care. The issue of creating a single payer health care system is one of national scope given the complexity of our health care system and costs to consumers and providers. Given the impact of COVID-19 on the state's economy and budget, requiring Massachusetts alone to bear these costs at the state level will only further exacerbate the current crisis. If elected, I will work with all stakeholders to expand state access to care, find ways to lower health insurance premium costs, strengthen Medicaid as a safety net and address the social determinants of health.

3. **Reproductive Rights. In Massachusetts, women under eighteen seeking an abortion must obtain parental consent or judicial authorization. This can lead to young women going out of state, or risking their lives and health with illegal or self-induced abortion. Would you support repealing this restriction?**

RC: YES.

The most pressing reproductive health access issue is protecting a woman's right to choose at the state level. I support a woman's right to choose by putting legislative safeguards in place in the event that Roe v. Wade is overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court or federal restrictions are passed by Congress.

4. **Harm Reduction. An essential part of addressing the opioid crisis, safe consumption sites allow medical professionals to respond to overdoses and engage participants in medical and behavioral health services. Would you support the legalization of SCSs?**

RC: YES.

Addressing the Opioid crisis will be a top priority when I enter the Legislature. It affects every family and every neighborhood. We should consider exploring all options and nothing should be off the table when addressing the opioid crisis. In my role as Senior Advisor at the Boston Public Schools, I work first hand on this issue as part of the City of Boston's Mass/Casualty Coordinated Response Team. I am in daily conversations with the Mayor's Office of Recovery Services as well as with the City's Office of Health and Human Services to discuss coordinated efforts to solve problems and provide solutions on this issue.

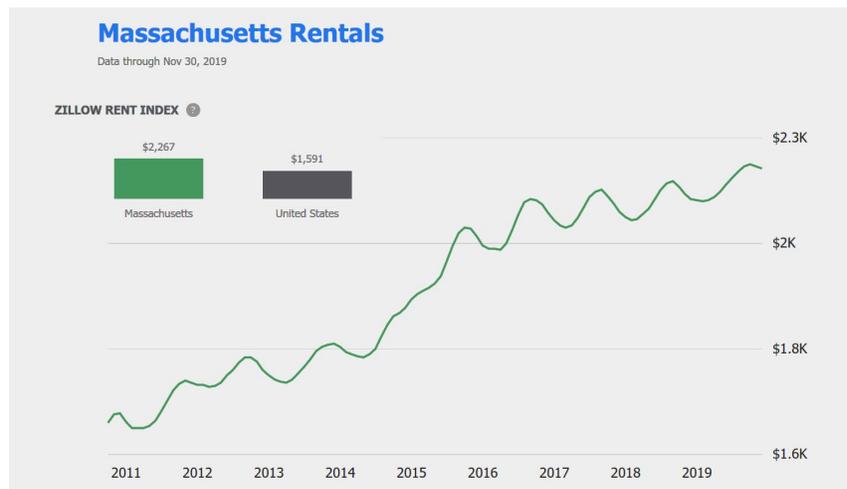
5. **Pandemic Response. How would you evaluate the state's response to the Covid-19 pandemic?**

RC: Climbing out of the pandemic requires a careful, phased approach to continue to control the spread of the virus while safely reopening the economy. The pandemic also exposed significant, long-standing, underlying economic and health disparities and is impacting communities of color disproportionately. Ensuring that the hardest hit communities have access to testing, contact tracing, credible and consistent public health information provided in a manner that is culturally and ethnically appropriate and language accessible remains of vital importance. Finally, equity must be at the center not only of our ongoing public health response, but our economic re-opening strategies, as well. This is an opportunity to get it right and provide strong support for communities that have been hit most hard.

E. Housing

Massachusetts has a lot to offer, but that does little if people can't afford to live here. The [US News & World Report's annual state rankings](#) put Massachusetts at #41 in housing affordability (and #43 in cost of living). A worker earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work [91 hours a week](#) to afford a modest one-bedroom rental home at market rate (and 113 hours for a modest two-bedroom). Over the last ten years, the need for affordable housing has increased, while funds for affordable housing have decreased at both federal and state levels. 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.

Monthly median rents have gone up by more than one-third since 2010, outpacing income growth.



(source: [zillow.com](https://www.zillow.com))

- 1. Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

- 2. Funding. Would you support legislation that would allow cities and towns to impose a fee on real estate transfers to generate revenue for affordable housing, with the ability to create local exemptions as appropriate?**

RC: YES.

- 3. Tenant Protections. Do you support passing enabling legislation to provide municipalities with the authority to implement rent-stabilizing regulations, just cause eviction protections, stronger condominium conversion and foreclosure protections, anti-displacement zones, and options to help tenants manage the upfront costs of leasing an apartment?**

RC: YES.

I have been a forceful, consistent advocate for stable, affordable housing for Boston residents and families, including strong tenant protection measures. I am proud of the work I have done as the former Director of the City of Boston's Boston Home Center helping residents prevent foreclosure and achieve the dream of homeownership. I am open to new ideas to achieve worthwhile goals and in that spirit if elected would engage and seek more detailed information

to understand how an anti-displacement zone would work and the specifics of any proposed rent-stabilizing measures.

4. **Zoning Reform/Housing Production. Do you support requiring cities and towns to allow multifamily housing to be built as of right within 1 mile of transit stations?**

RC: NO.

This should be decided after a public process by each city and town. As a Legislator, and a former Boston City Councilor who has participated in numerous zoning issues and led the effort to re-zone my district on the local level, I would not want to take that authority away from local elected leaders and neighborhood residents.

5. **Eviction Sealing. Today, when a tenant exercises their legal rights in housing court, it creates a permanent record. Eviction records create lasting stigma, are error prone and impair access to stable housing. Would you support legislation to seal eviction records so that both tenant and landlord could move on with their lives after three years?**

RC: YES.

F. Racial and Social Justice

Massachusetts must continue to strive to be a state that welcomes and embraces all of its residents and combats prejudice and discrimination of all kinds.

Mass incarceration in Massachusetts has proven socially and economically destructive, breaking apart communities across the state. From 2011 to 2016, [spending on prisons](#) grew faster than any other part of the Massachusetts budget, while funding for necessary services languished. The average cost per year to house an inmate in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections is [more than \\$60,000](#), money that could be better reinvested into the communities that have suffered from decades of misguided and racially discriminatory “tough on crime” policies. To achieve “justice for all,” we need a judicial system that does not disproportionately target communities of color and the poor and that does not criminalize public health issues such as addiction. The April 2018 criminal justice reform bill made strides forward, but there is more work to do.

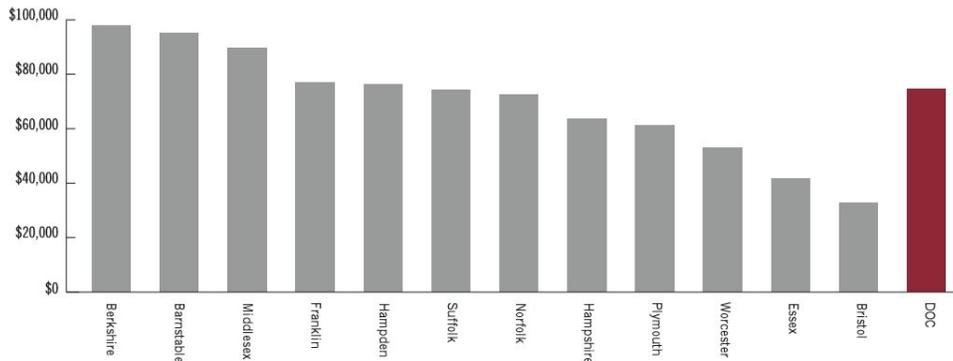
Immigrants make up 16% of Massachusetts’s population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. As the Trump administration in Washington ramps up a xenophobic mass deportation agenda, it is important for states like Massachusetts to take leadership in protecting and advancing the rights of our immigrant communities and making clear that all are welcome.

Significant racial disparities exist in incarceration in Massachusetts.

Imprisonment by Race/Ethnicity (2014)	
White imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	81
Black imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	605
Hispanic imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	351
Racial/Ethnic Disparity in Imprisonment (2014)	
Black : white ratio	7.5
Hispanic : white ratio	4.3
Juveniles in Custody (2015)	
Juvenile custody rate (per 100,000)	66
White custody rate (per 100,000)	22
Black custody rate (per 100,000)	222
Latino custody rate (per 100,000)	172
American Indian custody rate (per 100,000)	0
Asian custody rate (per 100,000)	7

Massachusetts spends large (and growing) sums per inmate -- while still not providing for basic needs.

Figure 4: Estimated expenditure per inmate, FY 2019



Source: MassINC's analysis of Department of Correction Weekly Count Sheets, April 2018, and average House and SWM FY 2019 budget proposals (adjusted upward based on final expenditures, FY 2011 to FY 2018)

- 1. Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

- 2. Police Accountability. Do you support the establishment of an independent review board for police shootings in the Commonwealth?**

RC: YES.

Police use of force is potentially a criminal matter. I support measures implemented by Suffolk DA Rollins in creating a Discharge Integrity Team, an independent panel of experts (including a retired judge, defense attorney, and public health official) who review all investigations into police involved shootings in real time. This strikes a great balance to ensure that these investigations are conducted fairly, professionally, and with independence.

- 3. Sentencing Reform. The 2018 criminal justice reform bill was an important first step in reducing mass incarceration. However, in our "liberal" state, incarceration rates remain much higher than they are in other countries, and sentencing laws can be even more punitive than those in states viewed as conservative. Which of the following reforms would you support?**

- Eliminating mandatory minimums for opioid-related offenses?
- Raising the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21, in line with research that shows that young offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to reoffend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood?
- Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth close in age?
- Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application?

RC: I believe justice begins with lifting people up, not locking them up and am proud of my long record consistent with this belief. I believe passionately in second chances, so I have supported CORI reform, Re-entry programs and more. I am opposed to criminal justice policies that drive racial disparities so supported the earlier reform of many of the mandatory minimum drug laws, like School Zone measures, that were racially disparate and counterproductive. I also believe that people have a right to live in safety and without fear and that victims' voices should be heard and respected. Additional proposed reforms need to be

carefully considered to ensure that each of the principles described above are carefully balanced and applied and as a State Legislator I will ensure that they are. I will continue to fight for criminal justice policies that are fair, equal and smart.

4. **Solitary Confinement. In Massachusetts, prisoners can be sentenced to 10 years of solitary confinement—per infraction. The UN defines holding someone in solitary confinement for more than 15 days as torture. Do you support limiting the use of solitary to no more than 15 consecutive days?**

RC: YES.

5. **Prison Visitation. Maintaining connections with friends and family outside prisons is one of the most important factors in ensuring successful reentry. In March 2018, the DOC severely limited the ability of prisoners to receive visits and the rights of family and friends to visit their loved ones in prison. ([Read more on this here.](#)) Do you favor ending these restrictions?**

RC: YES.

I believe that all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. All people. The vast majority of people who go to prison will return to their families and communities. Formalized re-entry programs, education, job-training, treatment and other programs that give people a real second chance deserve support. So do simple policies that promote ties to family, friends and community. Recognizing appropriate matters of safety and security are necessary, our visitation policies should be designed to prepare individuals for re-entry and avoid the kind of prolonged isolation that leads to alienation and other ills.

6. **Prison Profiteering. While Massachusetts does not have private prisons, the DOC invites private companies to profit off of the families of prisoners by price gouging inmates who have no alternatives but to buy from the sole providers of goods in prisons. Do support ending the price gouging of inmates for necessary items and requiring DOC to adequately supply inmates with the basic requirements necessary for life to keep in contact with their families and maintain good health and hygiene?**

RC: YES.

7. **Safe Communities Act. Do you support the Safe Communities Act, which limits local and state police collaboration with federal immigration agents, bars law enforcement and court personnel from inquiring about immigration status, and ensures due process protections?**

RC: YES.

The Safe Communities Act is based largely on measures already adopted in Boston as part of the Trust Act. The Trust Act was developed in conjunction with immigrants and their advocates, civil rights organizations and law enforcement. All agree that safe communities are built on cooperation and trust, not fear and scapegoating.

8. **Work and Family Mobility Act. Do you support removing immigration status as a barrier to applying for a license or learner's permit?**

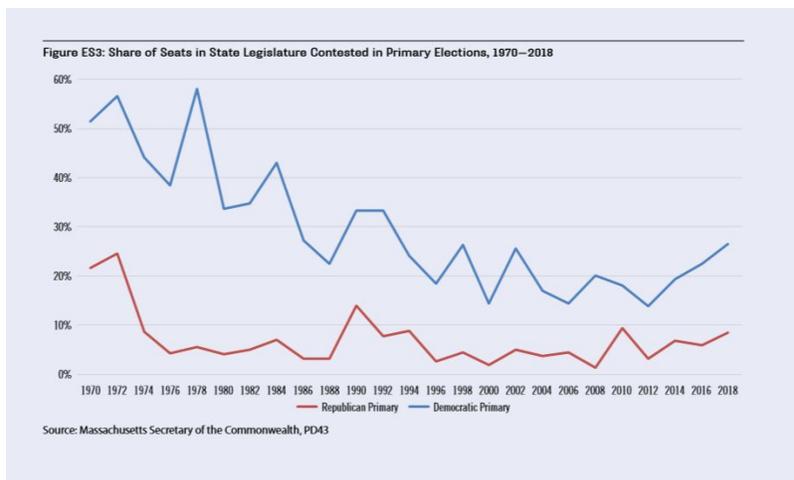
RC: YES.

G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

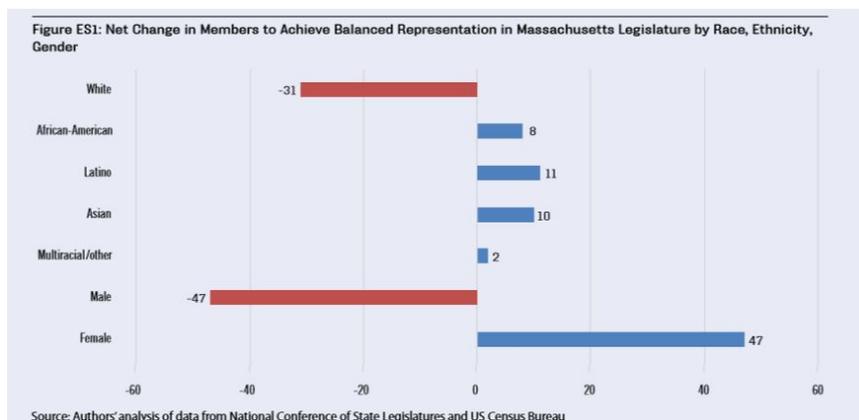
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine the system. Despite recent reforms, a weak public records system stymies government accountability: MA is one of only two states where all three branches of state government claim to be exempt. A strong democracy requires an engaged electorate, but voter turnout in midterm elections, and especially local elections, remains low. Although election modernization legislation in 2014 and 2018 helped bring much-needed reforms, we still lag behind states in New England and around the country in making voting accessible (Maine, for instance, has allowed for Election Day Registration since the 1970s).

A centralized power system, a skewed campaign finance system, and restrictive voting laws together help create a situation in which our elections are the [least competitive in the country](#).

Our elections have grown less competitive over the past four decades.



Our legislature is not reflective of the population as a whole.



1. **Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

2. **Public Records Law. Massachusetts is one of only two states where the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Judiciary claim full exemption from the public records laws. Would you support eliminating this exemption?**

RC: YES.

3. **Legislative Transparency -- Part I. The Massachusetts Legislature lacks many basic transparency measures found in other state legislatures around the country. Would you vote in favor of making the following items available online...?**

- a. All committee votes, whether taken by electronic poll or formal roll call?
- b. All written testimony submitted for or against bills?
- c. Reader-friendly summaries of bills currently in or reported out of committee?

4. **Legislative Transparency -- Part II. Legislators only vote to change the rules at the start of the legislative session, but all legislators can model transparency on their own throughout the session. Would you commit to doing the following...?**

- a. Standing for a recorded vote when a colleague asks for one on any amendment which you have co-sponsored?
- b. Making your committee votes available online on your website?

RC: I support a transparent process for policy development that will provide for the best outcome for my constituents on issues before the Legislature. Legislating is a process of collaboration, compromise and respectful dialogue that takes into account many different perspectives and balances the needs of the residents of the 14th Suffolk with all of the residents of the Commonwealth. If elected, I will continue to work to the best of my ability and judgement as to how to accomplish successful passage of legislation in a transparent manner much like I did when I was a Boston City Councilor.

5. **State House Culture. Do you support the creation an independent commission to investigate and report on complaints of workplace and sexual harassment in the Massachusetts Legislature?**

RC: YES.

Workplace and sexual harassment is never acceptable and I will work to ensure that allegations of sexual harassment are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and objectively in full compliance with state law. It is imperative that this is done in a way that respects the dignity and privacy of all parties. While the Legislature has made great strides in this area, if elected, I will continue to work to ensure that workplace and sexual harassment is not tolerated in any environment.

6. **Public Campaign Financing. Our campaign finance system favors incumbency and discriminates against potential candidates who do not have a ready pool of wealthy donors. Do you support the creation of a robust public financing system for state elections?**

RC: YES.

Equitable access to political engagement is a bedrock principle of democracy to which I am fully committed. Given the uncertainties and potential revenue emergencies in the wake of the COVID-19 public health crisis, we will need to thoughtfully examine all potential investments and their implications. Whether we will have the capacity to make a significant investment in public campaign financing is impossible to say right now in my view, but given the more

imperative of nature civic engagement, I believe the issue should be thoroughly considered.

7. **Removing Barriers to Running.** The cost of child care can prove prohibitive to working mothers or fathers seeking to run for office. Would you support legislation to explicitly allow working parents running for office to use campaign funds to pay for child care?

RC: YES.

8. **Voting Access.** Which of the following policies to increase voter participation do you support?

a. Election Day Registration?

b. The expansion of early voting to municipal elections and primaries?

c. No-fault absentee voting?

d. Ending the disenfranchisement of prisoners serving with felony convictions (Their right to vote was taken away by ballot twenty years ago)?

9. **Ranked Choice Voting.** Do you support the 2020 ballot initiative to adopt ranked choice voting for state, county, and (non-presidential) federal elections?

RC: NO.

10. **Election Integrity.** Do you support requiring **risk-limiting audits** of election results, in which a statistically significant percentage of ballots are hand counted to ensure that the reported winner was the actual winner, preserving the integrity of elections from foreign interference, technological glitches, or simple human error?

RC: YES.

Free, fair, and transparent elections are imperative to our democracy. Any issue that fairly and equitably improves the security of our democratic process should be thoughtfully considered, which is how I would approach the methods proposed here and others.

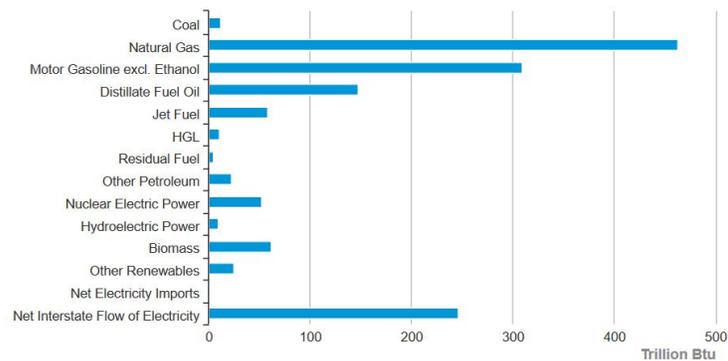
H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

As a coastal state, Massachusetts will be hit particularly hard by climate change, but we are not responding with the necessary urgency. In order to avoid catastrophic climate change, global carbon emissions need to be [halved by 2030](#) and brought to net zero by 2050. In 2016, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the state has failed to meet its legal obligation to set and enforce annual limits on greenhouse gas emissions as outlined in the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act. Setting and reaching these goals will require the decarbonization of our state economy and a transition away from fossil fuels toward clean, renewable sources of energy. In light of congressional gridlock at the federal level, state government must take a role in incentivizing reduced carbon usage and assisting in coordination between agencies and moving forward local government understanding of looming climate threats.

Public transit must play a role in decarbonizing our transportation system, as well as advancing complementary goals of equity and inclusion. However, Massachusetts politicians have lost their understanding of public transit as a public good that benefits all residents and businesses in Massachusetts, not just those who use it in their daily lives. The greatest evidence of this is their neglect of the MBTA: its debt has grown to nearly [\\$5 billion](#), and it would need [more than \\$10 billion](#) to bring infrastructure and equipment up to a state of good repair. Regional Transit Authorities that serve communities, including Gateway Cities across the state, face enormous capital needs as well.

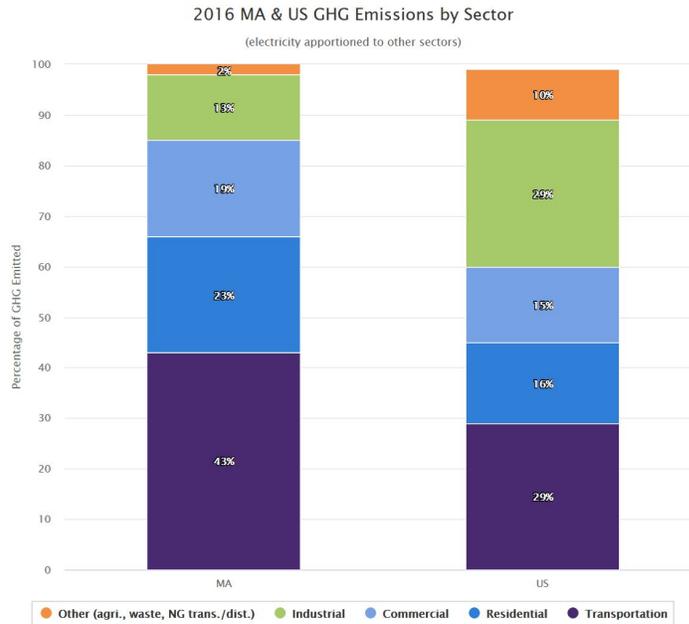
Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.

Massachusetts Energy Consumption Estimates, 2017



 Source: Energy Information Administration, State Energy Data System

Transportation is currently the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in MA.



(Source: <http://www.mass.gov>)

- 1. Please explain your principles and proposals as relate to this issue, and what work you personally have done to advance them (legislation, community work, published writings, etc.).**

RC: Please see answers and additional comments below.

- 2. Waste Reduction. Would you support a statewide ban on single-use shopping bags and a requirement that alternatives be more sustainable?**

RC: YES.

I am proud to have authored in 2007 the first piece of legislation before the Boston City Council to ban plastic bags in the City of Boston.

- 3. Solar Energy. Do you support increasing equitable access to solar power by removing caps on solar generation and restoring compensation for low-income and community solar?**

RC: YES.

- 4. Renewable Energy. Do you support a target of 100% renewable energy economy-wide by 2045 and 100% renewable electricity by 2035?**

RC: YES.

I support these and other goals for our clean energy future. With the economic impacts of coronavirus as yet fully understood, we need to move forward with clean energy development that ensures the economic and health security of all Massachusetts' families.

A goal of 100% renewable energy is laudable and we need to transition to clean energy sources as quickly as we can. I support approaches that aggressively reduce carbon pollution while increasing opportunity for families and workers in the clean energy sector and

supporting industries. As a Boston City Councilor a hallmark of my approach is bringing all sides to the table and I would work with environmentalists, public health officials and local businesses to find creative solutions that protect our health and boost our economy.

5. **Environmental Justice. Successive gubernatorial administrations have made verbal commitments to environmental justice (EJ), and Governor Deval Patrick issued an Executive Order on Environmental Justice in 2014 which has not been implemented. Would you support efforts to codify EJ into law?**

RC: YES.

6. **Fossil Fuel Infrastructure. Do you oppose the expansion of gas pipelines in the state?**

RC: YES.

Massachusetts ratepayers shouldn't have to foot the bill for infrastructure projects that benefit private energy companies. Projects that benefit the public good by delivering clean energy that reduces pollution and addresses climate change are worthy investments. In these unprecedented times and under historic budget pressures, we need to move very carefully to protect sacred resources like taxpayer provided revenue and ensure our investments yield strong benefits. We have to balance our energy needs with the necessity of providing affordable home heating energy with our need to move toward a clean economy as quickly as we can. With the uncertainty of the full economic impact of the coronavirus we must keep energy sources available and prices stable and move forward in a way that produces cleaner energy, less pollution and economic security for all.

7. **Carbon Pricing. Do you support imposing a fee on carbon emissions and using some of the revenue to invest in green infrastructure, especially in frontline communities?**

RC: YES.

Addressing the climate crisis is one of my top environmental priorities. Carbon pricing is an important tool and similar policies have worked well in addressing environmental concerns before. With the ever-increasing need for disaster relief, mitigation and adaptation, and green infrastructure for the future, we need to find innovative ways to pay for them. But, we cannot pass this cost onto already vulnerable communities. In fact, part of the proceeds from a price on carbon should be returned to ratepayers, especially those already suffering the brunt of unfair environmental and energy policies.

8. **Public Transportation. Will you oppose any fare increases to the MBTA or regional transit authorities and work toward the goal of fare-free public transit?**

RC: YES.

Boston and the entire state need a modern, reliable, and equitable public transportation system. I will fight for state financial support, as well as support for the Regional Transportation Funding option, not just to incrementally improve the system and keep fares equitable and affordable, but to propel systemic modernization and reform in quantum leaps. So-called "free" public transportation has been tried only on very small scales and so would be interested in a range of evidence and data how these small scale experiments translate to one of the largest public transit systems in the United States.

9. **Regional Transportation Funding.** The unavailability of state funds for infrastructure spending has meant the deterioration of regional transportation systems. Do you support allowing municipalities to place a question on the ballot to raise revenue for local and regional transportation projects?

RC: YES.

III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Limit answer to 150 words or fewer.

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.