



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2020 LEGISLATIVE
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Date: 5/5/2020

Candidate: Jen Fries

Office Sought: State Representative, 24th Middlesex

Party: Democratic

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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?

JF: When I was a newly divorced single mom in 2009, reliant on the Red Line to get to work, I learned quickly that I could not count on the MBTA to get me home in time to get my kid from her after school program. I eventually had to find a job closer to home, one where I knew I could be on time for 5:30 after-school pickups. The T has only gotten worse since, adding derailments to the delays. When it comes to public infrastructure, programs, and resources in the Commonwealth, we don't have to settle for sub-standard.

I am running for office because I believe that we deserve a rep who fights hard for our values. My top 3 legislative priorities are public transit, climate change action, and public schools and colleges. I also recognize that the pandemic will make basic needs more central than ever. We all – and particularly low-income people and people in the communities of color that have been hit hardest by COVID-19 in Massachusetts – will need greater attention to ensure that our basic needs are met.

At the Statehouse, we've seen a lack of urgency, a lack of political will, and a lack of leadership to fix the MBTA. That lack of urgency affects our lives. There is a similar lack of urgency about climate change, the ROE Act, the Safe Communities Act, and the chronic underfunding of the UMass system.

Coming from the non-profit sector, I have experience building coalitions and partnerships for good. I am running because I believe I can bring that urgency, and that I can better represent the needs and values of our district. This is an extraordinary time in our nation, and our state, and we need energetic leadership to meet the challenges. I hope that I can earn your endorsement.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

JF: I have a Masters in Public Administration (Harvard Kennedy School) and my BA in public policy (Brown). I wrote my undergraduate honors thesis on the prosecution of domestic violence misdemeanors in Rhode Island in cases with hesitant witnesses. I have spent my career in nonprofit leadership in Massachusetts, and will bring many of the skills and experiences from this time — my work building partnerships to address community needs as the Executive Director of the ACE Mentor Program and Cambridge School Volunteers, my experience coordinating legislative and policy advocacy at One Family, Inc and the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, and my experience in direct service as the head of a shelter and program for people who had experienced domestic violence and sexual assault — to my work as a State Representative.

A State Rep should work with constituents and community partners to identify pressing community needs, design policies to address these needs, and advocate for these policies at the state house, and I have deep experience working at each of these three steps. Both of these coalition-building efforts took planning, persistence, follow up, good listening skills, negotiation skills, and persuasive tactics.

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

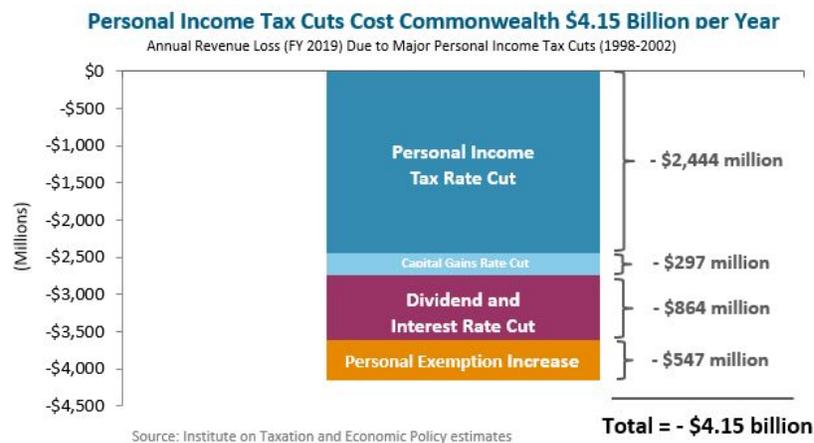
JF: The biggest obstacle to passing progressive policy, in my opinion, is a lack of attention to the difficult work of bringing people together in coalition to create change. I am ready to devote myself to that work, in particular to fix the T; address climate change through reducing emissions and adaptation to protect communities at risk; and provide adequate funding for our public colleges and universities. I have experience assembling, maintaining, and mobilizing coalitions to exert change at the State House, such as when I played a key role in an effort to secure a major funding increase for legal services for low-income people over the objections of the conservative Democratic speaker at the time. I would bring that experience to bear on Beacon Hill now.

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.

Highest Income Taxpayers Pay Smaller Share of Income in State and Local Taxes

% of personal income paid in state and local taxes, 2018 projection



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.).**

JF: Part of the reason I volunteered for Elizabeth Warren was because I believed strongly in her 2-cents plan to tax wealth and use the money to support workers, parents, students, disabled people, and our senior citizens. The growing inequality in incomes, exacerbated by cuts in services driven by tax cuts for the wealthy and for corporations, has impoverished our public sector. I will work to make the Massachusetts income tax more progressive and to increase revenue for vital public services that benefit all of us. We need to put the needs of people at the center again, and doing so relies on a far more progressive tax system.

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?**
 - a. Collecting and publicly disclosing information about the benefits to the state from any tax break?
 - b. Repealing any tax break that does not provide the intended benefits in a cost-effective manner?
 - c. Establishing sunset dates for all tax breaks so that they must come up for periodic review?

JF: I further support clawback provisions for tax breaks that do not result in promised jobs and other benefits. I would further support requiring corporations to place a percentage of their deferred tax obligation in escrow for a review period to ensure that the state can easily recoup tax breaks if corporations fail to deliver promised benefits.

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")?**

JF: 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?
 - a. Raising the corporate minimum tax for larger companies? (The corporate minimum tax is currently only \$456.)
 - b. Imposing a tax on the portion of corporations' US profits that are shifted to offshore tax havens?
 - c. Raising the corporate tax rate from 8% to 9.5% (where it stood in 2009)?
 - d. Raising the tax on long-term capital gains from 5% to 8.95%, in line with states like New York and Vermont?
 - e. Levying a modest tax on university endowments greater than \$1 billion?

JF: I support a graduated corporate minimum excise tax indexed to a company's total volume of Massachusetts sales. I also support an endowment tax in principle, but it depends on the proposal. We need to be aware that universities and research has helped drive our economy, and be aware that universities will be hard-hit by the pandemic, with housing sitting vacant and projected drops in enrollment for the incoming classes.

B. Jobs and the Economy

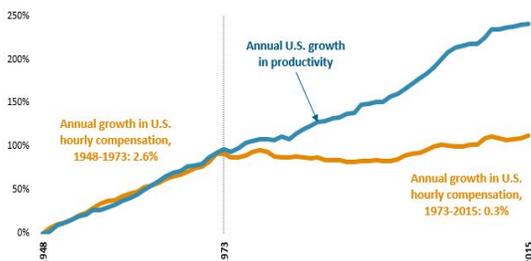
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which 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.

A Large Gap Has Opened Between Wage and Productivity Growth Since 1973

Cumulative Change in U.S. Hourly Wages for Private-Sector Production/Non-Supervisory Workers and Net Productivity, 1948-2015



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of unpublished Total Economy Productivity data from Bureau of Labor Statistics' Labor Productivity and Costs program, wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Cost Trends data, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Product Accounts
Note: Wages are the inflation-adjusted average hourly compensation of private-sector production/nonsupervisory workers.

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

Wages For Most MA Workers Have Stagnated Since Great Recession

Real Value of Hourly Wage for Selected Wage-Earning Groups in MA and U.S., 1979-2016 (2016\$)



Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of Current Population Survey data (deflated using CPI-U-RS).

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.).**

JF: I have stood with labor, particularly the teachers' unions, as they fought to Keep the Cap and for the Student Opportunity Act. I did canvassing and social media support for these campaigns. One of my kitchen cabinet members, Erin Shackelford, is the former Director of Organizing for SEIU Local 509.

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

JF: 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?**

JF: YES.

Workers' rights should not depend on the organizational structures of their employers, and the Commonwealth should not allow large corporations, universities, and other major institutions to turn a blind eye to the wage violations of their food service, custodial, or other subcontractors.

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?**

JF: 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?**

JF: YES.

I also support expanding protections for service-sector workers who face cancelled shifts. Once a shift is scheduled, employees should be able to count on earning full pay from it even if it is later cancelled.

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?**

JF: YES.

As the Executive Director of the largest non-profit partner of Cambridge Public Schools, I made my relationship with the Cambridge Education Association a top priority because I believe that a strong teachers union is the backbone of a strong public school district. I always have and always will stand with public-sector unions. In particular, as I work on fixing the MBTA, I will oppose any efforts to privatize or to impact the collective bargaining rights of the unions who quite literally drive our public transit.

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?**

JF: YES.

Mandatory arbitration deprives employees of their right to recourse when employers break the law, and should be illegal in Massachusetts. I am particularly concerned by the use of mandatory arbitration to silence people who have experienced workplace sexual harassment or assault and would strongly support legislation to ban mandatory arbitration.

C. Education

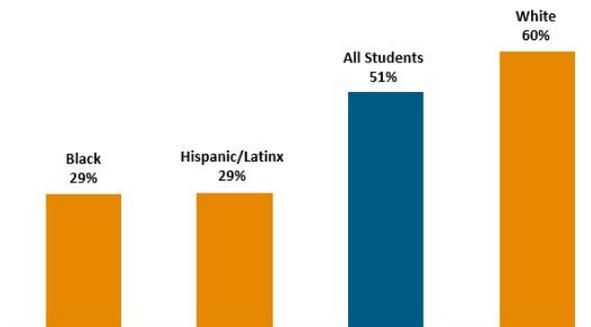
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country. 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

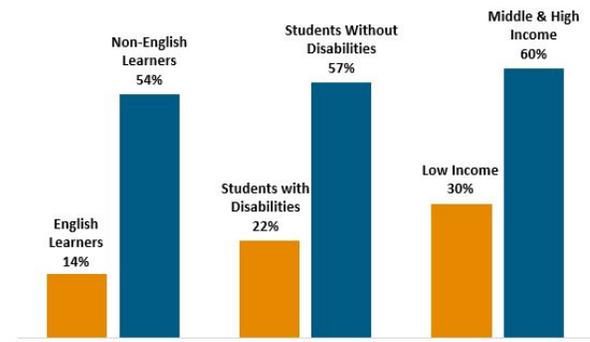
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

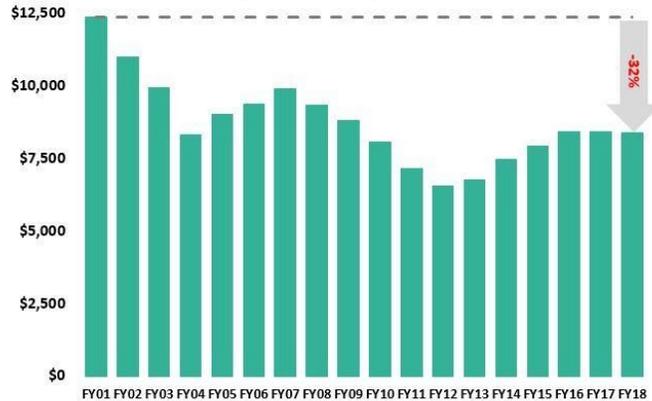


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

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.).**

JF: I am deeply committed to securing adequate state support for public education in Massachusetts, both at the K-12 and post-secondary levels. I have led educational nonprofits focused on access to educational supports for disadvantaged children and youth in Cambridge and Boston for over a decade. I have also made funding for public higher education one of the three cornerstones of my platform this year. I am committed to restoring our UMass system to fiscal health by passing the Cherish Act, and will fight for legislation to ensure access to debt-free in-state public higher education for every student in Massachusetts. Finally, while the Student Opportunity Act is a step in the right direction, Governor Baker’s most recent budget underfunded supports for low-income students under the Act; I will fight to ensure the Student Opportunity Act is fully funded and will work to create additional funding streams for schools serving low-income students.

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

JF: YES.

Universal public pre-kindergarten is vital to promote education equity in Massachusetts, and I support full-day pre-k for all students ages 4 and up. Additionally, I believe that Pre-K should be taught by licensed teachers as part of a public school and not outsourced to private providers, and that it should be fully funded by an appropriate increase in state Chapter 70 aid.

- 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?**

JF: As discussed above, I will fight to ensure that the State fully funds the Student Opportunity Act. As part of this commitment, I support several new revenue streams for education, including the Fair Share Amendment and increases in corporate excise and personal capital gains taxes.

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.)

JF: YES.

High-stakes uses of standardized testing undermine teaching and learning by compelling teachers to devote instructional time to test preparation. Standardized tests have some utility as a mechanism for tracking achievement gaps and targeting resources toward schools and districts that need them most, but high-stakes uses of standardized testing also undermine this goal.

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.**
- Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? **YES.**
 - 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.**

JF: I canvassed for the Keep the Cap campaign in 2016 and wrote a letter to the editor of my local paper, which was published here: <https://cambridge.wickedlocal.com/news/20160729/letter-vote-no-on-question-2>. I also support the rights of all charter school employees to form a union and bargain collectively. Finally, charter schools are already depriving public school districts of needed revenue due to the underfunding of state charter school reimbursements from 2015 to 2019, despite the state's promise to ease the transitions in enrollment figures caused by charter schools opening or recruiting students from a new district.

For too long, we have allowed anti-labor practices, harsh discipline, and discrimination against students with disabilities to masquerade as "innovation" in charter schools in Massachusetts. Disclosure and disciplinary standards and other protections in public schools in Massachusetts exist to protect the rights of students, teachers, and families, and I support applying these same standards to charter schools.

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?**

JF: YES.

I support mandatory consent education at every stage of sex education in every public school in Massachusetts.

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

JF: YES.

I also support further enhancing higher education access through a "Safe University Communities Act" to ban university police forces at public universities in Massachusetts from communicating with ICE or other federal immigration authorities, and would sponsor such an Act as a Representative. People from around the world come to Massachusetts to study, to do research, and to do vital work. We must stand with them, as they have stood with us. The night that Trump issued his Muslim ban, I went to Logan Airport to protest, prepared to be arrested if need be, until they released the university students and other travelers who were in the air at the time of the ban. We stayed at Logan until the ACLU announced it had secured an injunction and the last detainees were released.

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

JF: YES.

Yes, for in-state students in Massachusetts. I also believe that any change to tuition must be coupled by a robust increase in state support for public higher education, and the legislature should ensure that the UMass system, state universities, and community colleges remain solvent by replacing lost tuition revenue with public support.

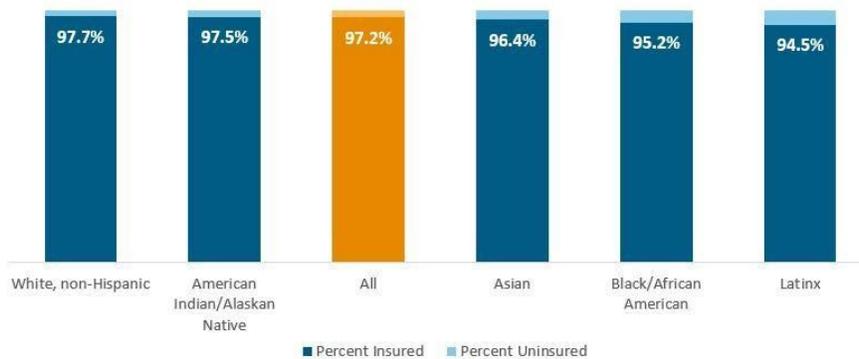
D. Health Care

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

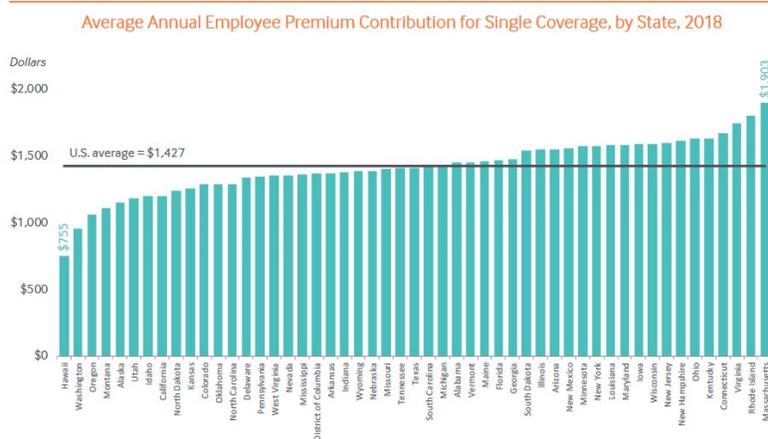
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).**

JF: I support single payer health care, sometimes known as Medicare for All. The system would be the most affordable, allowing us to control inflation and price gouging, and eliminating costs for corporate bonuses, advertising, shareholder profits, and other items unrelated to delivering good care. The first time I remember calling my representative about single payer health care was in 1992, and I have placed many calls since then supporting the Affordable Care Act and Medicare for All. On the state level, we should work to expand support for people who are paying for care on the Connector. The deductibles are too high, forcing many people to forego needed care.

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

JF: YES.

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?**

JF: YES.

I fully support the ROE Act and the rights of all people to have bodily autonomy. Having worked with survivors of abuse, I am aware that pregnant teens may be afraid to tell their parents for good reason. Abortion is health care.

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?**

JF: YES.

My family has been affected by the opioid crisis in Massachusetts, and I know that SCSs can save lives. I also support the expansion of funding for SCSs-like facilities such as the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program's SPOT. In addition to SCSs, I support repealing state laws which limit drug-checking in order to allow people to check substances for fentanyl contamination before use, since fentanyl-adulterated heroin is a major driver of fatal overdoses. I also support increasing state-wide investment in naloxone distribution and opioid overdose response education, particularly education specific to responses to fentanyl overdose, as literature indicates that voluntary municipal-level programs in overdose response education in Massachusetts can help reduce overdose deaths (Walley et al 2013, full citation available on request). I am deeply committed to harm reduction and believe that Massachusetts can make much more progress in implementing harm reduction practices.

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

JF: Although I am glad that the state shut down relatively early, many vulnerable people were not adequately protected. The state has failed to protect essential workers from COVID-19, and we are seeing the results in hotspots like Chelsea and Everett, both communities with a high proportion of essential and frontline workers. Workers were not provided with adequate PPE or cleaning supplies. Many of these people became ill as a result of this failure.

The state also moved too slowly on protecting nursing homes. At Belmont Manor in my

district, more than one-third of all residents have died due to COVID. More than 86% of the residents and 73 members of the staff have been infected, and we are seeing similarly staggering numbers across the state. Some of these failures must be traced to the federal government, but the state also failed to support and protect these workers.

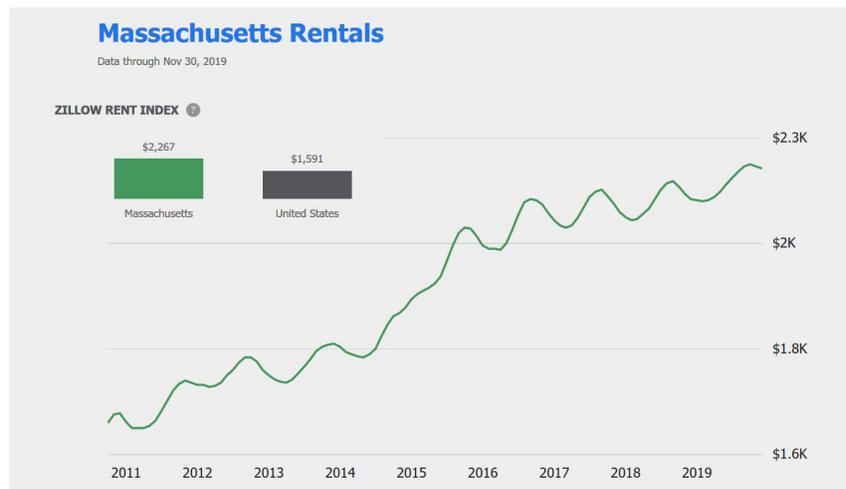
There have also been racial and socioeconomic disparities in the spread and the severity of the disease, which are exposing the health disparities that already exist in Massachusetts, as shown by the disproportionate burden of COVID in Chelsea, Lynn, and other gateway cities.

I am also deeply concerned with the lack of planning to protect people in our prison system and in immigrant detention. For many years, the medical services provided to prisoners have been under-resourced. This underinvestment puts people in state custody in grave danger during the pandemic. We need to release non-violent prisoners, particularly those who are medically vulnerable or at heightened risk for other reasons.

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.).**

JF: The housing crisis requires a response incorporating tenant protections, rapid rehousing, rental assistance, and affordable housing production. In 2008, I wrote the successful grant proposal that funded the first pilot of a "civil Gideon" program, providing counsel to every tenant facing eviction in certain courts. In my work at One Family, I advocated for a "housing first" approach to homelessness, recognizing that it makes fiscal and moral sense to provide stable housing before expecting people to address other instability in their lives. I also advocated (both as a private citizen and as a member of the Cambridge Nonprofit Coalition steering committee) for the Affordable Housing Overlay, a city-wide proposal to provide zoning relief for developments that are 100% affordable in Cambridge. The policy failed in City Council by one vote. In the 2019 municipal elections, I only supported candidates who pledged to support the housing overlay. We elected a supermajority to support the policy, and I hope to see it pass this term.

- 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?**

JF: YES.

The City of Boston's recent commitment to increase funding for housing by \$500 million relies in large part on a real estate transfer fee, and other towns face similar funding environments.

As a State Representative, I would vote in favor of the City of Boston's Home Rule petition and support legislation to allow this broadly.

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?**

JF: YES.

I have been inspired by the work of the Somerville City Council and other progressive local governments in Massachusetts, and believe that the legislature should seek to facilitate tenant protection measures through statewide enabling legislation and by approving pending Home Rule Petitions.

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?**

JF: YES.

Yes, and I believe that this requirement should apply to commuter rail stations as well as MBTA rapid transit stations. A recent analysis from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership found that a modest density increase to 10 homes per acre in low-density areas in the immediate vicinity of mass transit stations could generate an estimated 253,000 new housing units. I am also motivated by recent data showing that per-capita carbon emissions are far lower in the densest municipalities in Massachusetts than in lower-density towns. I see the production of accessible and affordable housing near transit as a climate issue as well as a housing justice issue, and would fight for it on each of these bases.

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?**

JF: YES.

I am particularly concerned that eviction records allow landlords to discriminate against holders Housing Choice Vouchers and MRVP vouchers, and strongly support eliminating the role that state-managed eviction records play in source-of-income discrimination.

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.

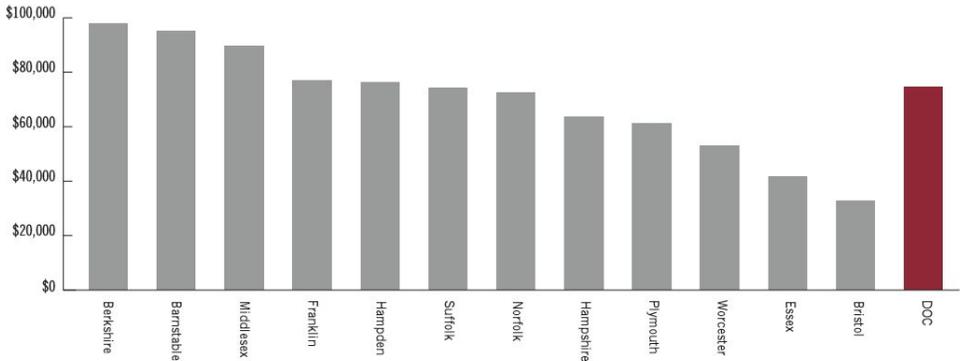
Immigrants make up 16% of Massachusetts’s population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. As the Trump administration in Washington ramps up a xenophobic mass deportation agenda, it is important for states 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.).**

JF: We must take bold steps to address the injustices created by the War on Drugs, particularly its disparate impact due to over-policing in communities of color. I contribute to bail funds through my religious community (Friends Meeting at Cambridge). I have publicly supported abolishing mandatory minimums on my social media.

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

JF: YES.

Such a board should include a dedicated seat to be filled on a case-by-case basis by a resident of the town or neighborhood in which a shooting occurred.

- 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?

JF: It is especially important to eliminate mandatory minimums because many opioid-related offenses are driven by addiction, and mandatory minimums also have a well-documented disparate impact on defendants of color. Treatment, not incarceration, is the appropriate remedy, and mandatory minimums deter many people involved in low-level offenses from seeking treatment. I will note that opioids have received more attention due to the population that is affected. Any offense tied to substance abuse should have treatment and education as the first priority.

- 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?**

JF: YES.

I further support banning the use of solitary confinement in Massachusetts, although such a ban should not prevent an incarcerated person from requesting individual confinement as part of a protective custody plan.

- 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?**

JF: YES.

I also support mandating that the DOC allow people to serve their sentences in prisons close to their home communities when possible to ensure that it is feasible for families to visit loved

ones in DOC prisons. Leslie Walker, the former Executive Director of Prisoners' Legal Services, signed my nomination papers.

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?

JF: 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?

JF: YES.

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

JF: YES.

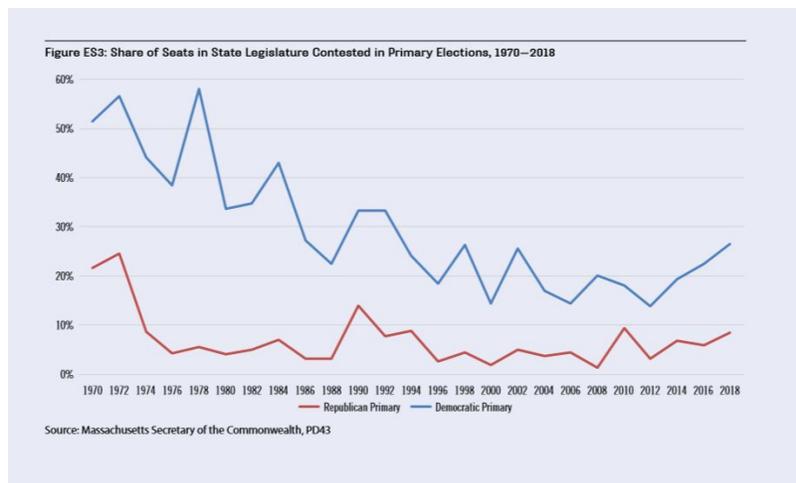
I have signed a pledge to support this bill.

G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

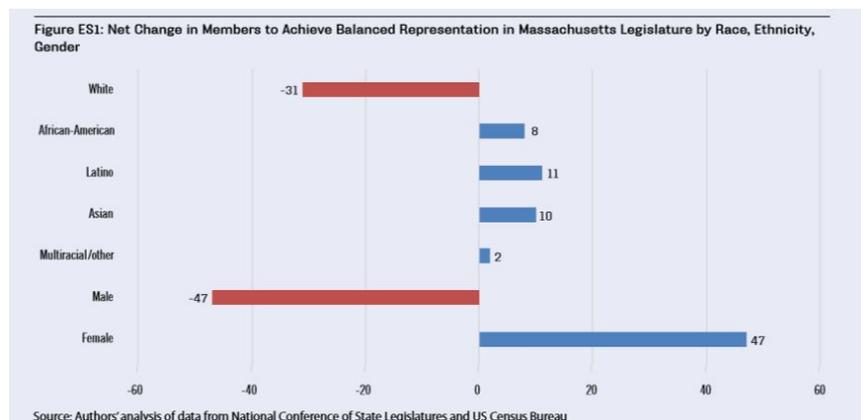
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine 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.).**

JF: Every election, I post on my social media to encourage my friends to register before the deadlines, request absentee ballots, etc. As a manager, I always give my employees paid time off to vote. I have supported new candidates, particularly women of color, in local elections in Cambridge, Boston, and other cities and towns, through canvassing and other volunteer work, and through donations. I organized volunteers to write postcards through Postcards to Voters on several campaigns, including Florida's recent successful ballot campaign to re-enfranchise citizens who have served their sentence and been released.

- 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?**

JF: 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...?**

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

JF: Constituents and advocacy groups deserve to know how legislators are voting in Beacon Hill, and committee voting records are a vital step toward holding legislators accountable to their campaign promises, especially since many progressive bills each year die in committee without ever seeing a floor vote.

- 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...?**

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

- 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?**

JF: YES.

- 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?**

JF: YES.

I have personally experienced the financial obstacles to running for office this year as a progressive candidate running against an incumbent, and believe that a public financing system would allow many new progressive candidates to participate in the political process in Massachusetts.

- 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?**

JF: YES.

As a working parent running for office, I have been inspired by Lee Erica Palmer's story of running for office in Somerville and her advocacy for such legislation, and would be a proud cosponsor of it in the House. Although my child is a teen, I know full well the cost of child care in our area, and how it presents a barrier to parents' full participation in civic life.

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)?

JF: I have long supported no-fault absentee voting, but this issue is particularly urgent in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also support passing enabling legislation to allow towns to design and pilot innovative approaches to absentee town meeting participation.

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

JF: YES.

As a Cambridge voter for decades, I have seen the concrete benefits of RCV on the municipal level. RCV limits strategic voting, which often harms women and candidates of color who are seen as less "electable" than white men, and promotes positive campaigns that allow voters to compare candidates on the issues. In Cambridge, RCV has also produced a City Council that is consistently representative of the city in terms of race, gender, and sexual orientation, a consistent shortcoming of the Massachusetts state legislature over the same period.

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?**

JF: YES.

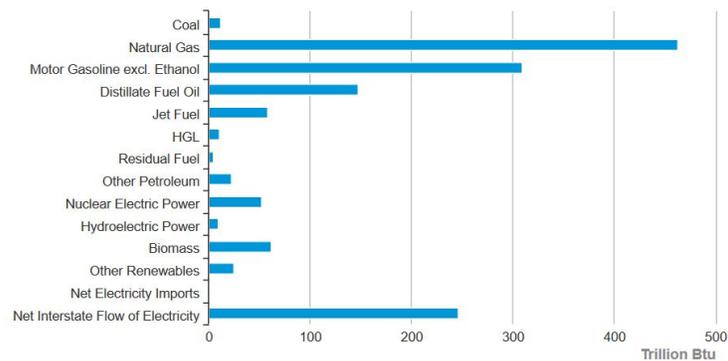
H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

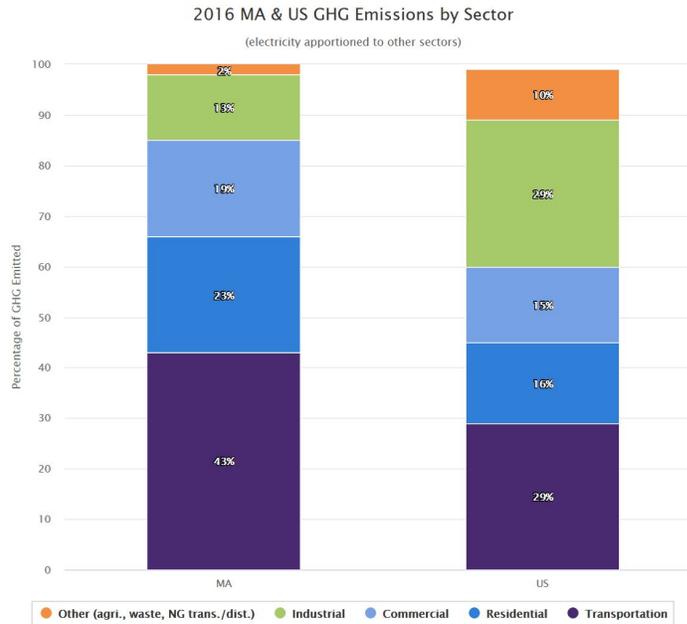
Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.

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.).**

JF: Addressing the climate crisis and public transit are two of my top 3 priorities inspiring my campaign. I have marched with Mothers Out Front and the People’s Climate March. I support a number of current bills in the state legislature, including the 100% renewable energy bill sponsored by Reps. Marjorie Decker and Sean Garballey (currently numbered H. 2836), Sen. DiDomenico’s bill relative to environmental justice (S. 453), and bills to institute carbon pricing in Massachusetts, including bills H. 2810 and S. 1924.

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

JF: NO.

I support a ban on single-use plastic bags and a mandatory fee for single-use paper and compostable plastic bags.

- 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?**

JF: YES.

I also support promoting small-scale solar production on residential properties through net metering to allow homeowners to offset the cost of solar infrastructure.

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

JF: YES.

I support H. 2836, the current leading 100% renewable energy bill in the state legislature.

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?**

JF: YES.

I specifically support Sen. DiDomenico's bill relative to environmental justice (S. 453).

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

JF: YES.

The current maintenance backlog on gas pipelines is an environmental hazard, and I support requiring utility companies to prioritize infrastructure maintenance over any new construction.

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?**

JF: YES.

I am most supportive of the terms of bill S. 1924, but I am also supportive of the more modest H. 2810, and I believe that the proceeds for carbon pricing should be earmarked for infrastructure in front-line communities to ensure that a carbon pricing program does not amount to a new regressive taxation system.

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?**

JF: YES.

My first priority for fare-free service, for racial and economic justice reasons, would be the bus system.

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?**

JF: YES.

I was forced to limit my job search in 2009 because I could not count on the Red Line to get me back from Boston in time to pick up my child from her after school program. The deterioration of public transportation is an economic, environmental, and quality-of-life issue, both in metro-Boston and in smaller metros throughout the state. Regional transportation systems provide vital service to residents of gateway cities and any state transportation funding package must include both MBTA and regional transit authority funding.

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.

JF: I have devoted my career to working for justice and building long-lasting coalitions for change, and this work would guide me as a State Representative. I would be honored to earn your endorsement and to take my dedication to the State House, and am happy to answer any additional questions on my record fighting for progressive change in Massachusetts.