



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS
2020 LEGISLATIVE
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

Date: 5/16/2020

Candidate: Anna Callahan

Office Sought: State Representative, 34th Middlesex

Party: Democratic

Website: www.annacallahan.com

Twitter: @AnnaCallahan4MA

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AnnaCallahan4MA>

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?

AC: I'm a software engineer and mom looking to change the way politics is done.

Progressives often say: they have the money, but we have the people. If that's true, we cannot win by preaching to the choir. We can't pass systemic change without drastically increasing the number of people engaged in the political process. I've spent my last four years empowering people in other cities to build movements through local electoral work. As an elected official, I will treat movement building as my #1 priority.

I will lead the fight for good government and transparency in the State House, champion a Massachusetts Green New Deal, and change the conservation around housing as a human right. Not only will these be legislative priorities, but I plan to build coalitions and grassroots movements around these issues. I will also prioritize Medicare for All, free college tuition, and overhauling our criminal justice system.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

AC: In 2016 (while living briefly on the west coast) I helped elect a slate of candidates for both city council and mayor in Berkeley, CA, as well as a public financing of elections ballot measure. I was appointed to the Open Government and Fair Campaign Practices Commissions where I helped finalize and implement those laws. I then founded The Incorruptibles and worked with Mayor Gayle McLaughlin, union organizer Jane McAlevey, and others to create workshops that empower people to achieve bold progressive change through movement-building local electoral work. I have trained people in dozens of cities in person, and many more online.

I served on the board of Mass Alliance for over a year. I run a podcast on state politics, Incorruptible Massachusetts, where I interview some of the most progressive State Reps, as well as organizations involved in the progressive movement.

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

AC: The Massachusetts State House has rules, financial incentives, and a culture that breeds an undemocratic concentration of power in the hands of the Speaker. This allows financial interests to spend less on fewer races while still determining which laws pass and which flounder. I agree with Act On Mass that transparency is the single most effective first step in addressing this core issue.

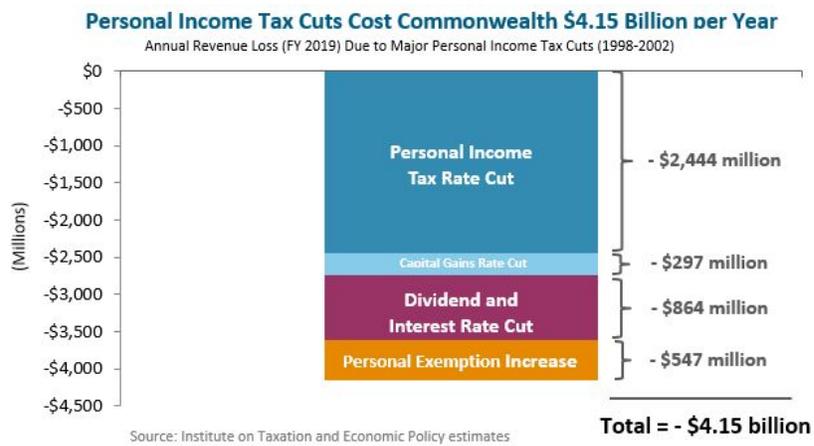
As I say in conversations with voters, "on most bills, you have no way of knowing how your own state rep is voting." We know this matters because there are bills where over half of our state reps officially co-sponsor the bill, but it still gets killed. Passing a suite of transparency bills is a key component to reducing the undue influence the Speaker has over legislation in Massachusetts.

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.).**

AC: Government is how we take care of each other. Corporations and the wealthy take advantage of our particular version of capitalism to be its primary benefactors. We need to tax corporations and the wealthy so we can provide a healthy planet, health care for all, housing as a human right, equitable education, racial justice, and a fair and transparent democracy.

In addition to those below, I support

- A tax on corporations that pay their CEO more than 100x their average worker.
- A state-wide house-flipping transfer fee on speculators who sell non-owner-occupied housing within 5 years of purchase (in addition to allowing municipalities to set transfer fees).
- Closing loopholes such as inherited capital gains tax avoidance.

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?

AC: These tax breaks rarely provide the benefits they are supposed to provide, and they create a race to the bottom where cities and states compete to give more of our tax dollars away to corporations. More often than not, when corporations pay less taxes, they are simply not contributing their fair share. If citizens aren't given a window into that, then they cannot make an informed decision about what taxes they want on the books, and are unable to change their minds when they are getting the short end of the stick. We need to empower voters to have the information they need to demand fair taxation for corporations.

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")?**

AC: YES.

I wholeheartedly support it, and I am frustrated that the last attempt at passing the tax was struck down on a technicality by the courts.

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?

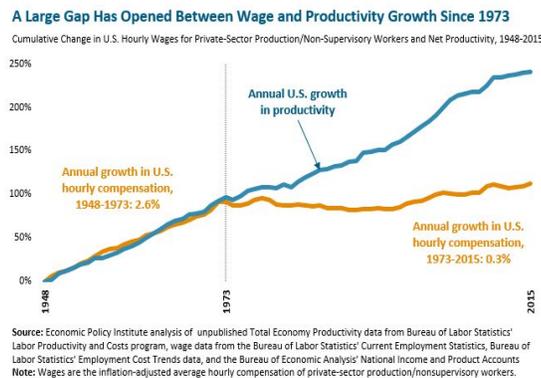
AC: I support all of these changes to our tax code. A few specific points: a. We should apply a graduated corporate minimum tax; d. I would support a partial exemption for low-income seniors on the long-term capital gains tax; e. I believe PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) should also be graduated based on a nonprofit's ability to pay.

B. Jobs and the Economy

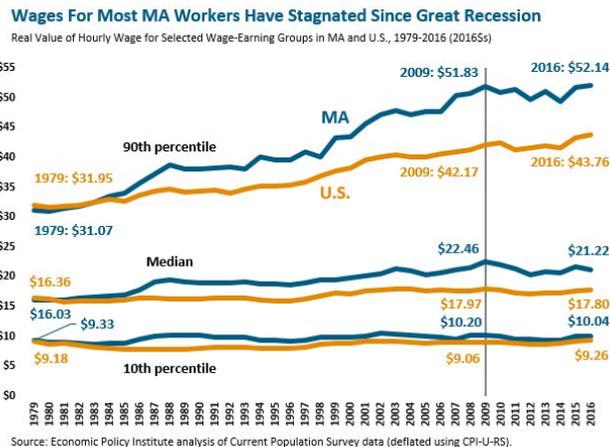
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which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

AC: High inequality is very bad for society. We are currently in a decades-long steep increase in inequality that is leaving tens of millions of people in precarious situations. I have had the pleasure of working with Les Leopold of the Labor Institute, who gives workshops around the country on precisely these issues (using some of the same graphs!).

I also worked with union organizer Jane McAlevey to apply the strategy and tactics she uses in union organizing to a local political context. Unions are crucial to both limiting the power of corporations and empowering/engaging working people in winning fights for their rights. I believe legislators should be actively supportive of union fights; I have been actively engaged in the Somerville Paraprofessionals' fight for a living wage here in Somerville.

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

AC: YES.

Minimum wage should be paid by employers, not customers. It is critical that we provide minimum universal basic support to all workers in all types of businesses. When we don't universalize, people get left out creating further room for inequality. For example, women comprise two out of every three tipped workers. By enacting a universal minimum wage we would eliminate one of the many sources of gender inequity in employment.

- 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?**

AC: YES.

The crime of wage theft is directly responsible for putting some families into poverty. I'm proud of the wage theft ordinance Somerville recently passed; the state needs to ensure that all Massachusetts residents are protected from this kind of exploitation.

- 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?**

AC: YES.

Overtime protections are critical to a healthy work-life balance and the general well-being of workers. That shouldn't change based on a person's job description.

- 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?**

AC: 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?**

AC: YES.

Unions are the strongest tool for advancing the rights and conditions of workers everywhere. I

will oppose all anti-union efforts, and as an elected official, I will work hard to expand the rights and power of unions. Elected officials have a unique ability to raise awareness around workers' rights and to engage more people in support of collective bargaining fights.

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?**

AC: YES.

Workers should not be forced to waive their right to challenge mistreatment at work in order to get a job. This legislation is particularly crucial in the midst of our current economic crisis where many people are in desperate situations and more likely to feel pressured to forfeit their rights in order to relieve economic uncertainty. Prohibiting mandatory arbitration would help them stand up to abusive practices at work.

C. Education

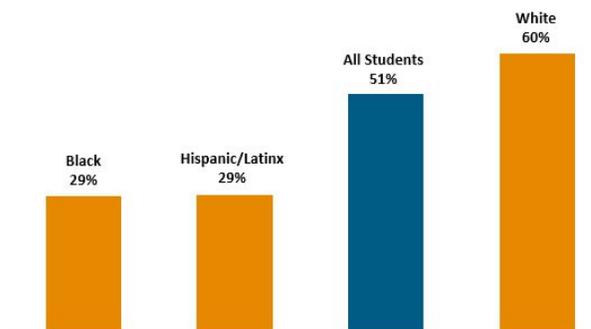
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

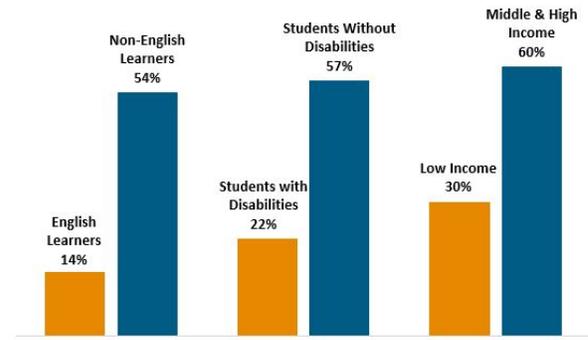
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

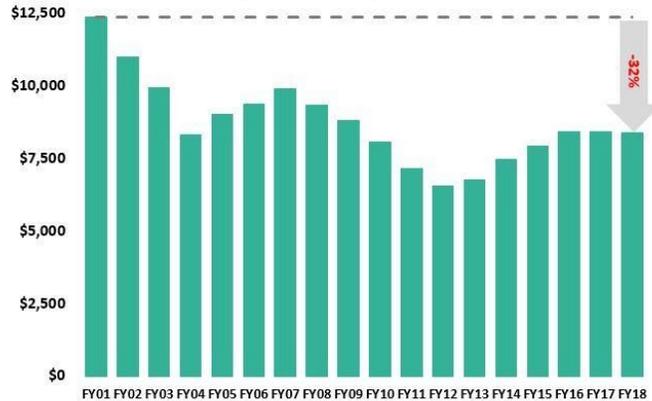


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

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.).**

AC: When I was in high school, my mother chose to spend 70% of our family income on rent in a good school district so that my sister and I could receive a decent education. The way that education is funded in the US is deeply unfair; children from wealthy families are fully supported at sufficiently-funded schools while children from low-income families attend under-funded schools.

I have a 5 year old in the public school system and am a member of the PTA. I have been actively supporting the Somerville Paraprofessionals in their fight for a living wage and for security. I will fight for equity in education, universal pre-K and child care, free public college and university, and LGBTQ+ inclusive sex education.

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

AC: YES.

Public Pre-K is vital to parents of young children. The cost of childcare is a heavy financial burden, particularly for low-income families. My family benefits from public Pre-K in Somerville, and all families in MA should have the same access.

- 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?**

AC: We must ensure that this program is fully funded each year. In this first year, some aspects are being fully funded at 14%, but additional funds for schools with low-income students are not receiving all of the funding initially promised. This is a key component of SOA's promise of equity and must be fully funded each year.

- 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.)**

AC: YES.

High stakes testing is deeply flawed. It ignores the many reasons why students may not test well, most notably the lack of funding for schools that have students who need the most support. It encourages teaching to a test rather than a more holistic approach. When it is used as a justification for taking over schools or districts, it is essentially an excuse to remove the democratic rights of low-income people by replacing their locally elected school officials with state-appointed outsiders.

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.**

AC: Charter schools should also meet public school standards for health and safety, civil rights, and labor protections.

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?**

AC: YES.

Absolutely to all of this. These requirements are particularly important to protect the mental and physical health of LGBTQ+ youth. Sex education needs to promote inclusivity and acceptance of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Sex education curricula should also teach youth about consent and healthy relationships. Inclusive sex education should go hand in hand with initiatives like gender-neutral bathrooms and "Safe School" policies that allow students to anonymously report incidents of harassment.

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

AC: YES.

All students who meet the residency requirements in the state of Massachusetts deserve to be afforded the same access to education.

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

AC: YES.

Student debt is a drag on our economy and places a disproportionate burden on the Gen Z and Millennial generations by delaying home ownership, family formation, and entrepreneurial ambitions.

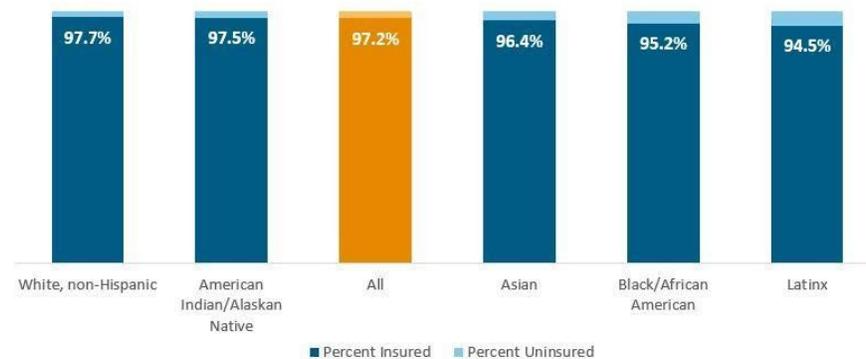
D. Health Care

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

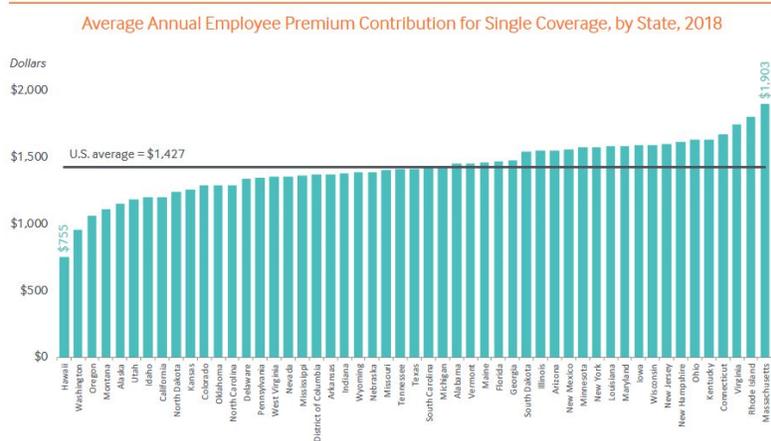
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).

AC: My mother is British, so I have always believed in a single payer healthcare system. It is excellent that Massachusetts has high rates of insurance coverage (though racial disparities are a problem), but having universal coverage does not change the fact that Massachusetts residents have to pay for unnecessary administrative costs and industry profits. In the current system everyone is gambling -- at any time each of us could be bankrupted by medical costs that are not covered for one reason or another.

While I am happy to vote in favor of "incremental" bills that help make healthcare more affordable or more accessible, I believe these are bandaids to a broken system. I intend to build the movement across the state for the systemic change we need: a Medicare for All-type system at the state level.

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

AC: YES.

Skyrocketing healthcare costs to the state are devouring the state's ability to pay for other services. Enacting single payer healthcare would make the healthcare costs predictable and ultimately affordable to the state. This is an instance where passing a state law can influence the passage of federal law. I believe that once one state implements single-payer healthcare, the rest of the country is soon to follow. Let's lead the country.

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?

AC: YES.

Women, and all people, should have the right to full autonomy over their bodies. We need to ensure that all women have access to the services they need for their own health and mental

well-being.

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?**

AC: YES.

I also think it is important that we prioritize SCSs in areas most affected by the opioid epidemic.

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

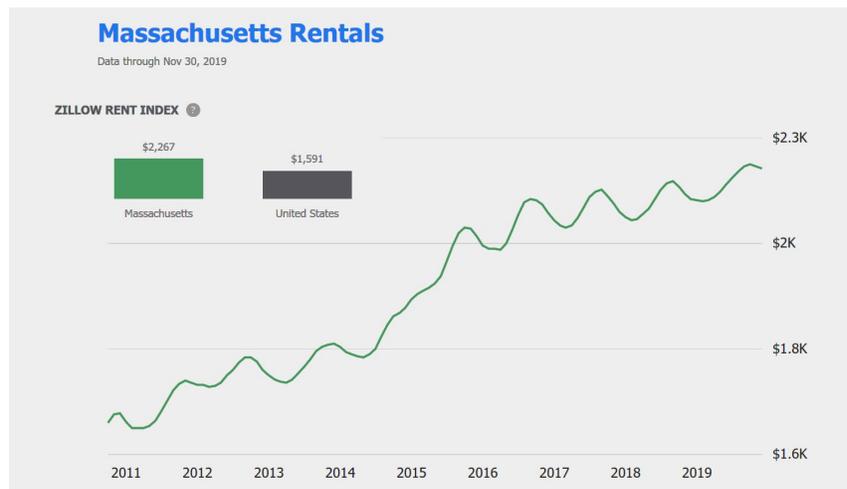
AC: I applaud the state of Massachusetts for taking the proper precautions in shutting down the state to ensure our hospitals were not overwhelmed during COVID-19. However, more should be done to protect Bay Staters who lost their jobs and their healthcare.

It is unacceptable that during a national crisis, individuals who have fallen ill are being saddled with hospital bills. We need to pass Medicare for All now, both to protect people who are sick with COVID-19 and to help those who lost their health insurance when they lost their jobs. Tying healthcare to employment is unethical and dangerous, and we are seeing that reality crystalized now. Additionally, more needs to be done to help those who lost their jobs due to this crisis. We need to freeze all rent and mortgage payments, pass relief bills that put money in people's hands, and provide more financial aid to small businesses.

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)

- 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.).**

AC: I served on the board of the University Cooperative Housing Association for two years and served as President for one year overseeing the housing for 430 low-income residents. For far too long our society has treated housing like any other commodity instead of what it is: a human right. The underlying reason for our skyrocketing rents and housing prices is that we allow housing to be used primarily for profit. The extreme cost of housing drives people to leave Massachusetts, forces residents to spend upwards of 50% of their income on rent, and all too often leads to homelessness. As State Rep, I will push for big-picture changes like social housing and community land trusts. In addition, I will fight for housing justice -- bills that can slow gentrification and allow our communities to remain intact.

- 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?**

AC: YES.

I support transfer fees as a way to fund affordable housing and slow house flipping. In addition to supporting municipalities' transfer fees, I support a state-wide transfer fee on speculators who sell non-owner occupied housing within five years of purchase.

- 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?

AC: YES.

I support Rep Connolly's "Housing for All" suite of bills. In addition, I support Tenant's Opportunity to Purchase as a way to keep people in their homes.

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?**

AC: YES.

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?**

AC: YES.

Such eviction records are the linchpin of a broader system that prevents those struggling with housing stability and homelessness from accessing safe and stable housing. Right now, the state enables an unjust power dynamic between landlords and tenants by allowing landlords to access information about tenants, but not affording the same right to tenants about their landlords. We need to balance this wrong by increasing the information accessible about landlords, and decreasing the information accessible about tenants.

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.

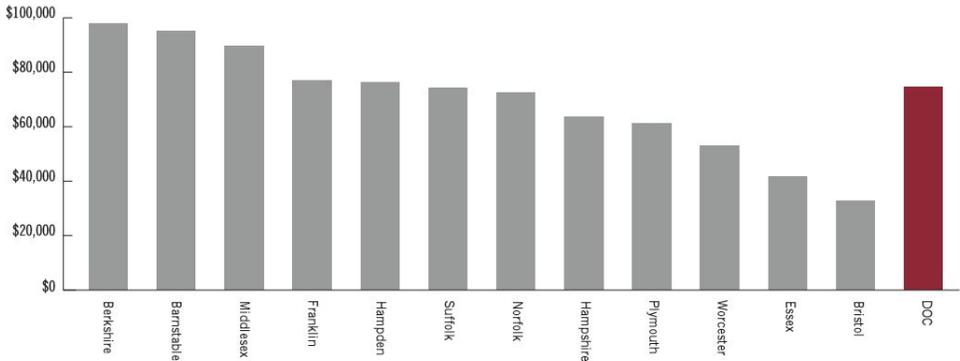
Imprisonment by Race/Ethnicity (2014)	
White imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	81
Black imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	605
Hispanic imprisonment rate (per 100,000)	351

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.).**

AC: In 2000, I was illegally arrested for protesting and spent two nights in jail. The psychological abuse and treatment I experienced there made me painfully aware that prisons are incredibly damaging to inmates, their families and communities, and even to prison staff.

Our criminal justice system is deeply broken and needs to be rethought from the ground up. Police have far too much power, our judicial system is racist in the application of punishment, and our prison system ruins people's lives and wastes public money while providing almost no benefit to society compared to other options.

I believe in restorative justice. Our criminal justice system should have the goal of healing communities, not punishment for punishment's sake.

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

AC: YES.

We need to implement strong policies that will address the systemic racism of our criminal justice system. Yes, we need actual accountability when police act outside the bounds of the law or abuse their power. But by the time someone has been wrongly shot, several other things have already gone wrong. In addition to establishing an independent review board, we need to implement other measures to prevent these shootings from happening in the first place. A few key examples include incentives for police departments to adopt mandatory trainings in de-escalation, LGBTQ+ competency, racial bias, and mental health.

- 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?

AC: These reforms are important steps we need to take towards restorative justice and systemic change. First, I stand for not just eliminating mandatory minimums for opioid-related offenses, but all mandatory minimums. Our judges should be able to consider what is best for the individual's rehabilitation and their community. Second and third, we need to take whatever steps we can to keep children and young adults out of prisons, as we know the likelihood of recidivism increases if one is in the criminal justice system at a young age. Finally, we must allow people the opportunity to reintegrate into society by eliminating life sentences without parole--a punishment that may bear no improvement to society, yet wastes of millions of dollars of tax-payer money. Current sentencing is excessive and does not reduce recidivism.

- 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?**

AC: YES.

Excessive solitary confinement is torture. The United States should not torture anyone, abroad or here at home. We need to drastically reduce the use of solitary confinement, both in length and frequency.

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?**

AC: YES.

There is no reason to prevent people from talking to their loved ones. This practice is morally wrong and destroys the fabric of our families. If we don't take steps to encourage successful reentry, then we are setting up our inmates and their communities for failure, wasting millions of dollars that could be invested in education and other policies that will strengthen low-income communities.

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?**

AC: YES.

The Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution abolishes slavery and involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime. Price gouging low-income inmates leaves them with no choice but to accept the only work they are allowed, which pays less than a dollar an hour. This is involuntary servitude. The issue of prison labor is intimately tied to the issue of price gouging. Massachusetts should lead the country in ending these practices, which are racist relics of slavery. We also must provide basic necessities. Simple steps like supplying adequate menstrual hygiene products, gender-affirming healthcare, and access to education are also important in addressing the sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and racism that plague our prison system.

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?**

AC: YES.

Massachusetts needs to stand up to our xenophobic president by becoming a sanctuary state.

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

AC: YES.

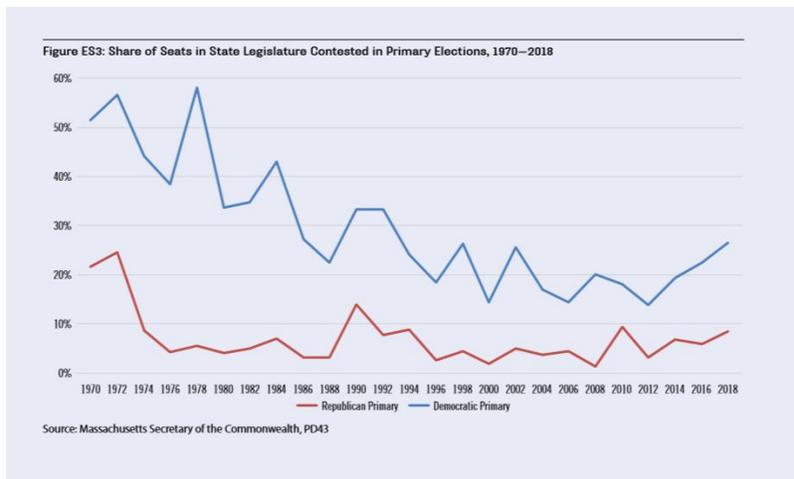
While I will work toward a future where public transit is accessible to all, right now the ability to legally drive a car is often necessary to hold down a job, visit family, get an education, and generally lead a full life. Removing this barrier is crucial to help keep our roads safe and communities thriving.

G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

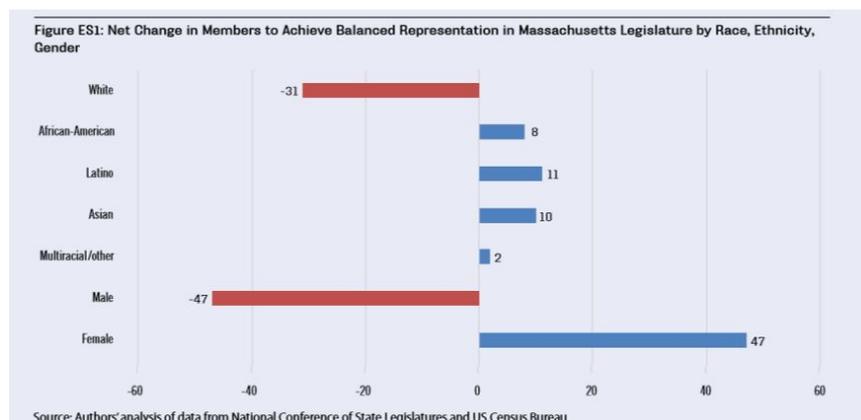
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

AC: Democracy is the issue I've been most active in. While temporarily living in California, I helped pass Measure X1, Berkeley's public financing of elections law. I was then appointed to Berkeley's Open Government and Fair Campaign Practices commissions to finalize and implement it.

In the workshops I wrote and facilitated in over 25 cities across the country, we devoted an entire section to the topic of good government and democracy. We must make it easier for progressive candidates to win, and easier for elected progressives to stay progressive.

Democracy and good government are crucial for our ability to get progressive bills passed. In my work on these issues, I have found that they are not as "sexy" as other issues and often end up deprioritized. I will prioritize fixing our broken system so that it will take less effort to pass all the other progressive legislation we want to pass.

- 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?**

AC: YES.

Transparency is not just about how legislators vote, but about how they conduct the business of government. The executive and legislative branches must provide public and transparent records so we can understand the entire process of how legislation moves through our democracy.

- 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?

AC: The lack of transparency at the State House creates many problems. Our State Reps cannot be held accountable by their constituents. Committees often determine which bills move forward and which don't, so without knowing their committee votes or the written testimony, engaged voters cannot mount a response to electeds who kill popular bills. State Reps can publicly co-sponsor -- but then secretly vote against -- a piece of legislation their constituents want. Without public records of each elected official, it is much more difficult for challengers to win an election, which is why the Massachusetts State House has the lowest rate of challenging incumbents of any state house in the country.

- 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?

AC: I see no reason not to stand for a recorded vote on everything. All my committee votes will be available on my website, as well as my reasoning for voting the way I did. I see this as an opportunity to engage the public in what is happening at the State House.

- 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?

AC: YES.

Harassment including sexual harassment is a power play to assert dominance. Its acceptance is part of a larger problem with a State House culture that accepts bullying and pressure to conform.

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?**

AC: YES.

This will be a top priority for me. In 2016, I worked with Common Cause and a coalition of groups in Berkeley, CA to pass measure X1, a public financing of elections law with 6-1 matching funds. Princeton researchers did a study of bills that went through Congress over a 20-year period and found that the needs of the bottom 90% of wage earners have a "miniscule, near-zero, statistically insignificant impact upon public policy." Money in politics is one of the main barriers to passing progressive policy. Because state policy can often speed the passage of national policy, I would like to build a coalition around amending the Massachusetts constitution to state clearly that money is not speech and corporations are not people.

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?**

AC: YES.

We need more diverse voices in our legislative offices, and parents often suffer burdens that are not well understood by either childless people or older generations. As a parent running for office during COVID-19, I feel the burden of caring for my child while running for office acutely.

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)?

AC: When voter turnout is high, progressive and pro-worker candidates and policies win. When voter turnout is low, pro-corporate and pro-wealthy candidates and policies win. We must pass a suite of legislation to help make it easier for people to vote. This suite should include the initiatives mentioned above, as well as initiatives expanding access to polling places in under-served communities and consolidating election days (e.g. putting the state Democratic primary on the same day as the Presidential primary).

9. **Ranked Choice Voting. Do you support the 2020 ballot initiative to adopt ranked**

choice voting for state, county, and (non-presidential) federal elections?

AC: YES.

I first became an RCV convert in college when I studied the mathematics of different voting systems for my math degree. RCV not only has a good balance of mathematically beneficial properties, it also instills the sense that each person's vote will matter in the final outcome. I have been a strong proponent ever since.

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?**

AC: YES.

Democracy deserves to be kept healthy. People go to the doctor for a checkup once a year; we need to do routine checkups on our elections.

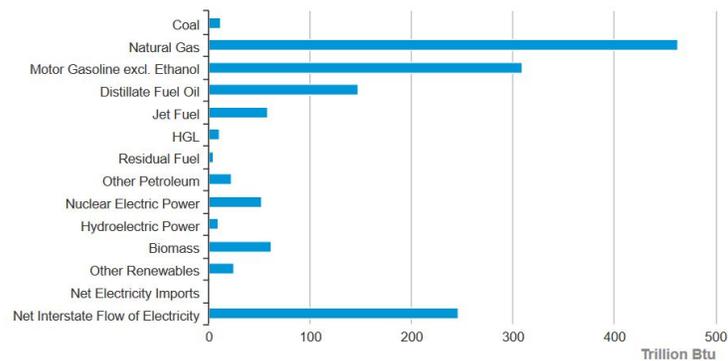
H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

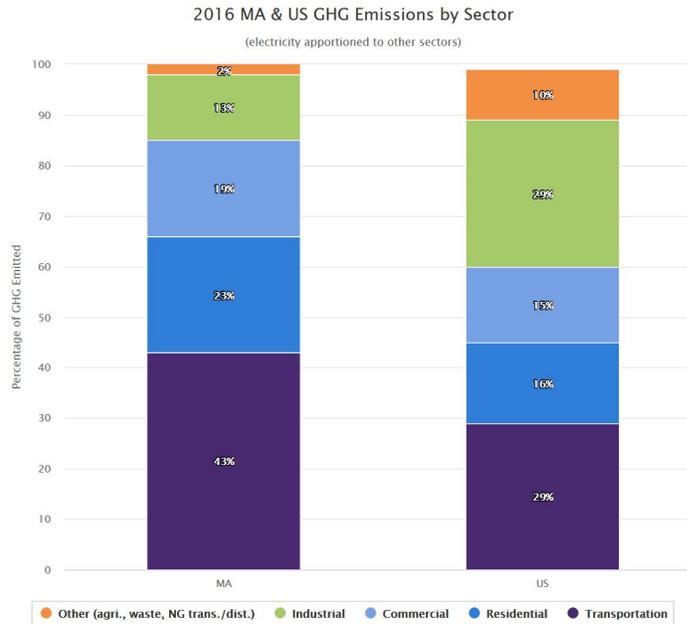
Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.

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.).**

AC: I have been a zero-waster and climate activist since the 90s. If we don't take unprecedented action, the human race may be extinct in 1000 years.

Massachusetts needs a robust Green New Deal. Committing to 100% renewables means divesting from fossil fuels, converting our electricity to renewables, converting government transportation to electric, requiring new developments to meet net-zero emissions standards, and converting all existing buildings and transportation to renewables.

In Somerville, 2/3 of our carbon emissions are from buildings, and 2/3 of our housing is rented (the owners have less incentive to weatherize). Tackling building emissions is the most effective thing we can do in my district. We have to require the retrofitting of all housing and commercial buildings. We also need to replace or upgrade private transportation to electricity.

This has the promise of job-creation and an economic boon for working people, creating tens of thousands of jobs.

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

AC: YES.

While the triad of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle are each important, they are not of equal efficacy. Using reusable instead of disposable or one-time use products is a far more effective way to conserve resources and reduce waste than recycling is. It is crucial that we launch an education campaign to this effect. I also support legislation aimed at reducing the amount of unnecessary packaging, especially plastic.

- 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?

AC: YES.

We will have to build the capacity to meet our energy needs in MA through renewables like wind and solar. Making solar accessible to low-income communities can help them build wealth while also building our renewable energy capacity.

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

AC: YES.

Committing to 100% renewables will put teeth behind the efforts to pass every future piece of environmental legislation. We can't wait until we have every plan perfected to make this commitment.

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?**

AC: YES.

Government agencies should be required to consider environmental justice in their decision-making. Infrastructure like the East Boston Eversource Station negatively and disproportionately impacts low-income communities and people of color. These communities experience more environmental disruption and increased exposure to pollution than their wealthier and white analogues, leading to higher rates of diseases like asthma and cancer.

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

AC: YES.

Any new fossil fuel infrastructure will then incentivize the use of more fossil fuel for decades to "pay for" the initial investment in the infrastructure. We must stop the expansion of gas pipelines and developments like the Weymouth Compressor Station. We also need to discuss existing fossil fuel infrastructure. COVID-19 has given us an unexpected glimpse of the dangers of a system that cannot be shut off. Our state legislature needs to stand up against the pressures of the fossil industry and work to phase out existing infrastructure. During this transition, it is important that we protect the economic security of workers in the fossil fuel industry, by providing a just transition for workers.

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?**

AC: YES.

I support carbon pricing as long as its effects on low-income and marginalized communities are mitigated. Carbon pricing both incentivizes people to use less fossil fuel, and it raises the funds we desperately need to move to renewables.

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?**

AC: YES.

We should work toward making public transit fare-free. Using public transit reduces our greenhouse gas emissions and lifts the burden from low-income residents who often have longer commutes. I worked on Jivan Sobrihno-Wheeler's campaign for Cambridge City Council, and free public transit was one of his main policy proposals.

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?**

AC: YES.

We need to empower local communities to pass the measures they need to improve their infrastructure. Transportation is as much a local issue as it is a state issue, and we need to provide local governments the tools they require to repair their deteriorated systems and provide jobs.

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.

AC: If it were up to the people of Massachusetts, we would already have most of the policies listed here. Moneyed interests ensure that bills we want are quietly killed and no one knows why. If they have the money and we have the people, the only way to get progressive policies passed is to drastically increase the number of people engaged in the political process.

We cannot pass a Massachusetts Green New Deal without a movement behind it. We cannot pass Medicare for All without a movement behind it. I am dedicated to building that movement, empowering the voices of the disenfranchised, the vulnerable, and those not engaged in the political process.

Elected officials have a unique ability to engage people in politics. I will use my platform as an elected official to build the movement we need to save our planet and provide dignity to all.