



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS  
2020 LEGISLATIVE  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Date:** 5/16/2020

**Candidate:** Christine Barber

**Office Sought:** State Representative, 34th 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](http://progressivemass.com/questionnaire))*

## **I. About You**

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

**CB:** I am running for re-election to continue to fight for progressive policies at the state level. As a long-time advocate before running for office, it's important to me to listen to people in the community and most impacted by policies, and work to pass progressive policy at the state level. My record of results on issues related to health care, environment, equality, education, civil rights and criminal justice shows that progressive wins are possible when we stick to our values and work hard.

My top priorities remain: housing affordability and tenant protections; access to affordable health care for all; and climate justice.

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

**CB:** Over my last three terms, I have worked to reach out to and listen to many different groups in my community and throughout the state, and work collaboratively with them on issues to bring greater justice and equity. I have developed strong relationships and been able to pass progressive policy changes. As public health and health policy expert, I approach most issues through the social determinants of health, in which jobs, housing, discrimination and the environment all contribute to our overall well-being. This expertise serves me well in representing all of the people of the 34th Middlesex district as well as highlighting the disparities that exist within the system for our most vulnerable populations.

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

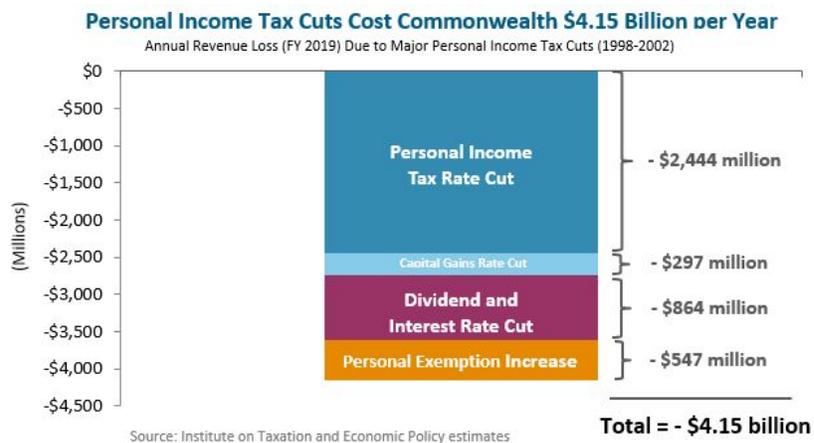
**CB:** In most cases, passing progressive policy means large-scale change. We need to work together and listen to each other, and commit to getting progressive policy passed. I have worked to bring together other House members on a number of progressive issues, and I work with outside advocacy organizations to create an environment where we can win: clear messaging, keeping people with different goals working together, and smart policy choices.

## 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.).**

**CB:** Massachusetts has spent the last few decades shifting the tax burden away from corporations and the wealthy on to working people. This has created a budget where we are constantly choosing between critical needs, rather than putting out a strong vision for supporting our residents. I strongly support closing corporate tax loopholes and taking measures to shift the tax burden to those who have greater ability to pay. I have worked on a number of policies to create a more progressive revenue structure - including the Fair Share amendment and other proposals to close corporate tax loopholes.

During the recent Transportation revenue debate, I actively worked on a corporate tax increase called GILTI (Global Intangible Low-Taxed Income), which would tax the profit corporations hold in off-shore accounts at a greater rate. I am continuing to work on this idea as we attempt to address revenue shortfalls due to the COVID crisis.

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

- 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")?**

**CB:** YES.

I strongly support the fair share amendment and have worked on this issue since it was introduced.

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

**CB:** It is imperative that we raise new revenue for our state's critical services, while shifting the burden from the backs of working families. Specifically, I support re-coupling the MA tax code to the federal GILTI provision, to tax the off-shore profits of large, multinational corporations that do business in MA. During the recent transportation revenue debate, I worked on a proposal to tax GILTI as a way to raise needed funds. I continue to strategize about how to successfully move forward on GILTI.

## B. Jobs and the Economy

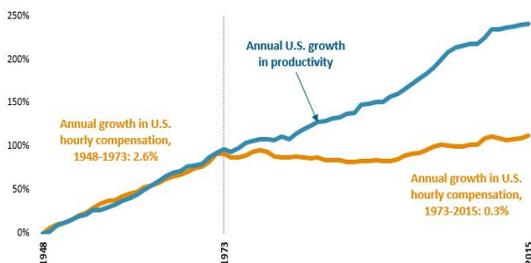
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which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

**CB:** I strongly support fair wages and ensuring worker protections including paid sick time and paid leave. I have cosponsored and worked on a number of these bills - particularly the paid family leave bill last session, and a paid sick time bill we are pushing in response to COVID-19.

In particular, I have focused on the wages of home health aides and early education providers - professions most often held by women and people of color. I worked with advocates to increase the rate home health aides are paid in the last budget. I am a member of the Early Education Workforce Council, which is tasked with increasing the wages and supports for educators, and I filed a bill to create pay equity between center- and home-based early education providers.

Finally, one reason that wages have stagnated is the exorbitant cost of health care for most employers and employees. I have continued to work on methods to address this challenge - from supporting a single-payer system to my bill to require accountability and affordability for prescription drugs, a major driver of our health costs.

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

**CB:** YES.

Yes, and I cosponsored and have worked on this bill.

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

Yes, and I have cosponsored and worked on this bill.

- 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?**

**CB:** 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?**

**CB:** 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?**

**CB:** YES.

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?

**CB:** YES.

### C. Education

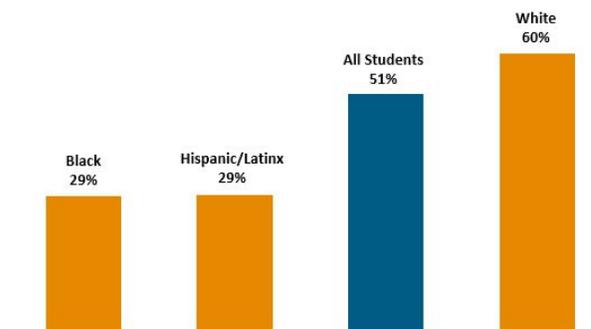
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

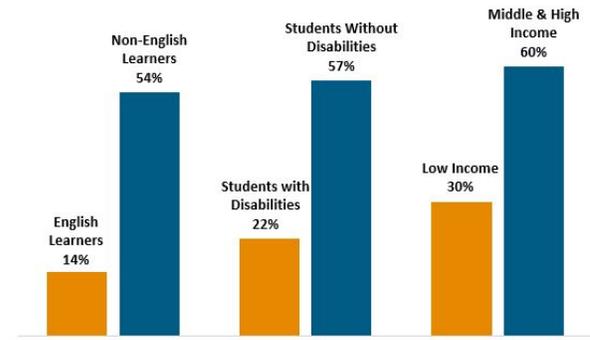
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

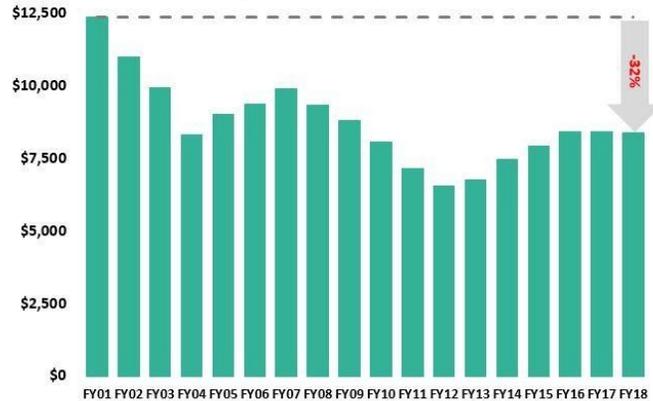


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### 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.).**

**CB:** I strongly believe in the importance of investing in our education system, from early childhood through higher ed. This includes equitably funding education across the Commonwealth. I'm proud of my work with my colleagues and many advocates to pass the Student Opportunity Act, but there is much more to do to ensure that it is implemented. I strongly support the rights of educators (and all workers) to unionize, and I support fully funding our commitments to cities and towns.

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

**CB:** YES.

I support expanding pre-K programs in public schools across the Commonwealth. These programs should have standards, be full-day, and receive state funding. Teachers should be part of the teachers union, like any other public school teacher. Somerville has a strong model and I support working with parents and educators to find ways to expand pre-K in other communities. Beyond pre-K, as a member of the Early Education Workforce Commission, I am working to increase pay and address pay inequities for early childhood educators. I have also filed legislation to level the reimbursement threshold for family- and center-based providers.

- 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?**

**CB:** I was proud to vote to pass the Student Opportunity Act last year—a bill that will improve equity in education across the Commonwealth. I've been disappointed to see how the Baker administration has refused to prioritize funding increases for low-income districts, which was the hallmark of this bill. I've been working with my colleagues to ensure that the timeline for implementation of the SOA, which was carefully crafted, is followed. I've also been working with my local school districts to make sure their needs are addressed. I also continue to advocate for progressive revenue options, like passing the Fair Share Amendment, which will

help us to meet this long-term commitment.

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.)

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor of H431, An Act to place a moratorium on high stakes testing and I submitted written testimony in support of this bill. Testing does not provide the information or tools we need to actually address the inequity in our system. It absorbs a significant amount of money and time from school districts, affecting the quality of student learning. I continue to advocate for a moratorium on testing.

5. **Charter Schools. In 2016, MA voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public school districts.**

- a. Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? **YES.**
- b. Would you support legislation to bring greater accountability to charter schools by requiring them to adhere to the same disclosure and disciplinary standards as public school districts? **YES.**

**CB:** I actively campaigned against this ballot question. I also support prohibiting for-profit charter schools, and allowing charter school staff to unionize.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am a proud cosponsor of H410, The Healthy Youth Act, and have supported it through written testimony and verbally among my colleagues. Medically-accurate, inclusive, and age-appropriate sex ed is a critical piece of public health, and I'm especially supportive of the requirement to include education on healthy relationships and boundaries for our students.

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

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor of Rep. Provost's bill to grant in-state tuition to undocumented students. This a common sense measure, and I've been advocating for it throughout my tenure in the House.

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

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor of H1221, An Act to guarantee debt-free public higher education and The Cherish Act, because I believe that higher education is a right, and we must ensure that debt does not become a burden, especially for public institutions. I've submitted testimony on both bills, and frequently advocate for this with my colleagues.

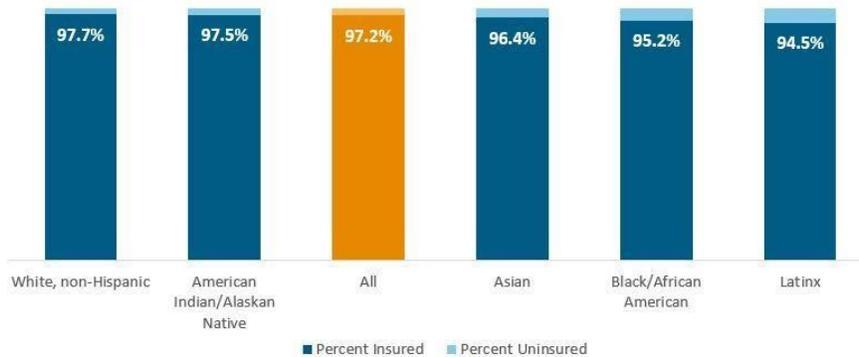
## D. Health Care

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

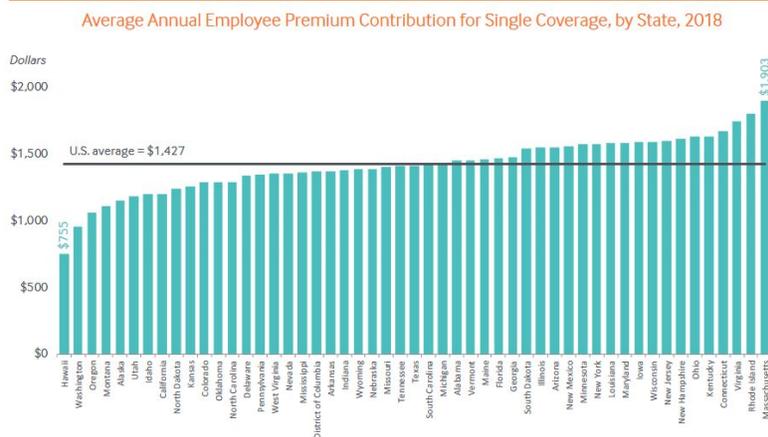
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).**

**CB:** I have spent my career working toward health justice through campaigns to improve coverage and access to affordable health care for all. For me, the social determinants of health are the underlying way I address nearly all policies, including climate justice, poverty and decarceration. A number of years ago, I was a staffer on the team that wrote the Massachusetts Health Reform, particularly working on Medicaid expansion and ConnectorCare, and then worked for a number of years as a health advocate working on the Affordable Care Act.

In my work in the State House, I have continued to prioritize health justice. I led a group of legislators to stand up to Governor Baker's proposal to cut over one hundred thousand people off MassHealth by rolling back the Medicaid Expansion, a proposal we successfully blocked. I recently worked with the Children's Mental Health Campaign to draft and ultimately pass a bill that requires health insurers to provide better access and information to mental health services. I am the lead sponsor on a bill to create prescription drug affordability and accountability and regulate the pharmaceutical industry, as part of a large Prescription Drug Affordability Coalition. I support single payer health care and filed a bill to create a public option, Masshealth buy-in program to start Massachusetts on that path.

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

**CB:** YES.

I am a co-sponsor on legislation to do that.

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am a co-sponsor of the Roe Act, which would address this issue. I continue to work closely with advocates to build support for these politics in the legislature.

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am a strong supporter of SCS, cosponsored the bill to do so, and testified in-person at the hearing. I've also been talking with other legislators of the necessity to create SCSs for public health.

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

**CB:** Overall, I think that the state's response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has been adequate, yet large gaps persist. I'm proud of several aspects of our response, including passing the eviction moratorium, funding programs like RAFT and homeless services, and the work that I and my legislative colleagues have done to support our constituents in getting unemployment benefits and food resources. Locally, I've also been impressed at the response

in Somerville and Medford, and am grateful for my colleagues in both cities.

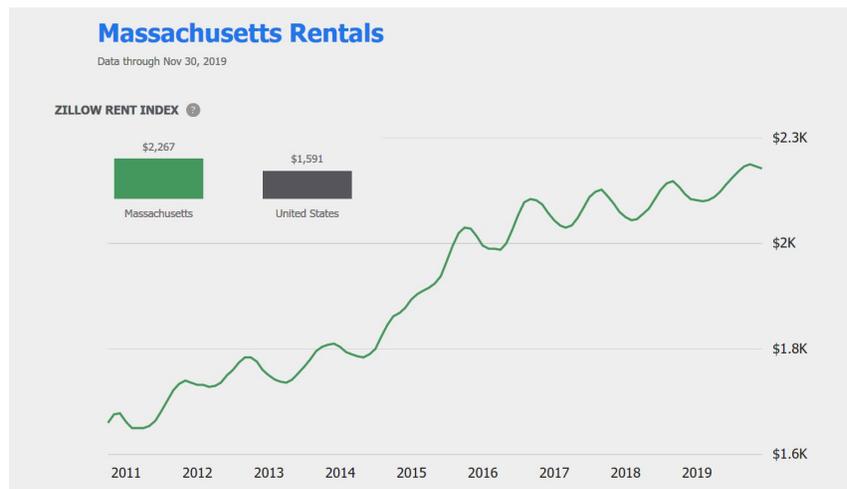
However, I feel that the Baker administration should have taken bolder actions earlier in this crisis. As we have seen globally, this pandemic has exposed the cracks in our safety net that have always existed, yet are now on an even greater magnitude. Since this crisis began, my office has helped dozens of constituents with needs in applying for unemployment, facing housing insecurity, issues with health care equity, or food insecurity. These are not new challenges, but more are exposed due to the limited social safety net in Massachusetts.

I've been advocating for several solutions to support the most vulnerable communities during this crisis. I filed a bill to provide financial support to undocumented immigrants who pay taxes through ITIN numbers, who were left out of the CARES Act. Some of the other issues I've been working on include: allowing grocery delivery for SNAP recipients, translation of the unemployment application and other critical services into other languages, pay increases for our essential workers, and ensuring that MassHealth has adequate resources to support a rising number of applicants. I am working to decarcerate those near the end of sentences or with underlying medical conditions. I will continue to advocate for these issues and other critical services, and I will continue to push the Governor to prioritize safety and public health over big business as we slowly reopen our state.

## 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.).**

**CB:** Housing affordability is a major crisis in my district and across the Commonwealth. We need to take a number of steps to ensure fair and affordable access to housing.

Creating more affordable housing is a top priority. As a member of the Housing Committee, I have introduced legislation to require communities to zone for multifamily housing in communities accessible by public transportation. I strongly support a number of tenant protections bills, and was proud to support the recent moratorium on evictions and foreclosures during COVID-19. I have worked to ensure programs like MRVP and RAFT have seen funding increases in recent budgets.

In addition to creating more housing that is affordable and strengthening tenant protections, we must also ensure that it is fair, accessible, and equitable. I have introduced legislation to update the Fair Housing law to prohibit exclusionary zoning, which communities use to deny affordable housing developments. Working with disability advocates, I have authored legislation that would update the Massachusetts Building Code to align with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring more accessible housing and workplaces for people with disabilities. I have also introduced legislation that would allow Accessory Dwelling Units (in-law apartments) statewide, to ensure housing for people with disabilities and the elderly.

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

I was proud to join with the Somerville delegation to sponsor a home rule petition to allow Somerville to enact such a fee. I also support Rep. Connolly's bill to allow such fees in any municipality without home rule approval.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am actively working on bills to allow for municipalities to implement rent control and other tenant protections. We also need to implement some of these proposals on a statewide basis to ensure that housing is affordable in all communities.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am the lead sponsor of this legislation and it is a top priority for me as a member of the Housing Committee. I have also introduced legislation to update the Fair Housing law to prohibit exclusionary zoning, which communities use to deny affordable housing developments. Both bills are supported by CHAPA and other affordable housing organizations.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am proud to co-sponsor and advocate for eviction sealing legislation.

## 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

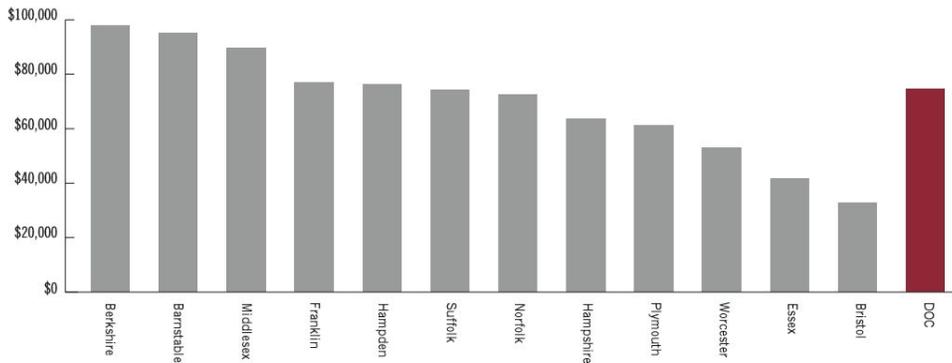
Racial/Ethnic Disparity in Imprisonment (2014)	
Black : white ratio	7.5
Hispanic : white ratio	4.3

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.).**

**CB:** Our state's economy and systems work only for some. We need to be proactive about implementing policies that combat systemic racism and put forward policies that create greater equity. As a State Representative, I have worked to amplify the measures that would work towards these goals by working with advocacy groups to further the cause of racial and social justice in areas of environmental, reproductive, health, and criminal justice.

Most recently, I have worked with immigrant advocacy groups to improve translation and language access on unemployment applications. I am also lead sponsor on an effort in to allow for all Massachusetts citizens, regardless of immigration status, to be able to apply for a Massachusetts Driver's License. I have partnered with a large coalition including a local nonprofit group, The Welcome Project, to get this crucial legislation done.

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

**CB:** YES.

- 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?

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

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

**CB:** YES.

As a Co-Chair of the Justice-Involved Women Task Force, I have actively worked to improve visitation policies to ensure incarcerated persons can maintain connections to family and friends.

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?

**CB:** YES.

I have addressed this issue specifically as lead sponsor of the Menstrual Equity bill, which would provide menstrual products to incarcerated people for free.

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?

**CB:** YES.

I am a proud cosponsor of the Safe Communities Act, and have supported it through written testimony, standing alongside the sponsors during the powerful hearing, and speaking in support of the bill publically and with my colleagues in leadership. This is a critical piece of legislation, which would ensure that everyone's civil rights are upheld--regardless of immigration status. This bill is a top priority for me.

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

**CB:** YES.

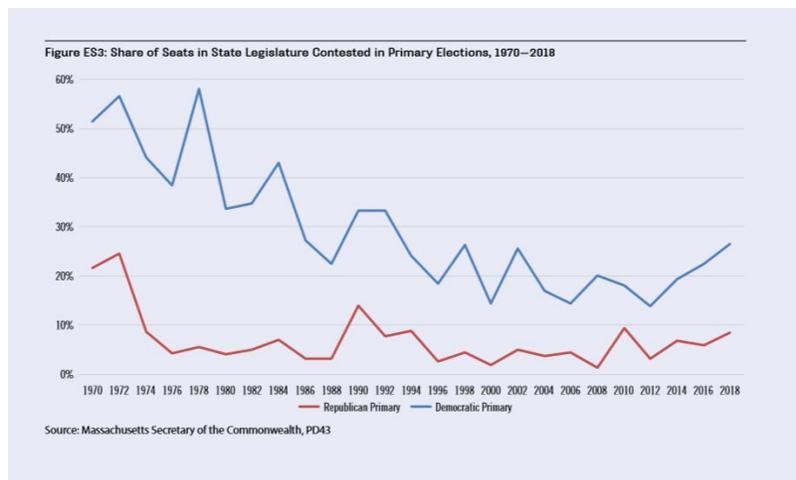
I am the lead sponsor of the Work and Family Mobility Act. It is one of my top priorities this session, and I work very closely with the Driving Families Coalition. It is critical, for safety, public health, and our economy, that all qualified drivers can apply for a driver's license, regardless of immigration status. This is a common sense bill that separates state drivers license eligibility from federal immigration status. It is imperative that everyone, including undocumented immigrants, have the opportunity to drive to work, to the grocery store, or drive their child to the doctor without fear of deportation every time they get behind the wheel. I worked hard to get this bill voted favorably out of committee for the first time in the bill's history, and am working hard to make it law this session alongside the grassroots Driving Families Forward coalition.

## G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

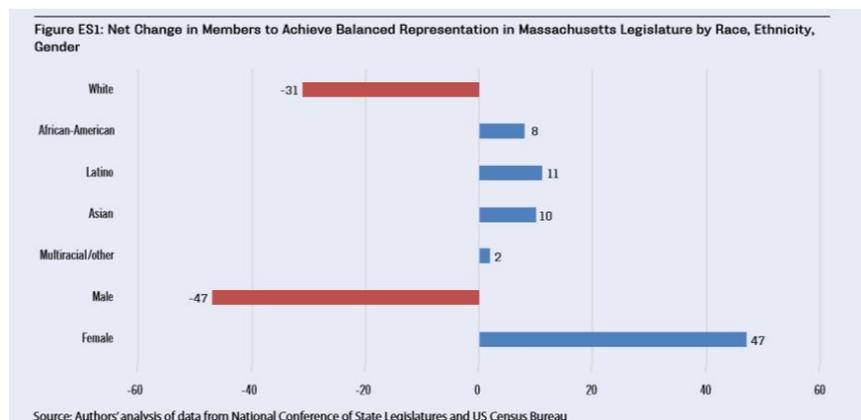
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

**CB:** Government works best when we listen to and engage with the needs of those in the community, particularly the most vulnerable and those affected by policies. I work to outreach different groups in my district - I hold regular office hours at various places, including public housing developments and with local organizations serving English-language learners and people with disabilities. I regularly send a newsletter, provide many updates on social media and my website about my work, and attend as many community events as possible to interact with constituents. My work is stronger when I hear from people in the community, and I work hard to do that.

- 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?**

**CB:** 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?

**CB:** This will also require funding, as it will include greater staff time and infrastructure.

- 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?

**CB:** I support transparency and am committed to making sure we pass progressive policies. When the strategy to move an issue forward means standing for a roll call vote for an issue I support, I do it.

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

I strongly support processes to ensure all allegations of harassment are treated with seriousness and addressed as necessary. After too long, I was pleased that the House took major steps to address workplace and sexual harassment, including the implementation of sexual harassment trainings for all staff and Reps and the hiring of a HR team to take all accusations seriously.

However, we still have considerable work to do. I am committed to fostering environments that make people feel comfortable coming forward without fear of retaliation and helping to create a more respectful environment.

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

**CB:** YES.

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?

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor and have worked closely on this bill.

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

a. Election Day Registration?

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

c. No-fault absentee voting?

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

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

**CB:** YES.

I signed the petition and encouraged others to do so through my social media channels.

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?

**CB:** YES.

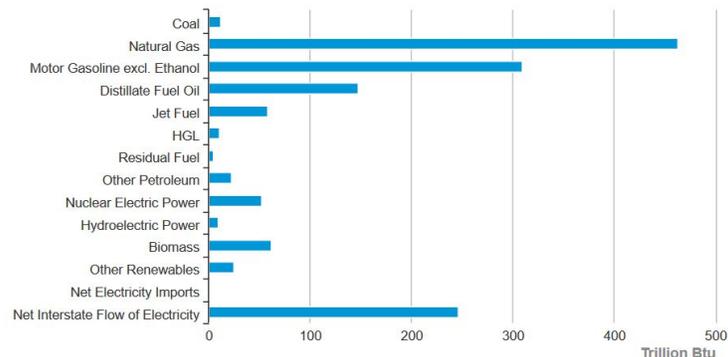
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

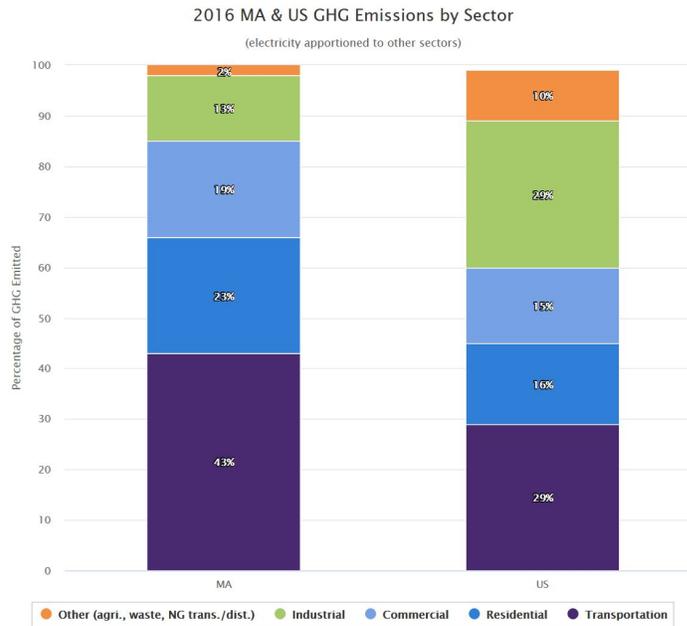
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

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.).**

**CB:** Climate justice is one of my top priorities and an area where Massachusetts cannot wait to act. This session, I proposed “An act to promote the transition to clean transportation fleets” along with Rep. Hecht, which is included in the Massachusetts Green New Deal Now, that would transition all publicly-owned vehicles, including buses and municipal vehicles, to zero-emissions vehicles. Because transportation-related emissions are one of the biggest sources of greenhouse gases from Massachusetts, taking this step would have a tremendous impact. To this end, one of my major priorities since I have been elected is ensuring the state fulfills its obligation to build the Green Line Extension to provide needed public transportation in my community, and take thousands of cars off the road. In addition, I have strongly supported bills to make it easier for residents (including renters) to have solar panels, and will continue to support promoting clean, renewable energy sources. I have been the lead sponsor on bills to address gas leaks, with the goal of reducing our dependence on natural gas infrastructure, for the past few sessions.

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

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor of H771, An Act reducing plastic bag pollution, and submitted written testimony to support the bill at the time of its hearing. This bill is now before the House Ways & Means Committee, of which I am a member, and I continue to advocate for it as one piece of a strong environmental agenda. Both cities in my district have plastic bag bans, and I am working hard to make that a statewide mandate.

- 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?**

**CB:** YES.

I proudly cosponsored H2843, An Act removing barriers to solar for low-income communities. Solar energy is a necessary piece of a renewable energy portfolio, which is absolutely critical to protect our planet from the present threat of climate change. In any piece of climate legislation, I focus on equity and environmental justice--and it is especially important that we include low-income communities in the solutions, as they have been disproportionately impacted by the effects.

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

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor of H2836, An Act Powering Massachusetts with 100 percent renewable energy, along with several other bills that would put us on a path to 100% renewable energy. I submitted written testimony in support of H2836 and continue to advocate for it to my colleagues. This type of transition is entirely possible and necessary to stave off the worst effects of climate change. This bill is also very popular among my constituents, and I continue to have positive conversations with people in my district about this. I recently signed a pledge to stand for a roll call on this bill if it is brought to the floor of the House.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am a cosponsor of several pieces of legislation that would codify environmental justice into state law, including H761 and H826, both of which I submitted written testimony in support of. Environmental justice is a critical piece of public policy--and in order to be effective and consistent, it must be included in law. I am hopeful that we will pass a comprehensive climate change bill this session, and I am in support of including a provision to codify environmental justice.

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

**CB:** YES.

I strongly oppose any expansion of gas pipelines. Pipelines present a danger to the environment and to the safety of the communities they run under. There are many viable, and more climate-friendly, alternatives to power our state. I have cosponsored H2916 and H2864, which would prevent ratepayers from paying for expansions, which I believe would also lessen the incentives for gas companies to build pipelines, since the cost would be solely on them. I am also a cosponsor of H2849, the FUTURE Act, which would make gas companies transition to modern renewable energy by 2050—a transition away from pipelines. I'm also the lead sponsor of H2848, An Act ensuring gas safety and consumer fairness, which would keep us and our environment safe from gas leaks while we transition.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I am a proud cosponsor of H2810, which would put a price on carbon pollution—a key piece to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. I submitted written testimony in support of this bill

when it was heard before Committee, and have also heard from many constituents who care deeply about this bill. Earlier this year, I worked with one of my constituents, a recent Somerville High School grad, to write an op-ed in support of carbon pricing: <https://somerville.wickedlocal.com/news/20191113/column-we-agree---its-time-for-bold-equitable-climate-policy>

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?**

**CB:** YES.

I strongly oppose MBTA and RTA fare increases, and am fully supportive of fare-free public transit. Expanding and improving public transportation is a key tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an equitable way—and also promotes walking and cycling as additional tools to transition away from cars. I have publicly opposed fare increases, and have written letters in opposition when this has been proposed by the MBTA. During this year’s debate on transportation revenue in the House, I was a strong advocate for increasing funding for the MBTA.

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?**

**CB:** YES.

Regional transportation funding is an important tool to raise much needed revenue for our transportation system. During this year’s debate on transportation revenue in the House, I supported an amendment to the Bond bill to allow cities and towns to implement regional ballot initiatives to raise money for local projects. I’m also the lead sponsor of H1759, An Act to improve the local infrastructure development program. This bill complements regional ballot initiatives. This bill would make it easier for property owners, using smart growth principles, to help finance public infrastructure improvements with tax-exempt bonds alongside municipalities.

### **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.

**CB:** These are incredibly challenging times, but we have an opportunity to support justice and equity in our communities. Since the COVID crisis, I have worked to address issues affecting the most vulnerable, including seniors, immigrants, essential workers, and incarcerated people. With the lack of leadership at the federal level, it is even more critical for Massachusetts to lead. I’m focused on passing drivers licenses for all, greater protections for abortion through the Roe Act, tenant protections and housing affordability, and climate justice this session. I look forward to continuing to partners with progressive activists to get this done.