



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS  
2020 LEGISLATIVE  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Date:** 5/10/2020

**Candidate:** Catia Sharp

**Office Sought:** State Representative, 27th Middlesex

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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?**

**CS:** I want to go to the State House because I want our government to better reflect our highest hopes for the type of community we want to be. I have spent my career – my life – taking on the hardest problems, and I know together we can continue to ensure that Somerville and our state can affordably, sustainably, and meaningfully meet the needs of our diverse citizens.

I sought out a Sheriff's office to work in after graduate school because I had seen the heartbreaking condition prisoners face every day, and I wanted to make immediate changes that would benefit people today. These environments are fraught because of an old-fashioned culture that is not progressive at all - our corrections system is designed to punish, not to rehabilitate. But to change that culture, you must speak with the officers and inmates, hear their perspectives and work to build a common understanding of justice that is focused on outcomes that everyone can agree on, like reducing crime, and show people how programs like diversion to housing and healthcare services can accomplish that goal. That's exactly why I want to go into the General Court: because it's similarly a place with an old-fashioned culture antithetical to progressive values. But that culture can change; it just takes a temperament which makes people feel heard about their values and concerns, and willing to spend the time and do the work of finding common understandings where real change can be made.

If I am elected and have the privilege to serve my district and commonwealth, my top 3 legislative policies would be:

- Ensure housing as a human right. I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to build a life here regardless of income bracket. Affordability is a crisis that affects people across the income spectrum.
- Increase funding and reliability of public transportation. A thriving and equitable economy requires the infrastructure to support workers. Our current system fails to do this. I know personally: I have taken the subway, the bus, walked, and biked to work at various times. To do this, we must focus on investing in our infrastructure, creating safer alternative transportation options with accessibility in mind, and fighting for transit-oriented development.
- Focus policies on protecting our most vulnerable populations. I have experienced the difficulty of trying to get a family member with a mental health condition the treatment they need, and how quickly non-criminal problems like this can devolve into police issues. I will seek to strengthen the health care, housing, and anti-poverty programs that can prevent tragic outcomes that can result when police are left to handle problems that aren't theirs to solve. I have always sought to reform the system from the inside out, because culture change is difficult but necessary to improve the equity of our systems.

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

**CS:** I have intentionally spent my career working in state and local government with the conviction that with the right programs and bold leadership, government can enact meaningful initiatives and drive systems change that directly impact the lives of our constituents for the better.

In Governor Patrick's budget office, I took on program efficacy, making sure that government services lived up to their promises. I created feedback loops to produce data and evidence for program effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) so that we could make better decisions. The programs I worked on provided housing and health services to almost half of the states chronically homeless citizens. I managed the Infrastructure Investment Initiative (I-Cubed) program which was designed to harness new economic activity that expands the state tax base to fund public infrastructure. I developed an understanding of the contours of bad deals with developers, and oversaw tools to measure and enforce compliance with deals that are good for the taxpayers. I have also seen failures in some of these contexts to be inclusive of our communities of color and those with more limited means (e.g.

the Seaport redevelopment in Boston). I will apply my knowledge and understanding of these principles to promote policies to ensure our state can affordably, sustainably and meaningfully meet the needs of our diverse citizens.

As a Government Innovation Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School, I investigated the root causes of mass incarceration and failures of our criminal justice system. With a system that was designed for punishment, and built within the context of a racist and inequitable society, we continue to imprison our most vulnerable populations, destroying lives, devastating communities, and perpetuating inequity and injustice.

My dream is to create a social fabric with a collective conscience – a coherent, system-wide strategic management practice that sets a goal (reduce mass incarceration, inequities, etc.) and then works, across all actors, to divert people to preventative measures at every step. I see the criminal justice system as the proverbial canary in the coal mine: an indicator as to where the holes in the social safety net are. Root causes of incarceration - poverty, lack of access to education and opportunity, lack of access to health and behavioral healthcare, and lack of affordable housing - are the very places we should focus on patching together that safety net. Now, at the Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission, I am creating mental health and substance use programs that can prevent unnecessary arrest and hospitalization.

I rush into the hardest culture change projects because I have seen what works and what doesn't. The House of Representatives is that kind of place. I know how to craft legislation that will produce the data legislators need to hold the administration accountable to the changes and values progressives hold dear. I also know what to look for when holding them to account. I am excited about the too-little discussed aspect of this job, which is oversight: for example, I know how jails operate and want to push DOC to implement the Criminal Justice Reform bill.

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

**CS:** I believe Somerville and the state should be at the forefront of enacting progressive policies on issues like housing affordability, transportation, and protecting our most vulnerable residents. Unfortunately, despite our national recognition as a progressive "blue" state, passing progressive policies at the State House are often blocked by career politicians with perceived power and influence, and those representing more conservative parts of the state with views and values that don't reflect the overwhelming majority of our residents. The Speaker certainly has too much power to make decisions about what bills don't make it to the floor, and there is far too little information in the public sphere about why bills die in committee.

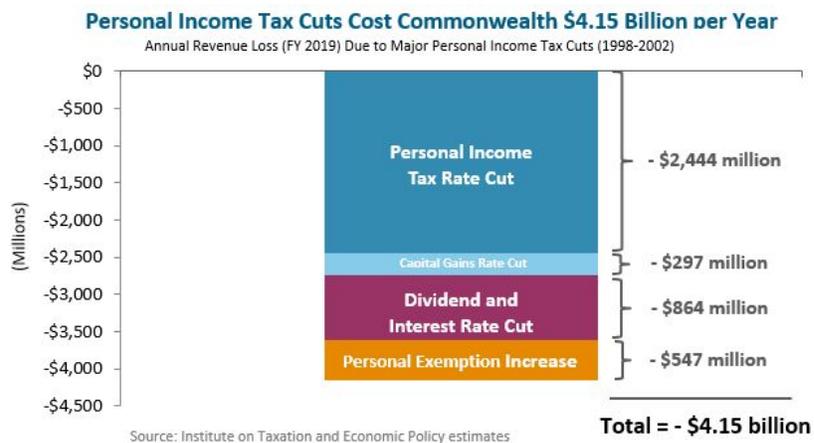
If elected, I will build coalitions and relationships with my fellow progressive legislators to push for policies that we know will result in positive outcomes for all of our residents. I will also work tirelessly to help elect progressive candidates to the House and Senate, regardless of whether or not I am elected. I believe that you can produce winning coalitions for specific issues even with members who might not share all of your values, but who have a good reason to share your belief in a single issue or bill. An example is transportation funding, which hasn't happened in 20 years despite it being a major unfunded liability. The new tactic of bringing in representatives with Regional Transit Authorities who want those funded, rather than making this into a regional issue.

## 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.).**

**CS:** Tax revenue must be collected not only in a way that does no harm to any one segment of society, but that also fosters the same values of equity, access and fairness as the spending side of the budget.

I have done this before. In 2013, I was an analyst in Governor Deval Patrick's budget office working on a tax reform plan to raise \$2 billion to fund education and infrastructure while making the tax code more progressive.

The way to do that (without a constitutional amendment) is to eliminate lots of special tax credits and deductions that benefit higher earners while increasing the personal exemption. But I was also hit with a stark reality - large-scale tax reform is difficult because there is a constituency lobbying for every single one of those special tax loopholes. Unfortunately, the House failed to take bold action on the revenue package I helped develop (the FY2014 budget proposal, H2).

I also support the Fair Share Constitutional Amendment in the long term.

If I am elected, I plan to tackle these issues head-on to make sure our tax system is fair, equitable and benefiting everyone - not just the wealthy few.

- 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?

**CS:** We ought to include accountability and performance metrics in our so-called tax code spending just like we do in our regular operational spending. To be clear, we don't do most of the time either; that was my role in the Governor's budget office to add performance measurement to operational spending. We need to look at tax expenditures as just that: spending through the tax code, and compare it to spending through the operational budget to determine the best way to accomplish our goals.

- 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")?**

**CS:** YES.

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

e. Levying a modest tax on university endowments greater than \$1 billion?

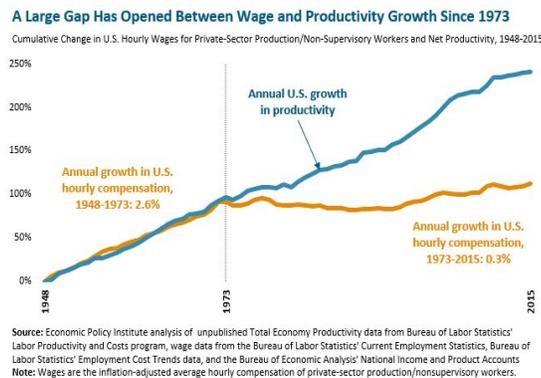
**CS:** In principle I would like to raise the corporate minimum and tax offshore havens - I want to see specifics (RE: offshore havens: would enforcement cost less than revenue brought in?).

## B. Jobs and the Economy

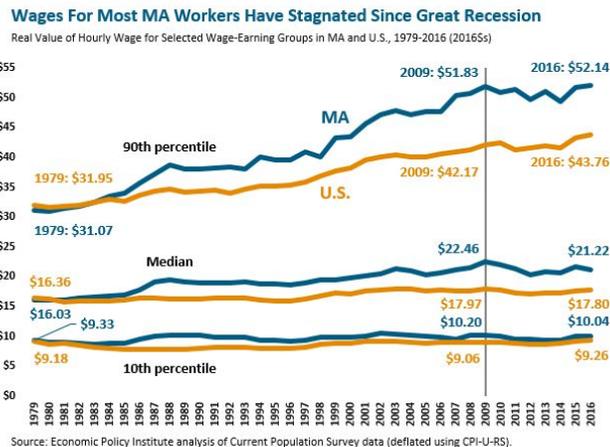
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which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

**CS:** We desperately need an economy, school system and workforce system that can ensure that all residents have access to the opportunities they need to succeed. I believe that it is imperative, as lawmakers, that our leaders ensure that the entirety of our workforce earn a living wage that is self and family sustaining. But for so many of our workers, this is not the case, which is being exacerbated and illuminated even more so now due to the COVID-19 crisis. We have an obligation to our collective well-being to pay workers what they deserve, and adequately fund workforce supports and safety net supports at all times, not just in times like this of widespread economic downturn.

We must learn from our mistakes, and avoid perpetuating a permanent cycle of workers who fall in and out of the employment system, and those who completely fall out altogether. We must help companies retain their workers to avoid massive long-term unemployment and the workforce dislocation that comes with it. This is what we learned from the long-term unemployment catastrophe after the Great Recession. Job loss and financial insecurity are chronic ailments of our society, simply made more apparent by the current crisis. Programs that work, like unemployment, shouldn't be eroded over time by an evolving economy. Let's be clear now and in the future: worker protections exist because they are the backbone of a functional economy, in addition to being the right thing to do for individual workers. An economy without supports ends up in the Great Depression.

I am committed to reducing barriers to work, which I have personally worked on while in the Governor's budget office. I helped create a program that would provide contextualized vocational English language learning for non-native English speakers (adult basic education), including immigrants and refugees. I further support reducing barriers relating to childcare duties for both parents, flexibility in work, maternity and paternity leave for everyone, not just those in high-income jobs, and others.

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

**CS:** YES.

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

**CS:** YES.

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

**CS:** 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?**

**CS:** 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?**

**CS:** 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?

**CS:** YES.

### C. Education

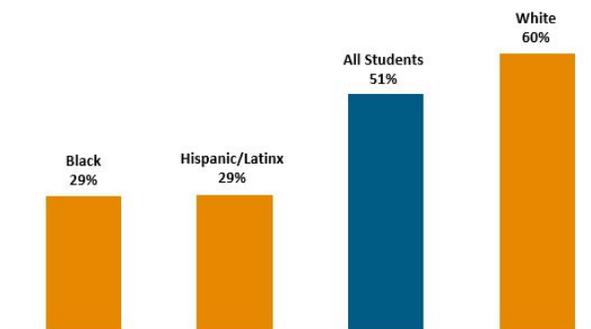
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

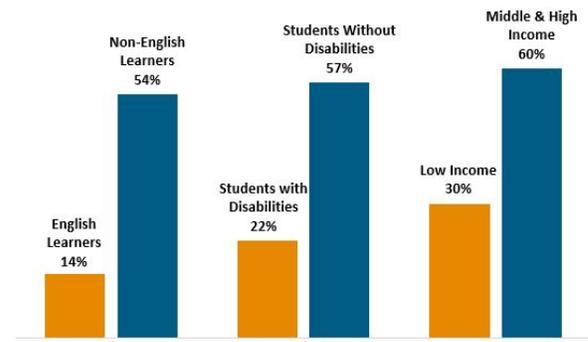
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

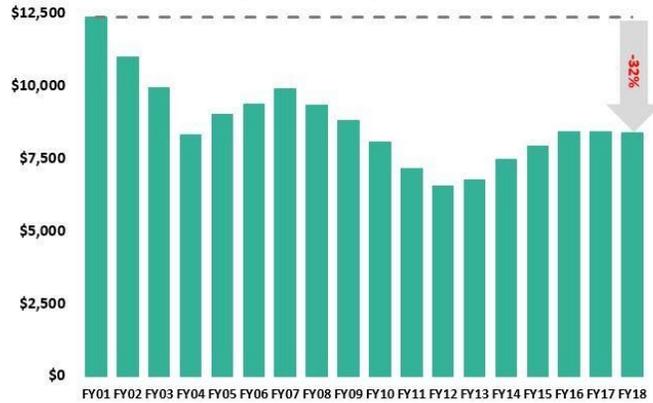


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### 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.).**

**CS:** I have spent my career working on lots of downstream issues from education (homelessness, incarceration, etc.) that make me appreciate the opportunity to get to work on properly investing in this most important of preventative measures. Lack of access to education is a core problem facing our society.

I am a proud product of a public school education, and carry a massive amount of student debt from college. I understand the importance of high quality education early on, and the struggles associated an adulthood shackled to a pile of debt. I have also been lucky to be able to take advantage of a good program - the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program - that I hope will one day make that load a little bit lighter.

The best-evidenced education solution to the access and equity challenges low-income children and children of color face is universal pre-K. Randomized controlled trials in multiple states can attest to the long-lasting impacts including higher wages, higher rates of home and car ownership, lower rates of high school dropout, higher college attainment, lower criminal justice involvement rates, better health. This is key priority investment.

I would also invest in English language learning and special education in K-12 and end supplementing frozen tuition with increased fees at state colleges and make college affordable for all, not only those who are able to pay out of pocket.

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

**CS:** YES.

- 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?**

**CS:** It simply needs to be a budget priority to maintain this funding level. It is a commitment the state made, and it must live up to that promise. COVID-19 is making the whole budget

picture bleaker, but this is exactly the time that you prioritize prevention measures like education to make crises less costly in the future.

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.)

**CS:** YES.

I think we need better tools to measure what "learning" really is. Back to those universal pre-K studies, they found that it's the soft skills that make children more successful later in life. How do you measure the attainment of skills like empathy and staying on task and emotional self-regulation?

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

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

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

**CS:** YES.

Also mental wellness education.

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

**CS:** YES.

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

**CS:** NO.

I support making college attainment debt free. My support of free tuition is contingent. Whenever we talk about making things free regardless of income, I think we need to have an equal conversation about where the money is coming from and whether the source is equitable, because raising revenue inequitably (as we discussed above) is just as bad as spending it inequitably. The revenue we currently raise is regressive; I support making the tax code more progressive. But my support for free state college and university depends on the ability to fund that progressively, or else using students who can afford to pay without borrowing to subsidize.

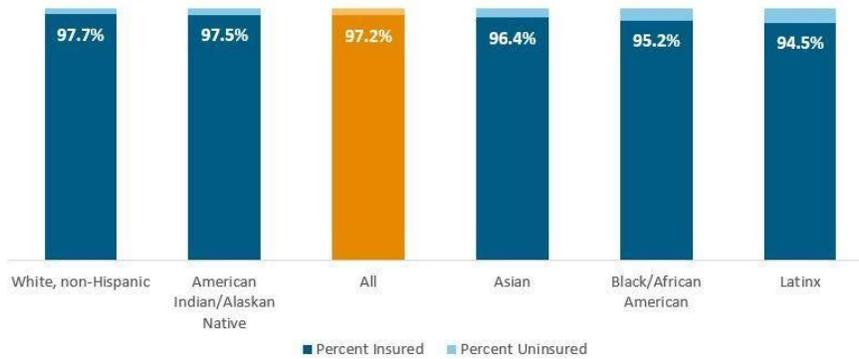
## D. Health Care

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

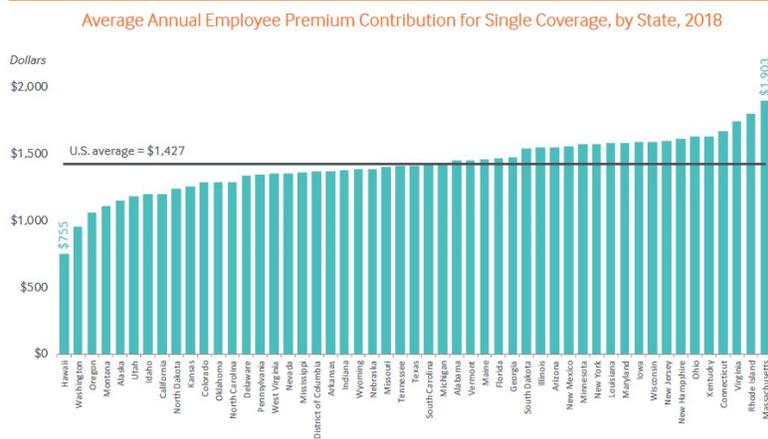
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.



- 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.).**

**CS:** I have personally mostly focused on the mental health and substance side (collectively this is referred to as behavioral health) because it is the part of health care that is most broken and least accessible.

I have spent the last two years investigating the specific ways in which the health care system fails people and they end up incarcerated as a result. Read more at <https://www.mamh.org/advocacy/roadmap-to-reform/criminal-justice-reform/restoration-center-commission>. These reports channel these findings into some specific recommendations to improve the health and behavioral health systems to address lack of access and disparities.

I believe we ought to be shifting our focus in health care from remedial to preventative solutions. This means investing more in primary care (both physical health and behavioral health primary care), and ensuring that urgent care is available when needed (again, for both physical and mental health) to prevent high-cost and unnecessary hospitalizations. This is how you address cost in our system.

You also address access in our system by tackling specific ways that insurance (both public and commercial) de-prioritizes preventative medicine, like by requiring prior authorizations for mental health treatment and clawing back payments that have already gone out for mental health treatment. There is an incredibly high proportion of Massachusetts psychiatrists who don't take any type of insurance, despite Massachusetts having a high number of psychiatrists per resident compared to other states. This is because the system is too complex due to efforts at cost containment. Consumers practically need a PhD to navigate the system of care and find a doctor. Similarly, behavioral health providers face the same complexity that leaves them deciding to opt out of insurance altogether.

But cost reduction and access to care don't have to be zero-sum alternatives. A focus on prevention over remediation is key to that idea.

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

**CS:** NO.

I support federal single payer because it resolves big problems states can't (do people employed in MA who live in NH get covered?). Single payer is not the only way to guarantee 100% insurance - we can create MassHealth for immigrants and others with no FMAP. I have spent a lot of time investigating why our health system fails people. State insurance fails people just as much as private insurance because it has the same incentive of cost containment. Reducing the cost of healthcare and also improving access to it have been traditionally put in conflict but don't need to be in conflict if you know where to look. This would be a "Medicaid for all" system, but MassHealth has serious management problems that would only be exacerbated by expanding it to cover three times as many people as it currently does.

- 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?**

**CS:** YES.

- 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?**

**CS:** YES.

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

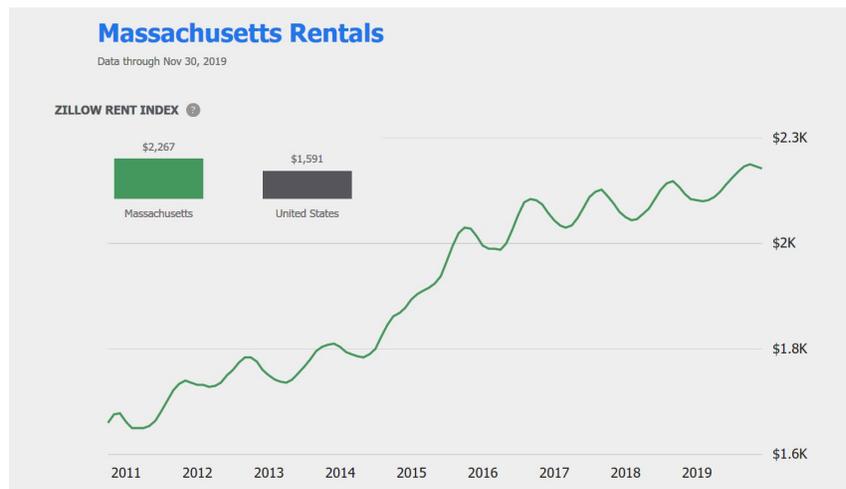
**CS:** Currently, the state's response has been too slow and not transparent. Thankfully, Somerville remains ahead of the state in terms of addressing the crisis.

Instead, we must be much more data driven, especially as related to disaggregating negative impacts on vulnerable populations and people of color. I support the Mass. Housing and Shelter Alliance's proposal to shift from congregate shelter settings to the dignity and public health-friendly nature of personal rooms in the shelter system. We need a plan that doesn't rely on the federal government to start contact tracing and acquiring supplies. Most importantly, we need good data and reporting structures up front so that the system from the get go is prioritizing disadvantaged communities and communities of color in our response.

## 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](http://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.).

**CS:** Housing affordability and equity is the number one issue in Somerville. I have specifically seen the terrible realities of a society that doesn't prioritize affordability of housing or consider housing to be a human right up front: people who have lived for years on the streets, sleeping outside, finding sanitation and food where they can. It's frankly despicable that the richest country on Earth allows human beings to suffer like this when we have the capacity to house every single person.

Unlike some other high-cost housing markets, Massachusetts, and the Somerville area in particular, suffer from a singular problem: more people want to live here than the available housing stock. The long-term solution is simple: build more housing. We need to focus on massively increasing our housing stock in a way that also meets the needs of our diverse set of residents such that no one is displaced. This means building where we can (and combining our housing response with our climate response, building more in transit-oriented locations so that people can get to work using cleaner modes of transit) in suburbs, and building diverse housing (different numbers of bedrooms to accommodate families and singles, etc.). Somerville can't solve this problem alone.

We also must protect the residents who struggle in the meantime through increasing housing subsidies for vulnerable populations like DMH RSP and MRVP. Finally, we must also address the ancillary ways in which housing is unattainable: eliminating broker's fees like New York did to give renters more power to move if they need to to get away from a bad landlord or

otherwise and providing a right to counsel in eviction cases like we do in criminal cases.

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?

CS: YES.

Somerville leads the way!

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?

CS: YES.

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?

CS: 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?

CS: YES.

Also right to counsel.

## 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.

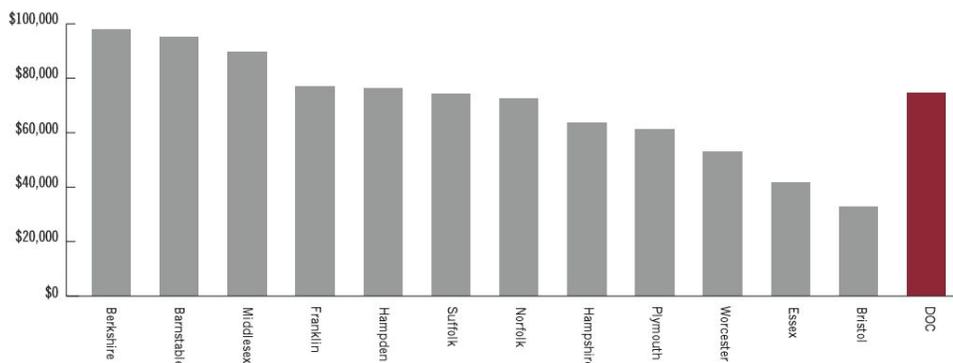
Immigrants make up 16% of Massachusetts’s population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. As the Trump administration in Washington ramps up a xenophobic mass deportation agenda, it is important for states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

**CS:** I view the criminal justice system as a window into the holes in our social safety net. I believe that the vast majority of people swept up into the criminal justice system are there for root causes relating to things like poverty, lack of access to opportunity, the school-to-prison pipeline, behavioral health conditions, homelessness, institutional racism, etc. I think this is how you identify the equity problems in the rest of the system currently.

We should start by fixing our social safety net and investing in prevention - high quality education, good healthcare that is accessible and equitable, housing as a human right, etc. We should also question the principles underlying the criminal justice system, which should be rehabilitative not retributive. The purpose should not be to punish for the sake of punishment; it should be to prevent crime and promote public safety. We need to redefine what "public safety" actually means. I believe it means social work over militarized policing.

Every step of the criminal justice process ought to be more reflective and introspective, asking what could society have done better to prevent this bad outcome rather than asking individuals to plead guilty to avoid lengthy detentions and court cases in which they lose housing and jobs and family.

Every social safety net program and every "public safety" program should measure its impact in promoting or reducing institutional racism. Sheriffs and DA's should not avoid asking themselves what they are doing to mitigate the compounding burden of institutional racism by saying it's the cops' fault for arresting in unequal numbers. Each actor must reflect on their own numbers, and ask themselves "what am I doing to promote or mitigate compounding effects of institutional racism?"

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

**CS:** 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?**

- a. Eliminating mandatory minimums for opioid-related offenses?
- b. 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?
- c. Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth close in age?
- d. Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application?

**CS:** Look at all mandatory minimums, not just for opioids; evidence says diminishing marginal returns of sentences over 10 years in crime deterrence.

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?

**CS:** YES.

Also keep definition of mental illness broad.

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?

**CS:** YES.

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?

**CS:** YES.

Also eliminate CMS exclusion of prisoners.

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?

**CS:** YES.

It is important to keep the lines between state and federal law enforcement separate. All residents should feel safe knowing that if they report a crime, they will not be treated as the criminal. Our state and local law enforcement should not be spending their time, resources, nor our Massachusetts tax dollars doing the job of the federal government.

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

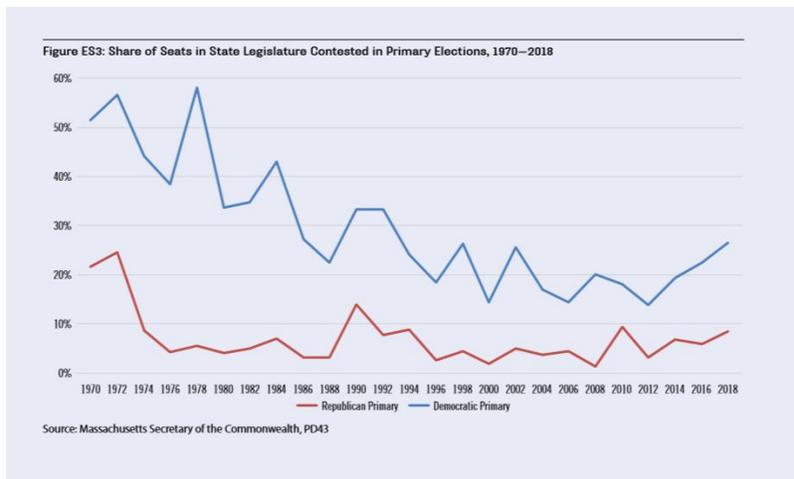
**CS:** YES.

## G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

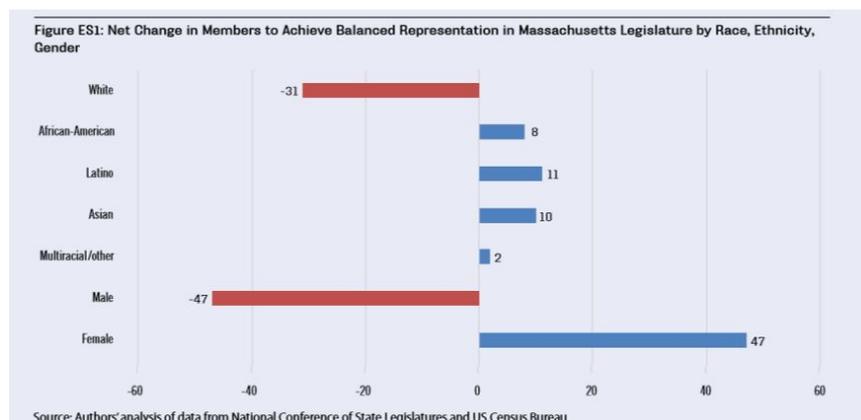
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

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

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



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



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

**CS:** Good government and transparency is exactly what I have been working on my entire career! My focus is on defining what success looks like for government services and programs, and then measuring whether we are achieving that success or not. Then, we must use that information to make more informed decisions about programs, and improve the ones we can improve. I believe we must approach service delivery in government with intellectual curiosity, and be humble about what we know and don't know.

I have done just this. I designed contracts in the Governor's budget office that set specific, measurable goals like reducing recidivism among young men who we provided with job training and connection; housing stability among formerly chronically homeless individuals we housed; etc. We published those contracts online so that people could see what we were doing and so other states could learn from it.

There is so much more to be done. We must invest in people and IT to know whether we are doing a good job, and to improve in the places we identify as needing improvement.

- 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?**

**CS:** 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?

**CS:** Testimony: people should know the impact of programs on the people who actually use those programs.

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

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

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

**CS:** YES.

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

**CS:** 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?**

**CS:** YES.

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

a. Election Day Registration?

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

c. No-fault absentee voting?

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

**CS:** Copy Oregon: universal mail voting.

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

**CS:** YES.

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?

**CS:** YES.

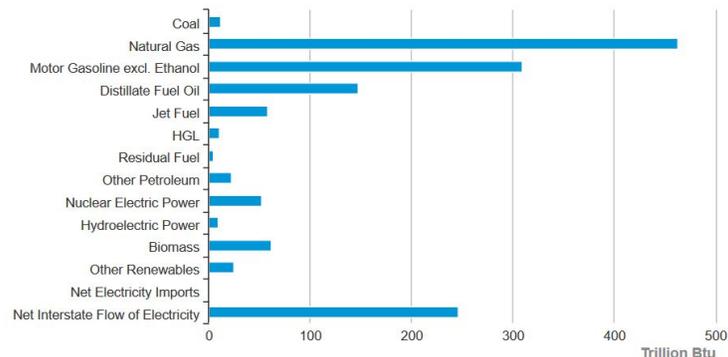
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

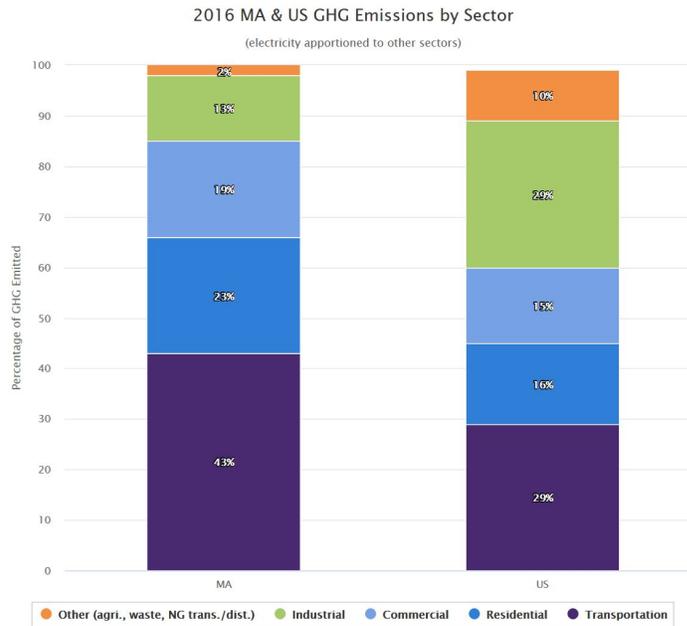
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

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.).**

**CS:** I really thrive when looking at systemic issues and the interrelatedness of policy issues. Environmental issues have stressors from and impacts on other policy areas. I majored in environmental studies in college because I am passionate about limiting the impact of climate change on our planet, and am most passionate about environmental justice.

We must invest in renewable technology and reduce barriers to implementation so that they are ubiquitous and can compete on price. We need to: decarbonize our electric grid; electrify all thermal heating loads; reduce consumption of energy so we don't need to build significant new amounts of transmission and distribution infrastructure; and do this in an inclusive and equitable way.

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

**CS:** YES.

- 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?**

**CS:** YES.

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

**CS:** YES.

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?

**CS:** YES.

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

**CS:** YES.

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?

**CS:** YES.

Equity: utilities are disproportionate burden for low-income people. Price increase offset: progressive rates and/or credits.

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?

**CS:** YES.

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?

**CS:** YES.

### **III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

***Limit answer to 150 words or fewer.***

Use this space to add any other issues important to your vision for Massachusetts or any other matter you think progressive voters should know about your candidacy.

**CS:** I've spent my entire career in Massachusetts state government developing programs that put people first and address the root causes of problems. I am deeply passionate about having the opportunity to bring my expertise in policy making to the legislature to make progress on issues Somervillians care about, and that benefit the whole of the Commonwealth.