



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS  
2020 LEGISLATIVE  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Date:** 5/10/2020

**Candidate:** Erika Uytterhoeven

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

**EU:** Growing up with a mother in a union showed me first-hand how since the late 70's, corporations have been busting unions and carving out the American worker. Every year, my mother's co-workers received worse and worse contracts until finally, investors like Carl Icahn, destroyed TWA via a hostile takeover. This is the story that has played out repeatedly over the past half a century and the corporate elite have gotten away with blaming unions and gaslighting our politicians and voters into believing that insatiable economic growth is more important than people living with dignity and respect. The key mechanism of neoliberal ideology is fooling people into believing that the elite's interests are their own interests. In reality, most people's wages have been stagnant or dropping for decades, while the hoarders of capital have been profiting off our basic human rights like housing, healthcare, and education.

I am running to reclaim our state government, to make the State House the people's house. This means implementing progressive taxation to fully fund a Massachusetts Green New Deal, fully fund our public schools, and to stop the gentrification crisis in its tracks, with massive investment in public housing. Underlying each of my top 3 legislative priorities is an ethos of all means all and the requirement to raise billions of dollars in additional revenue.

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

**EU:** As an organizer, an antitrust economist, a democratic socialist, and a proud daughter of a single mother, I understand both the struggles working people face and the mechanisms by which corporations take control of our government to rig the rules in their favor. I have experience in both local/state and national political campaigns, most notably as co-field director for state rep Nika Elugardo's inaugural campaign and on the National Field Team for Bernie Sanders in 2016.

I am a co-founder of Act on Mass, a nonprofit dedicated to activating grassroots organizers and voters to hold the Massachusetts State House accountable on progressive issues. My work has given me the opportunity to see and understand the inner workings of the State House and develop clear ideas on how it should be improved and what I could personally do in that regard.

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

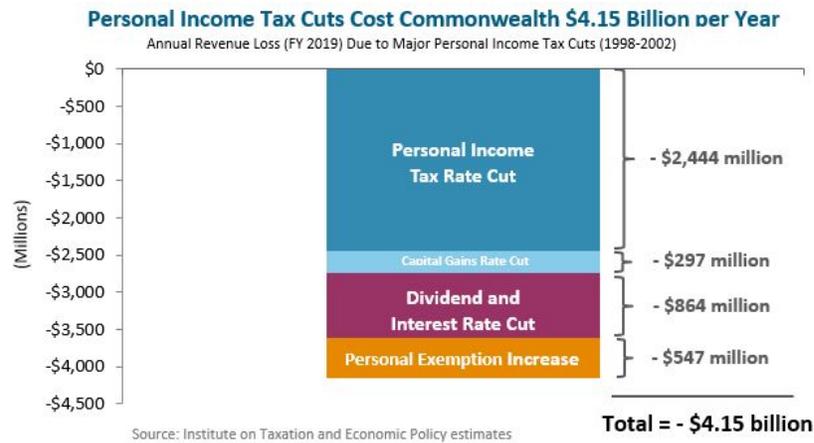
**EU:** Our legislature, particularly the House, is full of career politicians who value getting along with leadership and the perks that come with it over doing the right thing for Massachusetts. And the Speaker of the House wields so much power that he is able to use his position to stifle debate and kill policies before they even gain traction, because reps fear losing access and benefits. The lack of transparency across the board means it can be difficult for progressives to even know who they should talk to about progressive policies. Act On Mass has a list of the top ten issues at the Massachusetts State House that encapsulates my thinking on this topic: <https://actonmass.org/transparency/>.

## II. The Issues

### A. Revenue and Taxation

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

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



**Massachusetts state and local taxes are regressive.**

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



**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.).**

**EU:** Regressive taxation is criminal. Even the most valiant, hard-core, right-wing libertarian at worst believes in a flat tax. We must both educate our constituents and fight with the same unrelenting conviction as our opposition does, to fight to turn our taxation system right-side up.

I have fought to ensure we have progressive taxation in the MA House of Representatives. First, I led the effort to eliminate a controversial and detrimental corporate tax break from becoming law in the FY2019 supplemental budget (Amendment #60). I worked directly with State Representatives to ensure they filed amendments to remove this corporate tax break and mobilized over 1000 Act on Mass members to call their Representatives and Senators to vote against this tax break. Ultimately, we won because the MA Senate refused to include this tax break in conference committee.

Secondly, through my capacity as cofounder of Act on Mass, I pushed Rep. Mike Connolly to file an amendment to the budget in spring 2018 on a capital gains tax. Act on Mass organized several phonebanks, calling constituents in districts with Reps who were on the fence. Following our work, over 30 State Reps co-sponsored this amendment. Unfortunately, Rep Connolly decided to withdraw the amendment and Act on Mass and Progressive Mass issued a joint press release that received press coverage on the issue of the need for a capital gains tax.

**2. Corporate Tax Breaks. Corporate tax breaks cost Massachusetts more than \$1 billion in foregone revenue each year. Companies can secure access to such tax breaks due to political connections whether or not the promised benefits ever materialize. Which of the following accountability steps would you support?**

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

**EU:** In general, I am extremely skeptical of the idea that tax breaks generate economic activity in our state. It often seems to be a way to capture extra money for corporations who were already planning to work in our state. If a tax break is being proposed, I will file two kinds of amendments or lines of defenses. First, to remove the corporate tax break from the bill and second to add provisions that ensure the benefits are entirely or largely going to their workers, not their shareholders or executives. If corporations are going to beg the public for aid and receive special treatment, they must be held to a much higher standard. In addition, before I vote in favor of adding/maintaining any tax breaks, I want to see an analysis that shows how the Commonwealth can reasonably expect to see more tax revenue after giving the tax break than before. I think very few corporations will even offer such an analysis and that shows the tax breaks are just about profit for them.

**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")?**

**EU:** YES.

Absolutely, this is a first step. I believe we need to pass Fair Share and then come back to fight for an even more progressive income tax system overall.

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

**EU:** I do not believe the corporate minimum tax rates as included in the House transportation bill passed in early 2019 are high enough. Act on Mass put out a public statement on this and I have spoken publicly with many constituents that if I were in the State House today, I would have pushed for a progressive corporate minimum tax to fund transportation. The largest corporations ought to be paying a higher rate.

## B. Jobs and the Economy

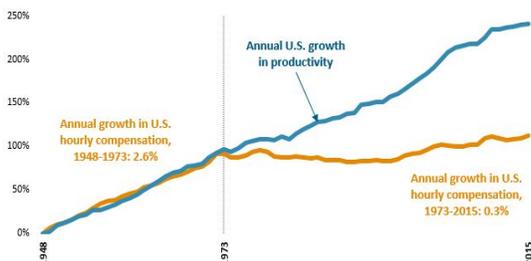
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which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

**EU:** This issue is deeply personal for me because I was raised by a mom who as a member of a union, benefited immensely from the contracts negotiated by her union. Thanks to her union, my mom had a stable job and earned a living wage. Thanks to her union, I was able to go to college. I truly am who I am today, thanks to organized labor.

I have worked with the Somerville paraprofessionals to ensure they get a living wage for the work they do, and I have showed up to pickets that the MNA has held when they were fighting for better contracts.

In 2019 I worked very closely with the AFT & MTA to support passage of the Student Opportunity Act and to fight for full funding for low income schools. We worked closely with State Representatives to ensure that they had enough support from their colleagues to fight for funding for low-income students. These funds mainly go to support students, but a component of these funds will be used for better wages for teachers.

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

**EU:** YES.

The subminimum wage for tipped employees is both unfair and has a racist and sexist legacy. The grand bargain for the \$15 minimum wage propelled me to join Nika Elugardo's campaign. Rep. Elugardo was running against the House Ways and Means chair who negotiated to exclude tipped workers from earning a \$15 minimum wage. This was unacceptable to me and thus I worked tooth and nail to ensure he did not keep his post as a State Representative.

- 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?**

**EU:** YES.

It is outrageous that 70% of legislators have co-sponsored this legislation but it's unlikely to be passed in the legislature. As a State Representative, I am more than willing to organize and force a vote on Wage Theft.

- 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?**

**EU:** YES.

Growing up with a mom who regularly worked overtime, I believe it is critical that all workers receive overtime pay.

- 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?**

**EU:** YES.

Another personal issue for me because I used to work as an EMT in college. I have felt and experienced the consequences of unfair scheduling. This is an essential step to ensure all workers can live with basic dignity and respect.

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?

**EU:** YES.

We must protect collective bargaining rights for employees and ensure that certain sectors that are currently excluded (e.g. public defenders) are given these same rights.

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?

**EU:** YES.

### C. Education

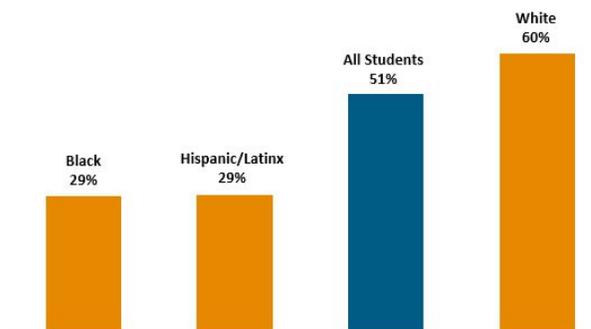
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

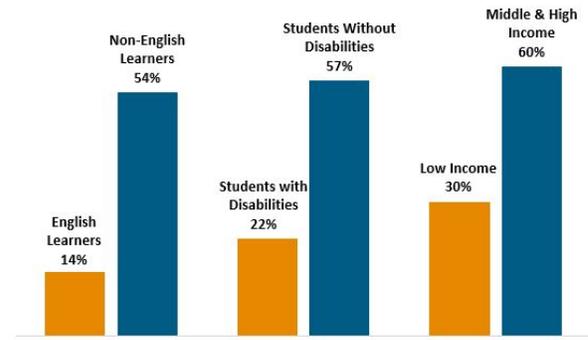
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

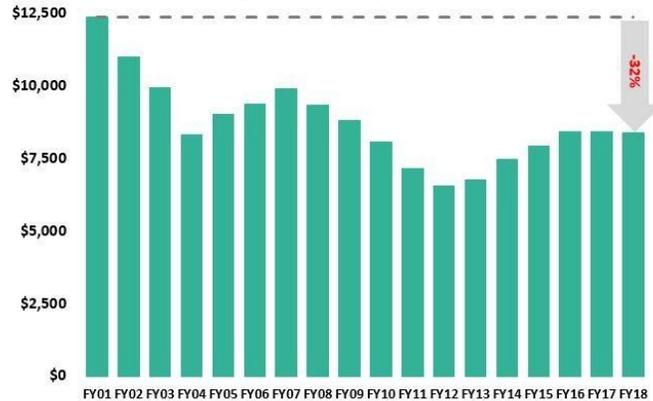


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### 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.).**

**EU:** I absolutely believe in the necessity and the promise of public education. While Massachusetts's educational system scores well compared with other states, we also have one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation (48th). No one's zip code should determine their access to a quality education.

I organized with the Fund our Future campaign to increase public education funding by \$1.5B per year via the Student Opportunity Act, with the funds largely going to low-income students, English language learners, and students with special needs. This was a monumental win led by the teachers' unions to update our 17-year-old funding formula—however, there is much more work to do to ensure that the funds are adequately distributed to the school districts as promised. This is especially true now that the MA legislature is talking about an austerity budget in light of the ongoing COVID crisis.

I have rallied with Somerville's paraprofessionals to advocate for a fair contract, including as a speaker.

As part of my work at Act On Mass, I coordinated with the Massachusetts Teachers Association to call for the cancellation of the MCAS test for this year.

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

**EU:** YES.

As a former economist, I can attest that all research on inequities in our education system stems from the United States being one of the few countries that does not provide universal pre-K.

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?**

**EU:** We—activists, union members, students, and families—must work together to impress the importance of funding the SOA on our legislators and our governor. It would be all too easy for our state government to blame the COVID crisis and fail to fully fund this commitment. We have to organize to let them know that we as voters and advocates will not stand for this vital funding to be put off any longer.

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.)**

**EU:** YES.

We must put a moratorium on high stakes testing, which has been shown to merely punish low-income students while padding the coffers of for-profit, private companies such as Pearson. In particular, due to the consequences of COVID on our students and how it has exacerbated structural inequities in our public schools, I believe we must cancel MCAS in 2021 as well. It will be a priority for me to force such a vote in spring of 2021.

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.**

**EU:** Charter schools are a mechanism funded by hedge fund and private equity investors to privatize and dismantle our public school system. Voters need to be educated on how charter schools were founded following Brown vs. Board of Education as a backlash against desegregation. Yet charter school proponents have been deceptively effective at co-opting racial justice narratives to present charter schools as a solution to structural racism. This is false. Charter schools will not bring racial or class equity, but only exacerbate it by dismantling our public schools and turning education into a privilege rather than human right and an essential cornerstone of our democracy.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

In particular, I support the Healthy Youth Act, which ensures that public schools in Massachusetts all teach the same sex education curriculum. That curriculum must include medically accurate information on consent, LGBTQ+ issues, and both abstinence AND contraception.

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

**EU:** YES.

This is an instance of supposedly very liberal, very blue Massachusetts not actually being as liberal as other states. Nineteen states already allow in-state tuition rates for undocumented students, and seven allow undocumented students to receive financial aid.

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

**EU:** YES.

Everyone deserves access to a quality education, and education is one of the ways we can work to end the racial and class disparities in our society.

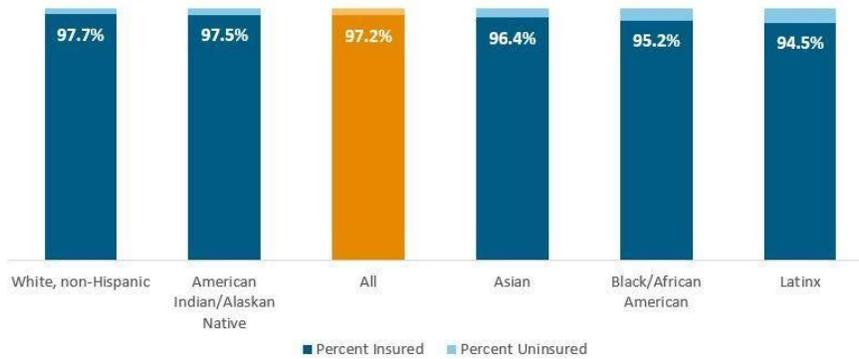
## D. Health Care

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

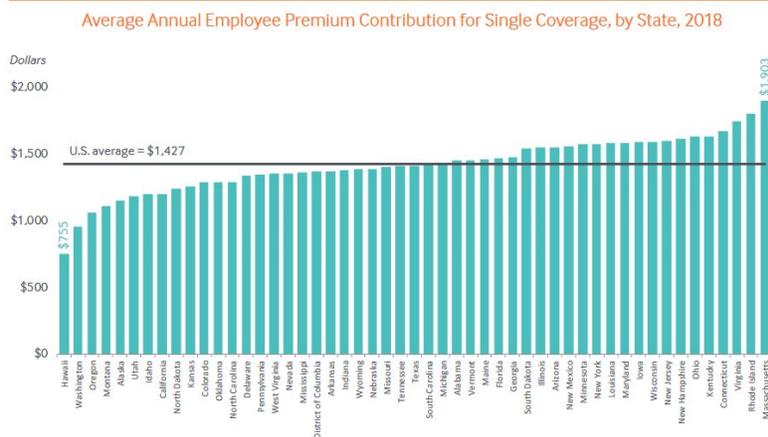
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).**

**EU:** Massachusetts is the 2nd most expensive state for health insurance, causing 1 in 5 Massachusetts residents saddled with medical debt. We need a single payer, Medicare-for-all system in Massachusetts, making health care a human right for all residents.

Not only is accessible and affordable health care the moral issue of our time, it will save the Commonwealth over \$21 billion annually. We need leadership in the State House that will put people first over profits for the health insurance industry.

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

**EU:** YES.

The need for a single payer healthcare system is the issue that brought me into working professionally in politics and organizing on the Bernie Sanders campaign in 2016. This is a moral issue for me, everyone has the right to healthcare and we must bring our primarily for-profit patchwork system of health insurance to an end.

- 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?**

**EU:** 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?**

**EU:** YES.

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

**EU:** Incompetent and bordering on involuntary manslaughter. I know that sounds dramatic, but it's true. Our governor was slow to order a Stay at Home advisory and mask order, and I believe the lack of action during the critical early weeks of the crisis made our infection rate much higher than it needed to be. Currently thousands of incarcerated people are now serving a death sentence due to our state's inaction to hold county and state prisons accountable.

I rate our legislature's actions as disastrously slow. To move slowly is a choice and a privilege. It is a choice that is disproportionately killing black and brown people in our state, it is a choice that leaves tens of thousands of elderly people vulnerable and unable to live their lives with dignity. At the time of writing this questionnaire, the legislature has only passed a handful of laws to deal with the disaster. They waived a 1-week waiting period, put in place a 120 day eviction moratorium (with no relief for renters on what they owe), and passed a handful of bills that give municipalities basic relief.

I believe all of the legislation listed at [https://www.progressivemass.com/covid\\_response](https://www.progressivemass.com/covid_response) should have been fast-tracked. The sick time legislation for example would have been much more useful before the surge began.

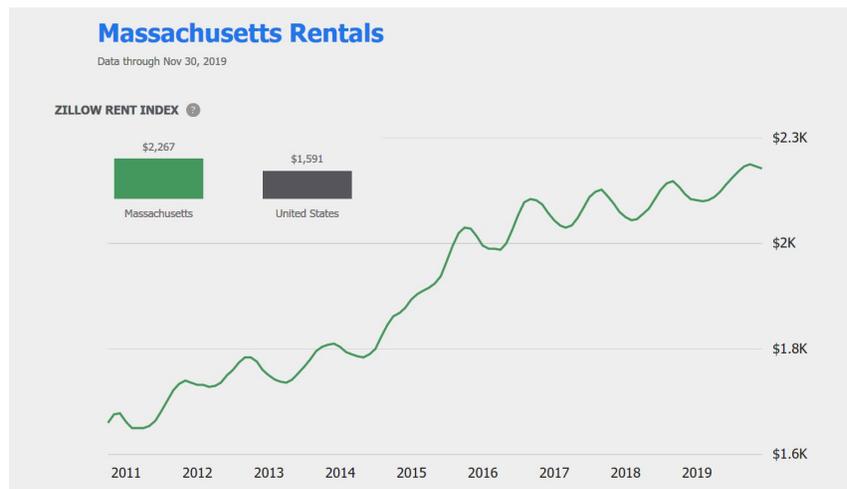
I am concerned about how business and conservative groups are already indicating they

believe important funding ought to be cut or delayed in our budget to handle the short term fiscal impacts of COVID. We know that in times of crisis, power interests use chaos as an opportunity to amass more power. I will fight like hell to make sure Massachusetts doesn't pass austerity budgets but instead builds a strong safety net to protect the people impacted by COVID and the underlying issues of economic inequality.

## 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.).**

**EU:** For too long policymakers have prioritized the interests of developers over residents, turning the places we call home into investment opportunities for profit. Over the past decade, Somerville has had the steepest increase in housing pricing in Massachusetts—we are truly on the front lines of the displacement crisis.

Housing is the most expensive purchase we will ever buy or pay out monthly from our wages. Exposing renters and homeowners alike to the systematic risk of wild price fluctuations is not only inhumane and destructive to our communities, it is a market failure. But cities in Massachusetts are prevented from taking action in solving the housing crisis: In 1994, the real estate industry funded a ballot question to ban rent control, which narrowly passed by winning 51% of the vote. Massachusetts needs to end the ban on rent control and give cities all the tools they need to address the housing crisis.

We can stop heartbreaking displacement and make affordable housing a guaranteed right for all by putting people first over profit.

- 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?**

**EU:** YES.

I support making as few restrictions on this fee as possible.

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?

**EU:** 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?

**EU:** 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?

**EU:** YES.

## F. Racial and Social Justice

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

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

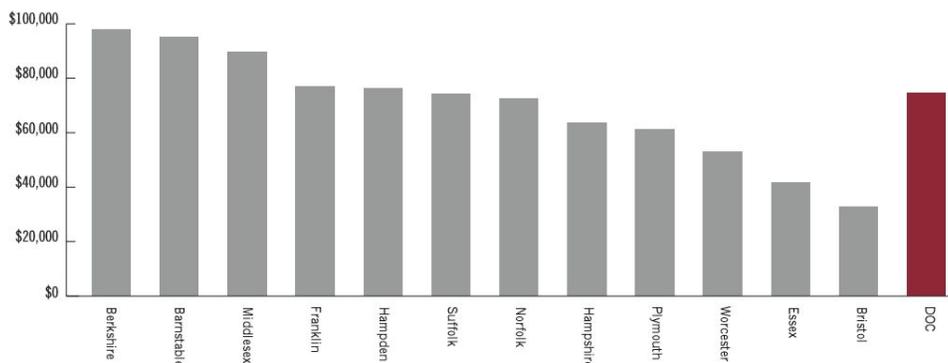
Immigrants make up 16% of Massachusetts’s population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. As the Trump administration in Washington ramps up a xenophobic mass deportation agenda, it is important for states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

### Significant racial disparities exist in incarceration in Massachusetts.

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

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

Figure 4: Estimated expenditure per inmate, FY 2019



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

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

**EU:** I do not believe the 2018 Criminal Justice Reform bill went far enough. In fact, it created new mandatory minimum sentences at a time when CJR advocates at the national level are clear that we need to get rid of them entirely.

I am disappointed that the CJR Bill did not abolish cash bail, something that disproportionately hits low income and vulnerable communities. We ought to get rid of it.

And finally, during covid-19 we should be doing everything possible to release people from the carceral system. Right now, being held in a jail is tantamount to a death sentence and we must do better in MA.

I do not accept money from Police unions, because I do not want anyone to question if that is contributing to bias in my legislating. I believe Sheriff Hodgson must be impeached by the legislature for his horrific treatment of the incarcerated in his facilities and denying legislators entry to his facilities.

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

**EU:** YES.

I want to ensure that it has appropriate membership & appointments from among marginalized communities, criminal justice advocates and isn't stacked against accountability.

**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?

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?**

**EU:** YES.

I would look to work with CJR advocates to figure out how we can propose to reduce that further and look to ban the practice entirely.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

We need to treat the people in our criminal justice system as PEOPLE. I support efforts to help families maintain connections with each other even if someone is incarcerated.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

This is an outrageous and inhumane practice that reinforces the role the criminal justice system plays as a continuation of chattel slavery. It is a racist system of economic extraction for a wealthy few.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

It is shocking to me that we are coming to the end of Trump's term in office and our state hasn't advanced this legislation past the committee step. This is shameful.

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

**EU:** YES.

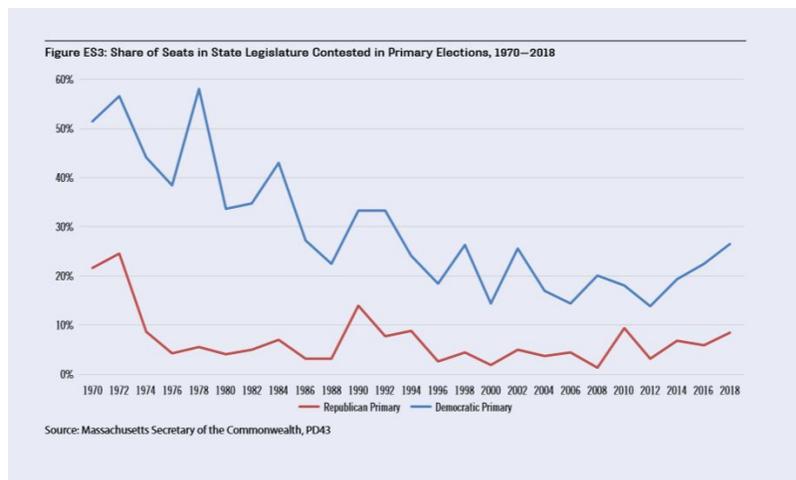
I support emphasizing the narrative of how Massachusetts laws are some of the least friendly to immigrants in the United States. For this law, already 15 states plus DC have removed immigration status as a barrier to applying for driver's licenses.

## G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

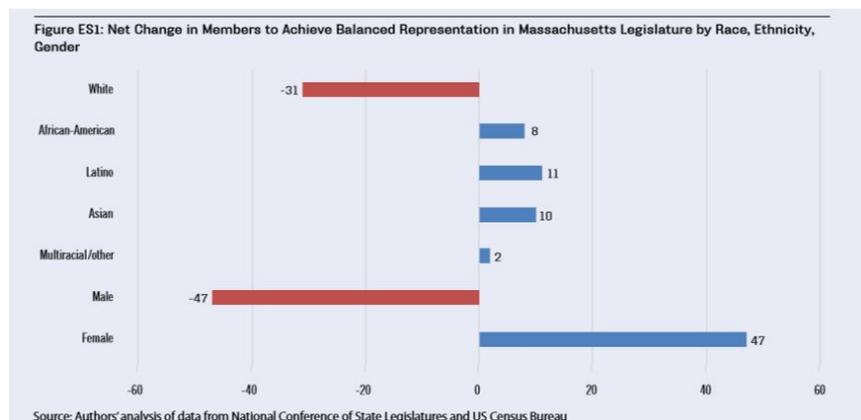
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

**EU:** I co-founded Act on Mass (www.ActOnMass.org) in 2018, and have worked closely with Progressive Massachusetts and other organizations to advance transparency in our state legislature. I drafted the transparency pledge which Progressive Mass now scores on your legislative scorecard, and I am so grateful for all the work PM has put into this issue and look forward to being a champion for this in the legislature.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

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

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

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

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

**EU:** Additionally, I am very likely to support any calls for roll-call even from legislators who I disagree with. We don't need to be afraid to go on record standing for our values.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

It is clear the system as it currently exists is hopelessly broken. We need to protect survivors.

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?**

**EU:** 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?**

**EU:** YES.

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

a. Election Day Registration?

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

c. No-fault absentee voting?

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

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

**EU:** 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?

**EU:** YES.

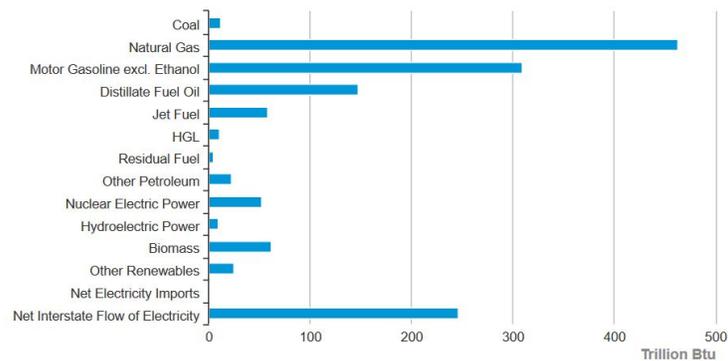
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

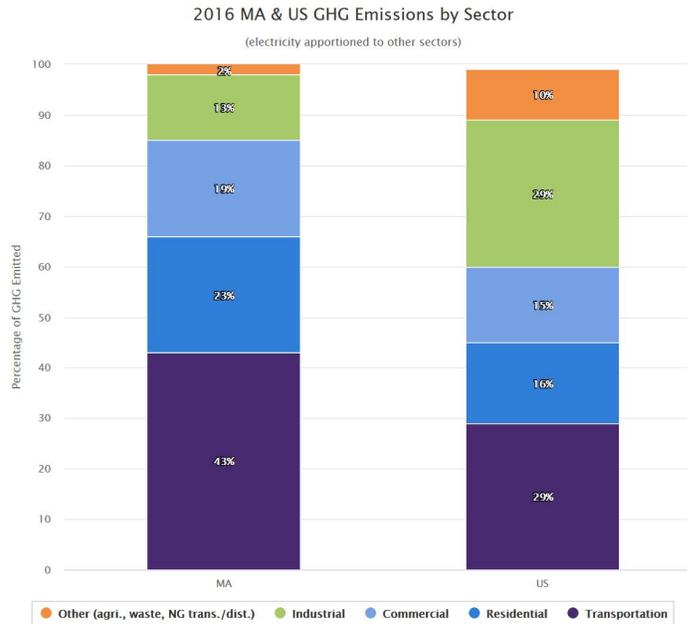
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

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.).**

**EU:** The Massachusetts State House has not passed a significant law addressing the climate crisis since 2008—12 years ago. Without action, over 90,000 homes in Massachusetts are at risk of flooding due to sea level rise. We now have only 10 years to drastically reallocate our resources and restructure our society to save our future.

As our nation struggles to address the climate crisis, we must be national leaders by passing a Massachusetts Green New Deal. This means getting to 100% renewable energy by 2030 by investing in public transportation, conservation and restoration of critical infrastructure, and sustainable and affordable housing.

The Massachusetts Green New Deal must empower the environmental justice communities who have been most impacted by climate change and the workers most affected by the transition to a green economy. This means passing taxation or carbon pricing that is equitable and ensuring that any worker displaced by the shift away from fossil fuels receive full income and benefits as they transition to alternative work. The Massachusetts Green New Deal will stimulate economic growth, strengthen labor unions, and provide long-lasting benefits for all.

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

**EU:** YES.

I would like to see any solutions avoid forcing a 10c bag fee on working families, which would be regressive.

- 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?**

**EU:** YES.

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

**EU:** YES.

This is a key priority for me.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

I want to see a broad group of EJ stakeholders come together to help draft the legislation, to ensure that the law is equitable and meets the needs of the community.

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

**EU:** YES.

I oppose the construction of any new fossil fuel infrastructure which would tend to lock us into energy sources that are causing climate change.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

Although I do not believe a price on carbon can ever be enough, as corporations will figure out ways to pass these fees onto consumers. As part of a just transition, I think carbon pricing makes sense and I would support and vote in favor of it as long as funds are distributed equitably and focused on frontline communities.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

Only about a third of MBTA revenues come from fares, but the MBTA is a huge boon for businesses in the area. We must make it fare-free and make corporations and the wealthy pay for it.

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?**

**EU:** YES.

However, I also believe the state has a critical role in funding RTAs. Many of the communities that most need investment in their RTAs have median incomes lower than the statewide average. Corporations & Wealthy MA residents in other parts of the state have an important role to play in funding transportation needs of other parts of the states.

### **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.

**EU:** I want to expand on the racial justice, which is a key issue for my campaign. Although in this questionnaire, the racial justice section was limited to criminal justice reform and immigrant rights, racial justice intersects all issues covered in this questionnaire. In particular, progressive taxation and economic justice is deeply intertwined with racial justice, not only because Boston has one of the most obscene wealth gaps between black and white families in the country, but all issues that rely on funding from progressive taxation, such as education, healthcare, housing, climate crisis, all systematically oppress communities of color.

The COVID crisis has exposed and exacerbated this oppression but this crisis is also an opportunity for progressives to reclaim narratives of justice and redefine what equity means in state policy. I am committed to fighting for this shift in the House of Representatives.