



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS  
2020 LEGISLATIVE  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Date:** 5/11/2020

**Candidate:** Andrew Flowers

**Office Sought:** State Representative, 8th Norfolk

**Party:** Democratic

**Website:** [www.andrewflowers.com](http://www.andrewflowers.com)

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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?**

**AF:** I'm running because we need a fresh infusion of progressive leadership on Beacon Hill. The status quo on Beacon Hill was not acceptable before coronavirus; but now it's critical we elect leaders with a fresh perspective and the expertise to deliver bold, progressive change when it's so badly needed.

Coronavirus is the top priority right now. In my coronavirus plan, I detail 10 specific policy actions. For example, I propose a "Pay Now, Verify Later" protocol to expedite unemployment insurance payments.

But before the coronavirus pandemic, my top three legislative priorities were (1) fixing our broken transportation system, (2) combating climate change, and (3) radically improving transparency at the State House. All these plans are on my website: [andrewflowers.com](http://andrewflowers.com)

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

**AF:** I grew up in a working-class family that struggled. We moved more than 20 times, across five states, before I graduated high school. I watched my parents go bankrupt twice. As a teenager, I worked for my dad's janitorial business, rising before dawn to clean office buildings and retail stores before racing to school.

Fast forward to today and I now have more than a decade of experience in economics, including five years at the Federal Reserve during the last recession. More recently, I was an economist for Indeed.com, the world's largest jobs site. I was also a writer and editor at FiveThirtyEight.com for three years.

I live in Walpole with my wife and two young kids, and I'm a leader here: elected Town Meeting member, Vice Chair of the Finance Committee, and Chair of the affordable housing committee.

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

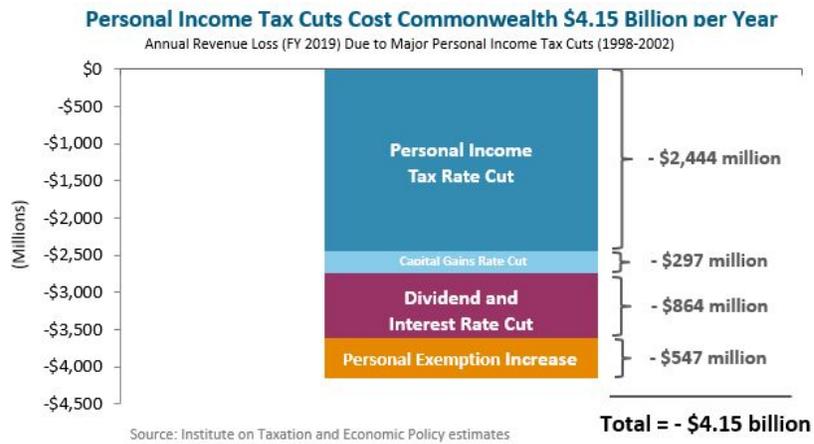
**AF:** In my view, two main obstacles are stopping progressive policy in Massachusetts. First, the lack of transparency and concentrated power in the House makes that body the critical bottleneck. State Reps can co-sponsor progressive bills but then secretly vote against those bills in committee. The Speaker and leadership team sharply limit debate and prevent popular bills from getting a floor vote. Second, voting rights could be improved dramatically, increasing engagement with the electorate and resulting in more competitive elections (with more progressives winning). We need to actually implement Automatic Voter Registration and pass vote-by-mail, along with election day registration; Ranked Choice Voting for primaries; make election day a holiday; expanded early voting; and allow the incarcerated to vote.

## II. The Issues

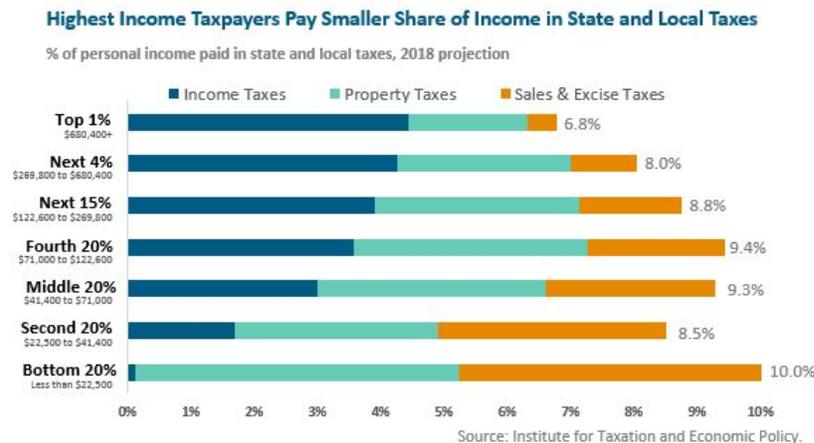
### A. Revenue and Taxation

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.).**

**AF:** Corrosive inequality (along with climate change) is a central issue of our time. Massachusetts should be a nationwide leader in raising progressive revenue to fund public goods and a robust social safety net. While corporate and individual taxes could be made much more progressive, a key issue often ignored by progressives is property taxes, which fund most of public education. The Massachusetts Legislature should be working to make local property taxes more progressive. Property taxes, like sales taxes, are some of the most regressive taxes. Current tools available to local governments include an owner-occupied residential exemption. We could do better with a simple residential exemption, which wouldn't penalize renters; better yet would be sliding scale property tax brackets. Either reform would have owners of more expensive homes paying higher property tax rates.

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?

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")?

**AF:** YES.

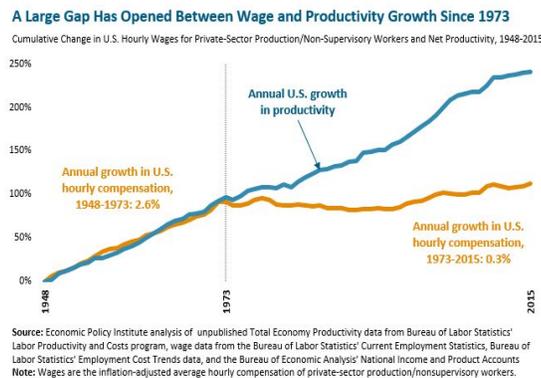
4. **Progressive Revenue.** Massachusetts will not see new revenue from the Fair Share Amendment until 2023, but we have unmet needs now (and will still even with the Fair Share Amendment). Which policies would you support to make a more progressive tax code?
  - a. Raising the corporate minimum tax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

## B. Jobs and the Economy

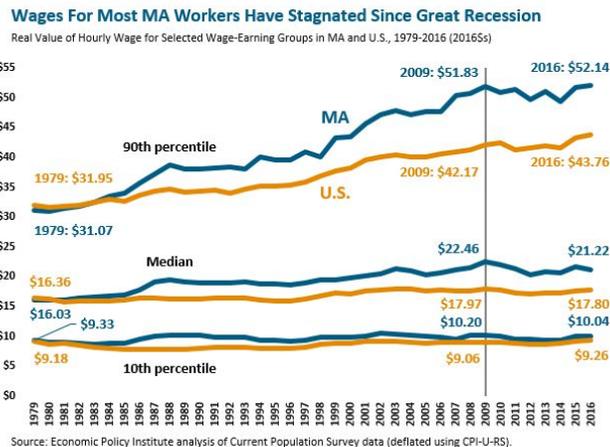
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which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

**AF:** I'm a firm believer in organized labor; unions are critical to achieving a just economy for all. I believe unions should not just be supported, but strengthened. We need unions for all – sectoral bargaining, as is done in many progressive European countries (link: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/9/2/20838782/unions-for-all-seiu-sectoral-bargaining-labor-unions>). Massachusetts should lead the way in implementing sectoral bargaining, to truly give unions a boost throughout the Commonwealth. This is just the first step to combat rising corporate monopolies, to forestall declining worker bargaining power, and to fight back against the counter-productive austerity likely coming because of the coronavirus-induced recession. I will fight privatization of existing state agencies, period. I oppose "right to work" laws, period. Moreover, I am uniquely qualified as a progressive economist to make data-driven policy that rolls back exploding inequality.

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

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** YES.

### C. Education

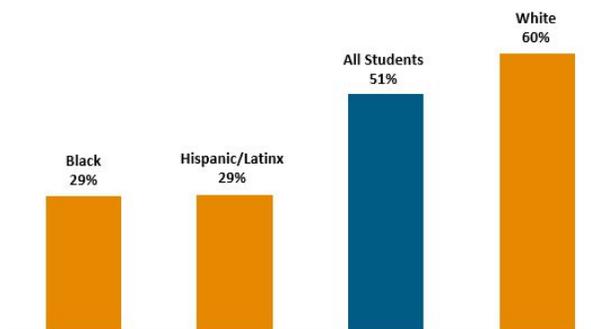
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

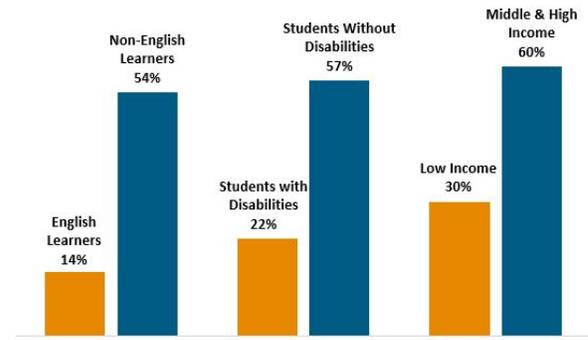
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

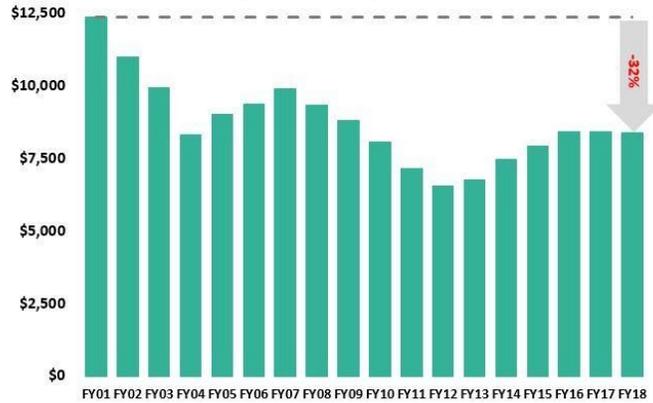


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### 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.).**

**AF:** Massachusetts is the birthplace of public education in America, but we can't rest on our laurels. The recently passed Student Opportunity Act is a good start at bringing equity to K-12 education. But we urgently need universal pre-K and debt-free higher education. I will fight for progressive education reform that prioritizes poor students and students of color.

In my view, the obstacle to improving public education is not charter schools, but a lack of progressive funding. I am neither zealously pro-charter schools nor zealously anti-charter schools. The Betsy Devos-style privatization of public education is unacceptable. In many states outside of Massachusetts I would outright oppose charter schools. And I oppose all dark money activities promoting charter schools. That said, as you'll see below, I believe regulated, non-profit charter schools have a small but important role to play in our education system.

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

**AF:** YES.

Yes, this is a key issue that I'm running on, and it's one of the truly "free lunch" policies – in that future earnings, better health, and lower crime "pay for" early childhood education investments. In fact, I got my start in politics four years ago fighting to reduce Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) tuition in my Town. I've explicitly called for raising the capital gains tax rate to fund truly universal pre-K (see: <https://andrewflowers.com/issues/education/>).

- 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?**

**AF:** We need dedicated, progressive revenue streams. One failure of the Student Opportunity Act is it didn't raise a nickel in revenues. And now with a recession, education funding is on the chopping block. Passing the Fair Share amendment and raising other progressive revenue are logical steps to forestall draconian austerity. But going forward progressives should insist on pay-fors.

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.)

**AF:** NO.

No, I don't support this policy. I believe that, with appropriate oversight and regulations, standardized tests can generate useful data, both to inform curriculum development, track student progress, and to be one input (among many) in teacher evaluations (see: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-science-of-grading-teachers-gets-high-marks/>). As Democrats and progressives, we are a science-informed, fact-based party. Gathering data through standardized tests in public education is an important (although sometimes abused) tool. I believe in reforming standardized testing, but not abolishing it.

5. **Charter Schools. In 2016, MA voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public school districts.**
- Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? **NO.**
  - 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.**

**AF:** I'll reiterate that Betsy Devos-style privatization of public education is unacceptable. But here in Massachusetts, in some important cases, charter schools have demonstrated legitimate gains in student achievement (source: <https://microeconomicinsights.org/charter-schools-teach-test-evidence-boston/>). And it seems charters uniquely help the most disadvantaged students (source: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/massachusetts-charter-cap-holds-back-disadvantaged-students/>). For these reasons I think maintaining a hard cap on charter schools \*in perpetuity\* is unnecessarily antagonistic. Only if more regulations are passed, and demand continues to be strong for charters, would I consider lifting the cap in the future. I'm not supportive of such a policy now, but I'm not categorically ruling it out.

While the evidence shows Massachusetts charter schools are some of the best-performing in the nation, I think they could use \*more\* oversight and regulation – reforming lottery administration, easily allowing educators to unionize, and so forth. One important failure of charter schools – local reimbursements – was addressed, progressively, in the recently passed Student Opportunity Act. I support the list of demands put forth by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) (link: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1rKX5RwMDPCWcdKYDWBcYbqKfRnUStKtm>).

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?**

**AF:** YES.

This is a big priority. One of my key campaign team members works for BARCC and is lobbying for this bill.

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

**AF:** YES.

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

**AF:** YES.

I've publicly said that the State House should pass An Act to Guarantee Debt-Free Public Higher Education (H.1221), which would guarantee a debt-free higher education to all eligible students, not just the wealthy ones. See here: <https://andrewflowers.com/issues/education/>.

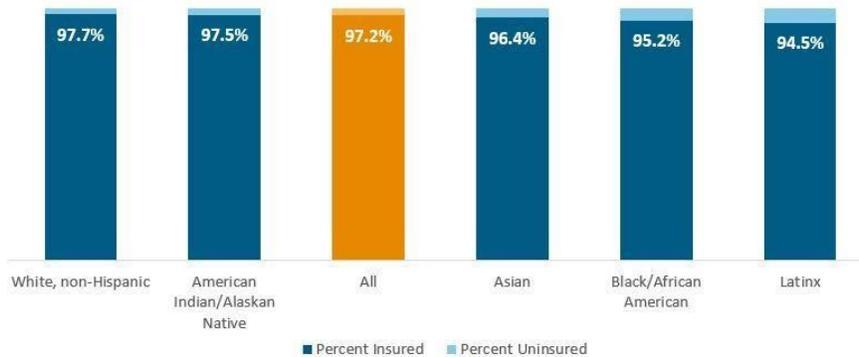
## D. Health Care

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

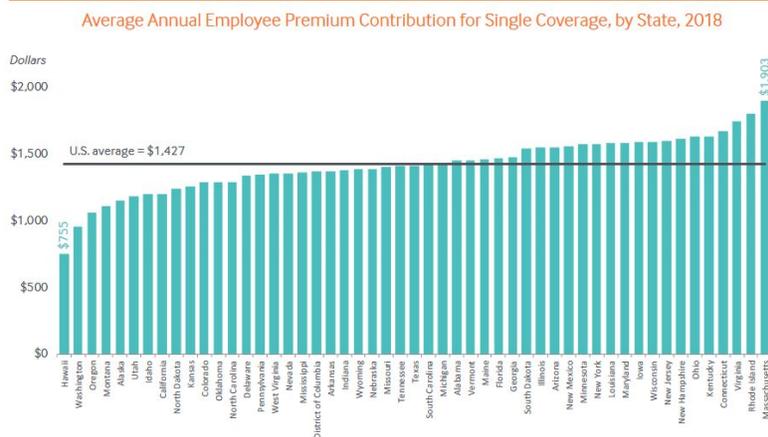
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).**

**AF:** There are two overall health care points I want to make.

First, while I fully support single payer health insurance \*nationally\*, as you'll see below, I'm not convinced that it can work at the state-level. I'm committed to reclaiming public power and enacting social democratic policies like truly universal health care. Health care is a human right, period. I just don't believe single-payer health insurance administered by state governments is a feasible approach right now.

Second, I think it behoves progressives to spend more energy developing cost containment and cost reduction policies beyond single payer. Massachusetts has the highest health care costs in the country. There are reforms that can reduce costs and free up revenue for other progressive priorities.

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

**AF:** NO.

I'm not convinced that single-payer can work at the state-level (e.g. Colorado, Vermont, California). I have two reservations, one legal and one economic. Legally, it seems that states cannot preempt ERISA laws (link: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20190717.466249/full/>), so we'd need a waiver from the Trump administration (and that is not going to happen). Economically, I'm concerned about "first-mover" effects. The intention behind a state single-payer system is admirable. But being the first to do it, when neighboring states don't, could backfire. Some businesses would relocate, some workers would lose their jobs, and job seekers in Massachusetts might be at a disadvantage. Even if these tax and labor market issues were to be fixed, the fiscal flexibility to finance such a program just isn't there, because state governments must have balanced budgets. So single payer without significant federal funding seems very challenging.

- 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?**

**AF:** YES.

Yes, and moreover I fully support the Roe Act. Abortion is health care and a human right. Forced birth is barbaric.

- 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?**

**AF:** YES.

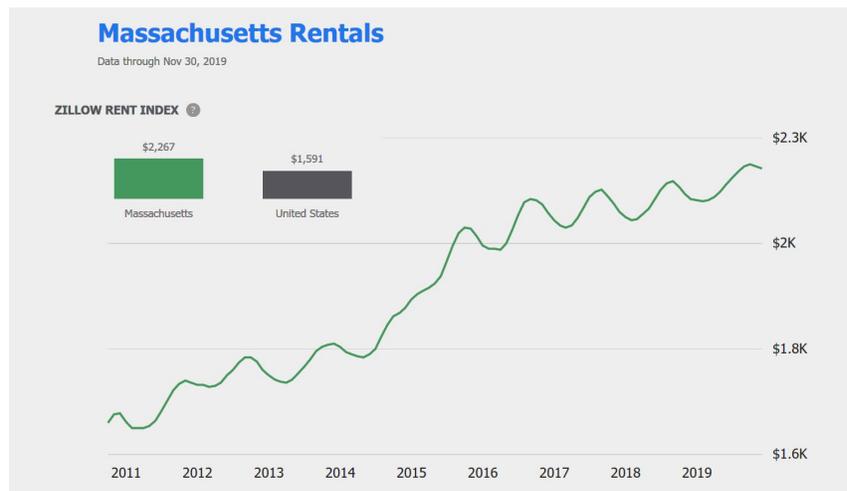
5. **Pandemic Response. How would you evaluate the state's response to the Covid-19 pandemic?**

**AF:** I would characterize the State's response to COVID-19 as "competent timidity," but that is too low a bar. The response has been competent in that the Governor has mostly enacted the right public health policies, but timid in that he has not been aggressive enough in implementing or scaling those policies. The state's test and trace initiative has garnered nationwide attention, but it's inadequate. Ditto for procuring PPE and protecting frontline workers. In my coronavirus plan (link: <https://andrewflowers.com/issues/coronavirus/>), I detail 10 specific policy actions I'd support to defeat the pandemic, revitalize the economy, support the vulnerable, and safeguard our elections.

## 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.).**

**AF:** Greater Boston is in a housing crisis. Rents and home prices are skyrocketing, creating a stranglehold on business growth and forcing out long-time residents. As a local leader on affordable housing, I've seen low- and middle-income families priced out of their community; homeless workers living out of vehicles; and seniors living on a Social Security check struggling to pay property taxes. This is personal to me, as I grew up in a family that rarely had stable housing (I moved over 20 times before finishing high school).

Three different housing problems require three different solutions: (1) limited housing supply because of zoning restrictions; (2) scarce affordable housing; and (3) regressive property taxes.

- 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?**

**AF:** YES.

- 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?**

**AF:** NO.

I support all the tenant protections you outline with the possible exception of rent control. I don't think rent control laws, on their own, are progressive. According to the best research I've seen (link: <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20181289>), rent control laws help existing tenants (which is great) but shrink housing supply, which raises rents and hurts future residents. If paired with mandated housing production targets, or an insurance scheme instead of a mandate, I could support a local option rent control bill. In short, rent control without more housing production is a bad mix. I support progressive housing policy, which in my mind includes building more public housing. I've been a local leader, chairing the Walpole Housing Partnership. I believe in using tools like inclusionary zoning that mandate developers build some share of new housing to be affordable.

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?**

**AF:** YES.

Yes, this is the critical reform, more so than rent control. Massachusetts has not been building enough homes in recent decades. Governor Charlie Baker's An Act to Promote Housing Choices is a good start – but it doesn't go far enough in ensuring affordable housing. Yet it gets one thing absolutely right: municipal zoning changes should pass with a majority vote, rather than a super-majority. And we should be building up our housing supply to meet the surging demand – it's Economics 101. Separately, exclusionary zoning that prevents needed development has to be rolled back, and can be done while still retaining local control. Massachusetts should scale back single-family-only zoning, along the lines of what Minneapolis has done, and legalizing "gentle density" that would dramatically improve affordability.

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?**

**AF:** 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

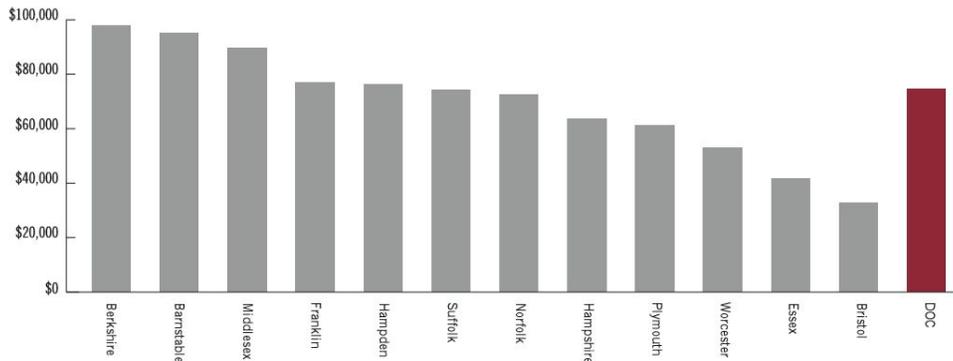
Racial/Ethnic Disparity in Imprisonment (2014)	
Black : white ratio	7.5
Hispanic : white ratio	4.3

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.).**

**AF:** We cannot achieve racial justice without reversing mass incarceration, ending the War on Drugs, eliminating all bail, and improving police accountability. Our sentencing laws and private prison systems are barbaric and cause for outrage. I oppose the death penalty, solitary confinement, and the militarization of police departments.

I'm especially outraged at State House Democrats not passing the Safe Communities Act to protect our immigrant neighbors from the racist Trump administration. It's not enough to co-sponsor the Safe Communities Act; one must fight against the State House rules and complacent culture that prevents its passage. I will do that and my primary opponent will not.

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

**AF:** YES.

- 3. Sentencing Reform. The 2018 criminal justice reform bill was an important first step in reducing mass incarceration. However, in our "liberal" state, incarceration rates remain much higher than they are in other countries, and sentencing laws can be even more punitive than those in states viewed as conservative. Which of the following reforms would you support?**

- Eliminating mandatory minimums for opioid-related offenses?
- Raising the age of criminal majority from 18 to 21, in line with research that shows that young offenders served by a juvenile system are much less likely to reoffend and more likely to successfully transition to adulthood?
- Decriminalizing consensual sexual activity between adolescents, by creating an exception to the statutory rape law for youth close in age?
- Eliminating the sentence of life without parole, which is costly and has been shown to be racist in its application?

**AF:** I believe we should raise the age of criminal majority even higher, to 24 or 25, based on adolescent brain science (link: <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentTypeID=1&ContentID=3051>). I am not a lawyer, but I believe if incorporated in the existing structure, it would mean that any offense committed before 21/24/25 would be a delinquency finding and not a criminal

offense per se. It would place jurisdiction in the juvenile court system. In Massachusetts, there are youthful offender laws which allow the Commonwealth to petition to remove the case to adult criminal court for certain severe offenses with aggravating factors.

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?**

AF: YES.

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

AF: 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?**

AF: YES.

7. **Safe Communities Act. Do you support the Safe Communities Act, which limits local and state police collaboration with federal immigration agents, bars law enforcement and court personnel from inquiring about immigration status, and ensures due process protections?**

AF: YES.

I have gone out of my way to vigorously support the Safe Community Act, unlike my primary opponent. See my immigration plan here: <https://andrewflowers.com/issues/immigration/>.

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

AF: YES.

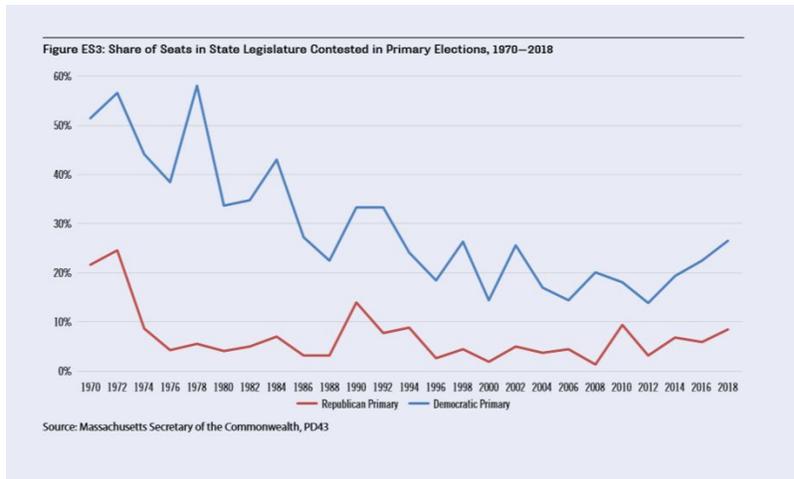
Driving with a driver's license should still be required. But all citizens, regardless of immigration status, should be entitled to them. And driving without a license should be a civil offense, not a criminal one. I've publicly gone on the record support this: <https://andrewflowers.com/issues/immigration/>.

## G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

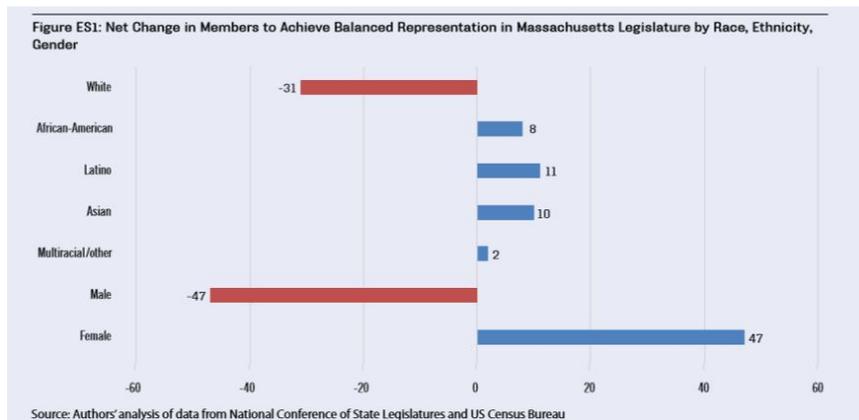
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

**AF:** As I mentioned earlier, two critical reasons I'm running are to reform the State House and expand voting rights. Those are the two main obstacles to progressive legislation.

The House, in particular, is the bottleneck because transparency is poor and power is concentrated. Too many bills are killed without a public vote. For example: the Safe Communities Act – which would protect immigrants from the Trump administration – had support from a majority of Democrats but was “sent to study” in a secret committee vote. Other popular bills this session with a majority of co-sponsorships include Election Day Registration, 100% Renewable Energy by 2050, the ROE Act, and The Healthy Youth Act.

The root problem is the same: a broken State House culture, dominated by a top-down leadership structure that feeds on an astonishing lack of transparency. See my plan here: <https://andrewflowers.com/issues/state-house-reform/>.

- 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?**

**AF:** 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?

**AF:** I just want to point out that I'm the only candidate in my race to sign the "Voters Deserve to Know" pledge. My primary opponent is a lifelong House staffer. The House Majority Leader, Ron Mariano, is raising money for my opponent. He is the status quo and won't push for transparency and rules reform.

- 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** YES.

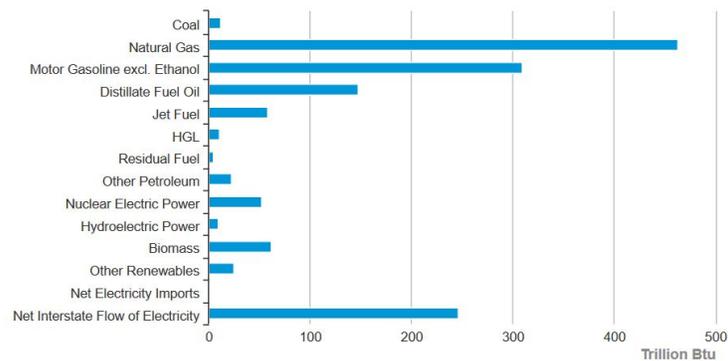
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

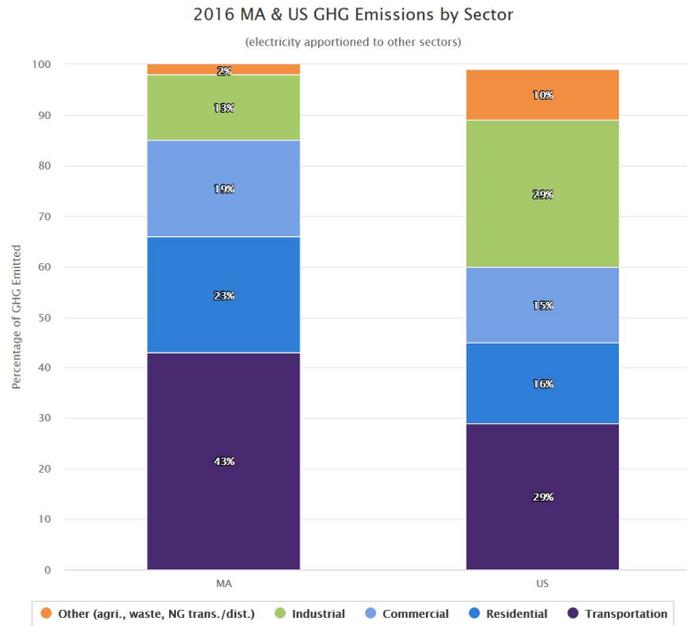
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

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.).**

**AF:** Climate change is an existential threat. The lack of action from Beacon Hill in recent years has been alarming. The Legislature has not led on climate since the Global Warming Solutions Act passed in 2008. We need bold, progressive action on climate change, and now. Specifically, I would support the following initiatives: a goal of 100% renewable energy by 2050; promoting electric vehicles and a charging infrastructure; and enacting carbon pricing.

Before the coronavirus hit, transportation was the most urgent issue in my district. I will work to: prioritize investment in public transit; encourage transit-oriented development; and alleviate congestion on our roads with time-of-day pricing. This last policy is a proven method to significantly reduce gridlock. In the legislature, I will support means-based pricing – an approach to variable road pricing that is specifically designed not to be regressive.

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

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** YES.

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

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** YES.

Unlike my opponent, I've publicly listed environmental justice as one of my top environmental priorities:  
<https://sustainablesharon.org/2020/03/29/statements-by-andrew-flowers-and-ted-philips-candidates-for-state-representative/>

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

**AF:** 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?**

**AF:** YES.

From dirty transportation and home heating fuels and reinvest 30% of the proceeds in a Green Infrastructure Fund. I'll also work to make the other 70% of rebates be targeted to low- and middle-income residents. As an economist who has researched the green jobs of the future, I'm uniquely qualified to deliver on bold, progressive action at the State House (link: <https://www.hiringlab.org/2018/04/19/where-to-find-green-jobs/>).

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?**

**AF:** YES.

We need to invest in the MBTA and improve it beyond current standards. These investments will be paid back as more people utilize public transportation. It will be better for the economy, for the environment, and for tourism.

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?**

**AF:** 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.

**AF:** I'm an economist with more than a decade of experience running because now, more than ever, we need expertise and advocates for progressive ideas on Beacon Hill to get us through this unprecedented crisis.

I'm running because I have the experience we need. My background makes me uniquely qualified to put forth bold new ideas at the State House, and to protect our economy from falling into a depression. The status quo on Beacon Hill was not acceptable before coronavirus; but now it's critical we elect leaders with a fresh perspective and the expertise to deliver bold change when it's so badly needed.