



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS  
2020 LEGISLATIVE  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Date:** 5/9/2020

**Candidate:** Jordan Meehan

**Office Sought:** State Representative, 17th Suffolk

**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?**

**JM:** I'm running for State Representative to fight for housing justice, transit equity, and a Green New Deal for Massachusetts. For far too long, big real estate developers and absentee landlords have called the shots in Allston-Brighton, while young renters and lifelong residents face higher and higher rental costs and displacement. For decades, we have seen our public transit system collapse in real time while quality of service has unambiguously declined, despite higher and higher fares. And we've seen little in the way of bold, meaningful action to combat climate change, despite the science telling us we have limited time to act. The state legislature, and the House in particular, lacks the requisite sense of urgency around each of these issues and many more, and we need more elected officials who understand this urgency and aren't afraid to act.

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

**JM:** As a lawyer, LGBTQ youth advocate, and longtime activist, I have spent years organizing on the outside and pushing for policy change in state government. In my current role, I work as the Policy Coordinator for the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth. I work in partnership with youth advocates, community organizations, and over a dozen state agencies to advance policies and resources to better the lives of LGBTQ youth across the state. In this role, I have advocated for policy and legislative solutions to help homeless youth, reform our juvenile justice system, and build safe and supportive school environments for LGBTQ youth.

Prior to this role, I spent years in public service positions while in law school. As an intern for the Navy JAG Corps, I worked in legal assistance, where I advocated for disability benefits for transgender soldiers after Defense Secretary Ash Carter lifted the ban on transgender troops serving openly, and further pushed for expanded consumer protections for service members. At the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, I worked on high-profile cases of various natures -- including assisting with the prosecution of an auto shop owner who illegally dumped thousands of gallons of waste oil into the Merrimack River. I also worked on a federal civil rights investigation while interning with the U.S. Attorney's Office, investigating allegations of discrimination against English language learner students with disabilities.

A lifelong environmental activist, I have recently served as the Chair of the Massachusetts Sierra Club's Political Committee, identifying, supporting, and endorsing candidates across Massachusetts who can be counted on to protect the environment and fight for climate action. I am also an active member of the Allston-Brighton node of 350 Mass, a statewide network of climate activists. A vocal and persistent advocate for public transportation, I have long pushed for increased funding for the MBTA and worked on the successful campaign to establish a bus and bike-only lane on Brighton Ave in Allston.

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

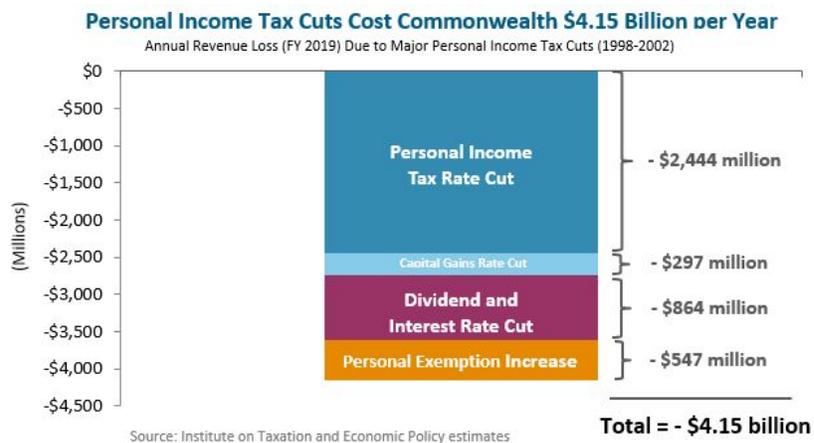
**JM:** More than anything, the House needs more progressive representatives who will advocate for bolder progressive legislation, organize in support of it with advocates and activists, and stand up to House leadership. The State House's lack of transparency makes it extremely difficult for people to learn about the content of legislation and how their representative votes on pieces of legislation, making it even more difficult for people to learn about and organize around progressive policies.

## 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.).**

**JM:** For far too long in Massachusetts, big corporations and wealthy individuals have not paid their fair share in taxes. The results of these decades of neoliberal economic policy and austerity are all around us: barely any money invested in affordable housing, a public transit system falling apart, and severely underfunded public schools across the Commonwealth. I will advocate for a progressive tax system. Fair taxation should encompass passing the fair share amendment, ending step-up-in-basis for capital gains, raising the estate tax, implementing a mansion tax, and raising C-Corp taxes. Each of these ideas I have built in my economic justice plan, which can be found at <https://medium.com/@jordanforma/building-a-fair-and-moral-economy-f89a17542ddf>

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")?**

**JM:** YES.

The Fair Share amendment is a no brainer - and is one that 75% of Massachusetts residents are in favor of. The tax can generate up to two billion in new revenue for the Commonwealth which is absolutely essential in constructing a more equitable state.

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?

**JM:** I advocate for many of these in my economic justice plan. With respect to raising the corporate tax rates in particular, MassBudget estimates that "each 1 percentage point increase in the rates applied to C-corps (and other large businesses, including banks, financial institutions, and insurance companies) might generate between \$200 - \$300 million in additional annual tax revenue," on top of the roughly \$2.8 billion collected annually through business taxes.

## B. Jobs and the Economy

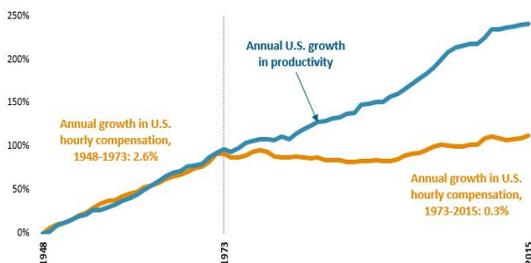
Massachusetts ranks as one of the top ten [most unequal states](#), as the gains from economic growth have disproportionately benefited the already well-off. Compounding this, we are one of the most expensive states in the country for [health care](#), [housing](#), and [child care](#), all of which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

**JM:** I come from a family with many longtime union members, so the fight for expanding unions and collective bargaining rights has always been personal to me. On May Day I released my plan to build a fair and moral economy in Massachusetts. My plan calls for raising the minimum wage and indexing it to inflation, abolishing the subminimum wage for tipped workers, ending wage theft, strengthening protections for workers, a fair and progressive tax structure, and much more.

As an activist and community member, I joined the picket line when Stop & Shop workers went on strike in 2019 and organized a supply drive to bring food and supplies to workers at 5 stores in Greater Boston, raising hundreds of dollars in a short time to do so. As a candidate, one of my first actions was to join the Harvard grad student strike in December and stand in solidarity with those grad student workers.

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

**JM:** YES.

It goes without saying that the tipped minimum wage has always been horrifyingly low. Currently, the tipped minimum wage in Massachusetts is just \$4.95 and will only rise to \$6.75 by 2023. Beyond being grossly insufficient to support an individual or a family in Greater Boston, the tipped minimum wage perpetuates gender-based inequity and discrimination, facilitates workplace sexual harassment and assault, and further worsens poverty. Over two-thirds of all tipped workers in Massachusetts are women, 33% of whom are mothers. The tipped minimum wage is, in essence, a legislated pay inequity for a predominantly female workforce. In addition to eliminating the subminimum wage, we also need to raise the minimum wage higher than \$15/hr to reflect the actual cost of living in Massachusetts and index the minimum wage to inflation to ensure that minimum wage workers do not lose purchasing power each year as living costs rise.

- 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?**

**JM:** YES.

Employers hold extraordinary power over workers, including virtual immunity from financial penalty for misclassifying their employees as "independent contractors." In the hospitality and construction industries in particular, workers lack a strong remedy to recover stolen wages from hotels, restaurant groups, and general contractors who misclassify, withhold overtime and holiday pay, or outright refuse to compensate. In addition to the economic damage done to workers themselves, wage theft and misclassification harms our state tax revenue to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars a year according to some estimates. Workers deserve to get paid and our Commonwealth deserves tax revenue to fund equitable public transit, fair housing, and a Green New Deal. We can capture hundreds of millions of dollars in unpaid taxes and restore wages for thousands of workers by passing An Act To Prevent Wage Theft (H.1610 and S.1066), bills that have three times passed the Senate with near universal support only to die without a vote in the House.

- 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?**

**JM:** YES.

Under current law it is almost impossible for any worker in Massachusetts covered by wage

and overtime laws to be eligible for overtime under the current salary threshold, and the legislature should take immediate steps to remedy that. Overtime protections are codified through a mix of federal and state laws and regulations, which specify a salary threshold below which workers are automatically entitled to overtime pay. In 2019, both the federal government and the Massachusetts state legislature considered updates to the salary threshold to make more workers eligible for overtime. Legislation still pending in the legislature would grant new or stronger overtime protections to 435,000 salaried employees in Massachusetts. That's about one in four salaried employees in the state. Although the federal Department of Labor raised the salary threshold in 2019 to \$35,568 — while Massachusetts took no action — the new federal regulations cover 330,000 fewer salaried workers than the Massachusetts proposals and represent a significant rollback of the improvements put in place by the Obama Administration. Massachusetts should increase the salary threshold to \$64,000 by 2024 to cover 435,000 salaried employees.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

In addition to 14 days notice, fair scheduling laws should include: (1) the right to rest for 11 hours between shifts; (2) the right to be offered any additional available hours before an employer hires a new employee to fill them; and (3) the right to collect unemployment benefits when they are forced to leave a job due to their employers failure to comply with fair scheduling practices.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

It seems like almost every day the Trump Administration or the Supreme Court whittles away at collective bargaining rights and the power of unions. Even in Massachusetts, our own Governor cannot be relied on to stand up for our unions or workers. After the Supreme Court gutted the rights of public sector unions in the 2018 Janus decision, the Massachusetts legislature restored those rights for public sector unions in Massachusetts to collect reasonable costs from non-members for the union to represent them in a grievance or arbitration proceeding, over the veto of Governor Baker. The legislature must do all it can to protect and expand collective bargaining rights, and that should include expanding collective bargaining rights to public defenders.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

### C. Education

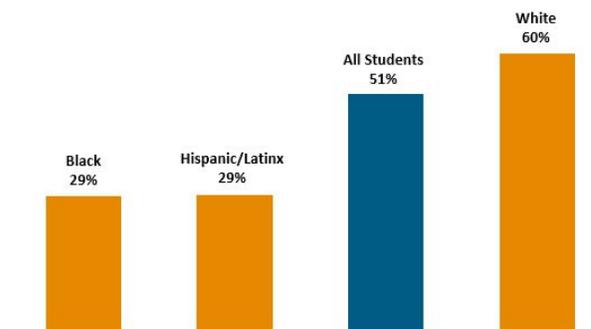
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

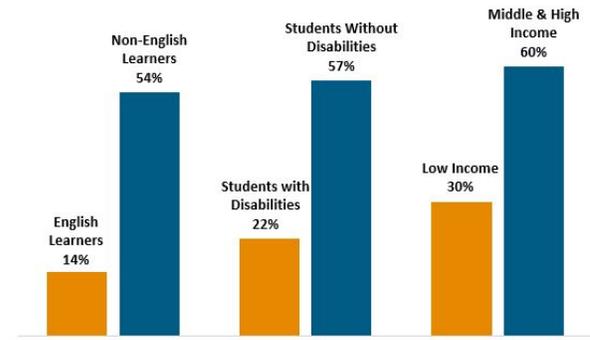
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

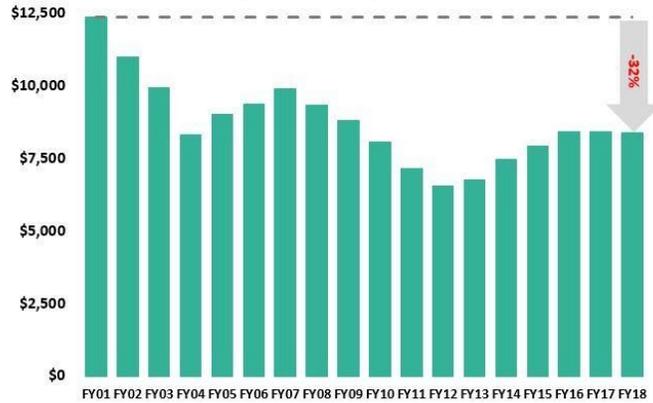


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### 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.).**

**JM:** Education is a human right. First and foremost, we must ensure that the Student Opportunity Act remains fully funded in its first year of implementation and beyond, and does not fall prey to budget cuts. Part of this should include legislation to raise new revenue, such as the ones I have discussed above. Now more than ever we must be willing to demand that large corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share.

In addition to the issues and policies discussed above, I believe passing the Healthy Youth Act is essential to ensuring that schools who teach sex education (and all schools should teach sex education!) teach curriculum that is age-appropriate, medically accurate, LGBTQ-inclusive, and teaches consent. I have worked closely with Planned Parenthood in my current role with the MA Commission on LGBTQ Youth to further this bill, though it appears that it will not pass in the current legislative session.

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

**JM:** YES.

- 3. Equitable Funding. In 2019, Massachusetts updated its 25-year-old education funding formula and committed to \$1.5 billion more in investment in public schools. How will you make sure the state follows through with this promise?**

**JM:** I believe that is important to continue to fight for progressive revenue streams to ensure funding for our education systems. With revenues set to sharply decline in light of COVID-19, it's clear that the fight to ensure the Student Opportunity Act remains funded is long from over, and we must ensure that this legislation does not fall prey to budget cuts. As mentioned in the taxation section, I will support and advocate for revenue from fair share amendment, a mansions tax, increasing the corporate tax rate and more. I also think transparency in the State House is vital to make sure progressive promises are followed through.

- 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.)

**JM:** YES.

5. **Charter Schools. In 2016, MA voters overwhelmingly rejected a ballot initiative to lift the cap on charter schools given the millions of dollars it would have siphoned away from public school districts.**
- Do you support keeping the cap on charter schools? **YES.**
  - Would you support legislation to bring greater accountability to charter schools by requiring them to adhere to the same disclosure and disciplinary standards as public school districts? **YES.**

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?**

**JM:** YES.

In my current role as the Policy Coordinator for the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth, passing the Healthy Youth Act has been a top priority, and I have worked in coalition with organizations such as Planned Parenthood to fight for it. It is, frankly, insane that this bill has failed to pass in numerous consecutive legislative sessions. Should it not pass in the current session I will proudly fight for it in the next session when elected.

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

**JM:** YES.

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

**JM:** YES.

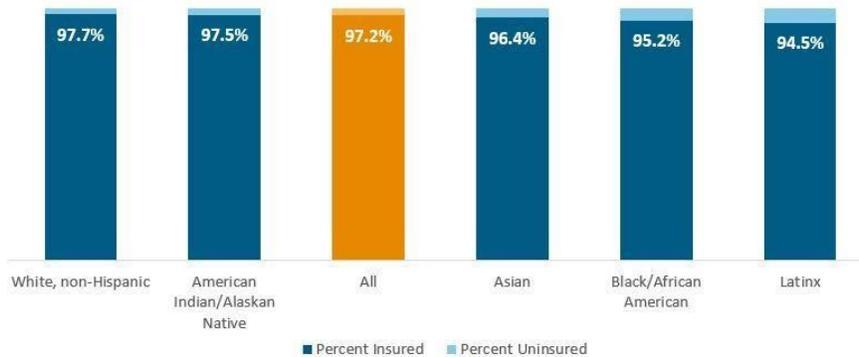
## D. Health Care

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

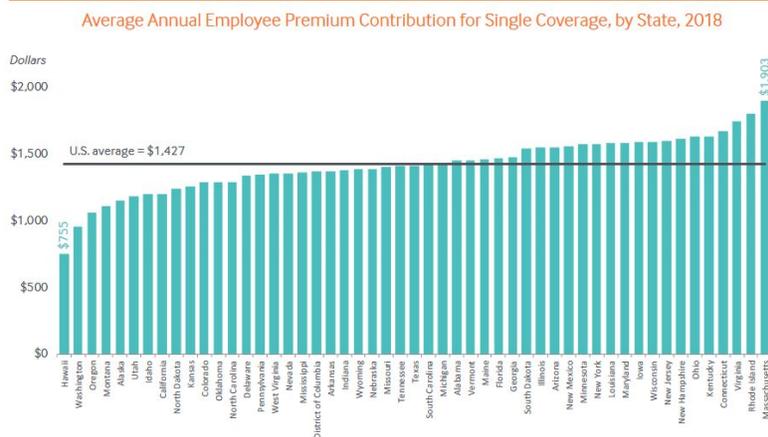
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).**

**JM:** I fully support Medicare for All. We need a moral and just health care system that guarantees high quality health care to everyone as a human right. When I am in the State House, I will co-sponsor An Act Establishing Medicare for All in Massachusetts (currently pending as S.683/H.1194). This legislation would guarantee equitable health care access to every resident of the Commonwealth through a single payer system.

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

**JM:** YES.

We cannot build a fair and moral economy without a fair and moral health care system that guarantees high quality health care to everyone as a human right. When I am in the State House, I will co-sponsor An Act Establishing Medicare for All in Massachusetts (currently pending as S.683/H.1194). This legislation would guarantee equitable health care access to every resident of the Commonwealth through a single payer system. Medicare for All in Massachusetts will provide continuous access to quality health care without tethering people to employer-provided plans and trapping people in jobs they wish to leave.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

I have worked in coalition with Planned Parenthood and other groups in my current job with the MA Commission on LGBTQ Youth to pass the ROE Act and have submitted testimony in support of the bill. Eliminating the judicial bypass process is an especially important element of the ROE Act. The current system requiring a young person to navigate the court system to have their decision signed off on by a judge offers no support or protection while causing undue stress, anxiety, and fear. By eliminating the judicial bypass requirement, the ROE Act ensures that the small percentage of young people who cannot turn to their parents when they experience an unintended pregnancy will still be protected, without delaying their care or causing them to leave the state to receive it.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

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

**JM:** It has been too slow and not sufficient. Racial and economic inequities has plagued Massachusetts long before COVID-19 tore through it. The COVID-19 crisis has not only exacerbated these inequities, but has also revealed the massive gaps in our social safety net. The disproportionate impact COVID-19 has inflicted on marginalized populations are the direct result of a broken economic system that values profit over human dignity.

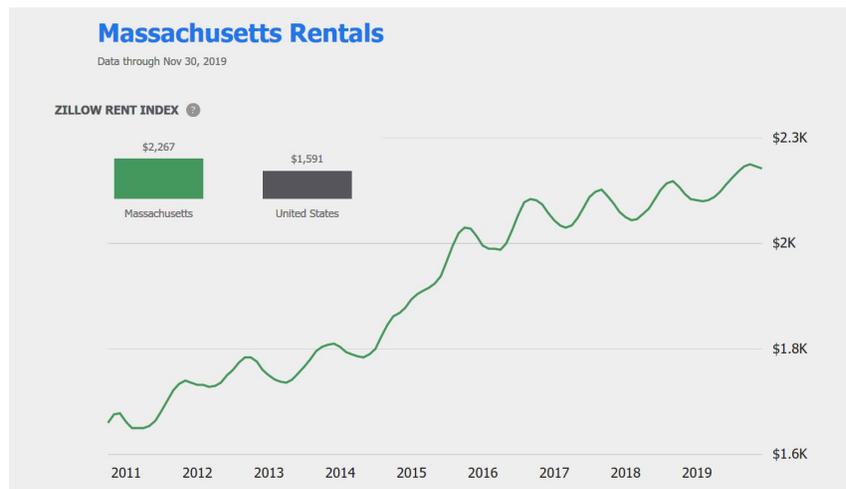
Massachusetts has also been distressingly slow to address the impact COVID-19 is having on incarcerated individuals. While some juvenile justice entities in the Commonwealth have taken

measures to reduce the number of people in secure facilities, it has taken numerous rulings from the Supreme Judicial Court for the adult criminal justice system to merely expedite parole for 300+ people whose parole had already been approved. This is to say nothing of actively decarcerating the prison and jail populations to slow the spread of COVID-19, which the state has been reluctant to do, despite the infection rate among incarcerated individuals being over twice as high as the general population. We are only as safe and healthy as our most vulnerable people, and the state's response to this pandemic has shown a disturbing reluctance to ensure that our most vulnerable are properly looked after.

## 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.).**

**JM:** Housing is a human right. In January, I published my housing platform, which calls for numerous policies to affirm that right in Massachusetts, protect tenant rights, and build housing for all.

80% of Allston-Brighton residents are renters, making our neighborhood especially vulnerable to the current housing crisis. We've seen the impacts all around us: poor and working people displaced from their homes; working class artists driven out by the cost of rent; lifelong residents hoping to downsize forced to move elsewhere; young renters taken advantage of by predatory or absentee landlords.

Rents in Allston-Brighton have skyrocketed over the last few years. Recent data has revealed that the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Allston-Brighton increased by 26%, from \$1,427 to \$1,801, between 2016 and 2018. During that same period, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment has increased by 20%, from \$1,807 to \$2,167; average rent for a three-bedroom has increased by 30%, from \$2,131 to \$2,767; and average rent for a four-bedroom has increased by 50%, from \$2,323 to \$3,496.

My housing platform that calls for stabilizing rents through statewide rent control, creating a tenants' bill of rights, building and investing in mixed-income social housing, ending exclusionary zoning, and ending homelessness in Massachusetts through a Housing First policy.

My full housing platform can be read here:  
<https://medium.com/@jordanforma/housing-is-a-human-right-a-policy-vision-for-massachusetts-61da7b50cddc>

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?**

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** YES.

My housing platform calls for a 10-point Tenants' Bill of Rights, which includes: (1) The right to quality and accessible housing; (2) Just cause eviction; (3) The right to counsel in eviction proceedings; (4) The right to eviction sealing; (5) Freedom from unjust fees; (6) The right to reasonable lease renewal; (7) The right to organize; (8) The right to comprehensive information (on your landlord and management company and on your rights as a tenant); (9) Tenant right to purchase; and (10) Real means of enforcing tenant rights.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

Massachusetts' zoning laws have not been overhauled in decades, and in the time since, restrictive zoning practices in wealthier, whiter suburbs have blocked the construction of mixed-income housing developments, family housing, and even modest developments like accessory dwelling units (ADUs). These restrictive practices have fueled the affordable housing and displacement crises, driving up the price of rent (especially Allston-Brighton), and putting the onus almost entirely on Boston to build new housing. A statewide housing crisis requires a statewide response, and overhauling our zoning rules must be prioritized. Massachusetts needs new zoning rules to permit the construction of multifamily housing and encourage the construction of new housing in areas close to public transit. New zoning rules must also outlaw any racist, exclusionary land use practices.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

Eviction sealing is an incredibly important housing justice issue that hasn't gotten the attention it deserves as policy, which is especially troubling considering both how disruptive and damaging an eviction record is, but also the extent to which the public eviction records on MassCourts have been used to harass and discriminate against renters. In Massachusetts, 38% of households are renters. In Allston-Brighton, however, that number is much higher, at around 80%. People of color are especially vulnerable to eviction. In Massachusetts, African-American and Hispanic households are twice as likely to be renters as White households, putting them at higher risk of evictions. Recent studies have shown that women face higher rates of evictions than men. Women with children, particularly women of color, may also be disproportionately harmed by the availability of eviction records. Further studies have shown that having children increases the chances that a landlord will file an eviction case

against women. The Tenants' Bill of Rights in my housing plan calls for the passage of the HOMES Act (currently pending in the legislature as S/824/H.3566). If this legislation does not pass in the current session I will fully support and fight for it when I am elected.

## 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.

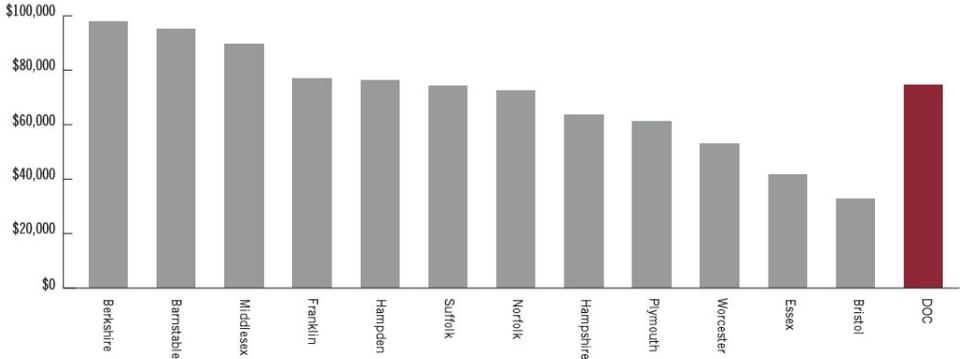
Immigrants make up 16% of Massachusetts’s population; however, demagoguery against, or indifference to, immigrant populations has historically been a mainstay of Massachusetts politics. As the Trump administration in Washington ramps up a xenophobic mass deportation agenda, it is important for states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

**JM:** In my current role with the MA Commission on LGBTQ Youth, I focus heavily on state policy and legislation around reforming our juvenile justice system. In this role I have worked closely with Citizens for Juvenile Justice in supporting legislation and executive branch policies to stop the school-to-prison pipeline, improve data collection and reporting, and raise the age of the juvenile justice system to include 18-to-20 year olds (which would ensure that those justice-involved youth receive rehabilitation and education programming, which is mandatory in the juvenile system but almost impossible to obtain in the adult system).

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

**JM:** YES.

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

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

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?**

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** YES.

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

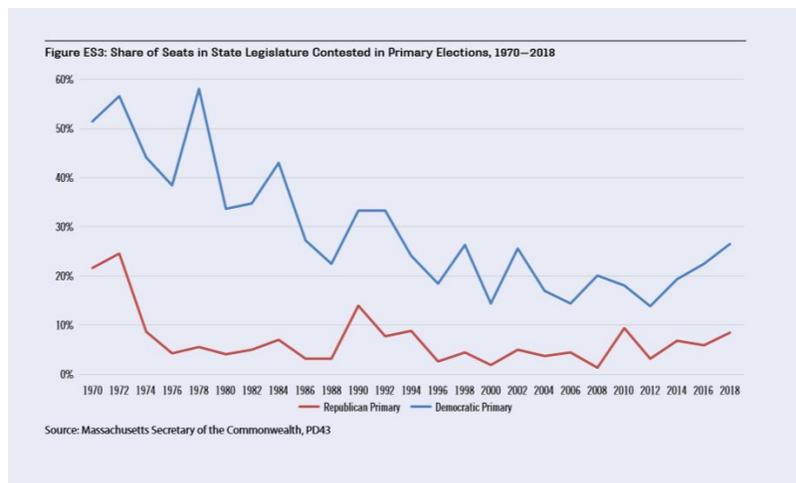
**JM:** YES.

## G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

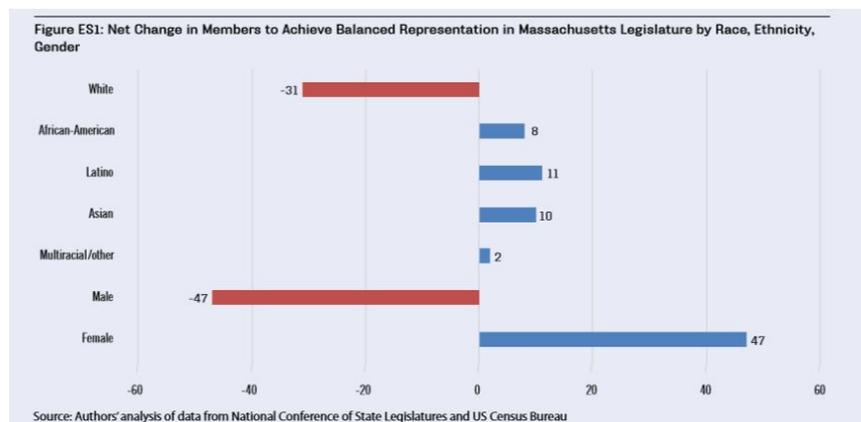
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

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

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



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



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

**JM:** I fully support the goals of groups like Act on Mass and Progressive Massachusetts in furthering democratic reforms inside the State House. We have a long way to go to achieve real and full transparency in the State House. It is simply unacceptable that the House refuses to do basic things like make roll call votes and committee votes available online. A well-functioning democracy depends on a well-informed electorate, and the legislature has stood firmly in the way of realizing that ideal, which is both bad for our Commonwealth and disrespectful to constituents.

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?**

**JM:** 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?

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?**

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** 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?

**JM:** 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?

**JM:** YES.

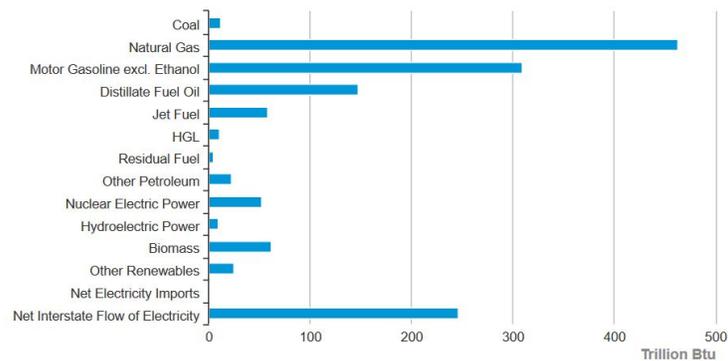
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection

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.

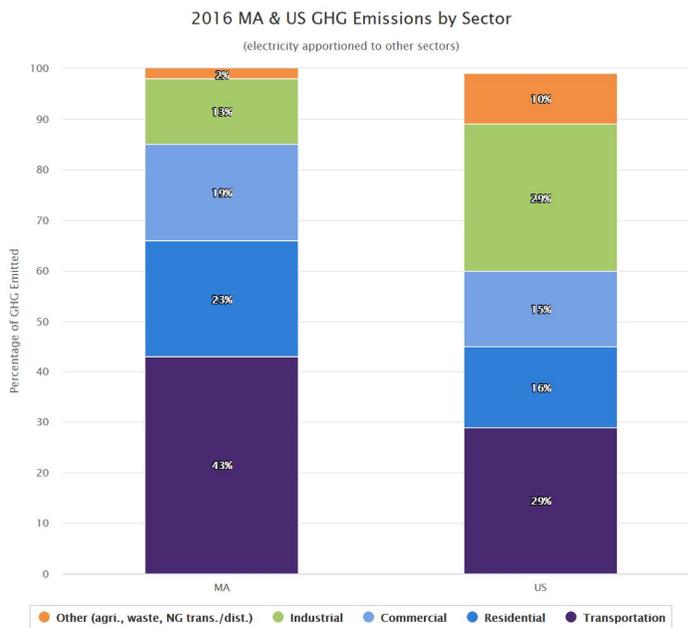
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

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.).**

**JM:** I have been a diehard environmentalist since I was very young, and a climate activist for many years. One of the biggest factors in my decision to run for office this year was the IPCC climate report from 2018, which made clear that we only have until 2030 to take bold, meaningful action on climate change. For far too long, we've seen good legislation either die or get severely watered down in the House, which happened to the 2018 climate bill. We can't afford to lose any more time on this. We have a deadline. By necessity the next 10 years must be the climate decade.

A Green New Deal for Massachusetts is a cornerstone of my platform. This will include transitioning to 100% renewable energy by 2035, utility reform, investing in and expanding public transit, creating a Massachusetts Conservation Corps, legislation to codify environmental justice and integrate it throughout legislation and executive branch action, carbon pricing, investing in green infrastructure, and creating a performance measurement tool to publicize and track our progress towards meeting our climate goals.

I have been in this fight for years. Until announcing my own run, I served as Chair of the Massachusetts Sierra Club's Political Committee, identifying, endorsing, and supporting candidates for office in Massachusetts, up and down the ballot, who are dedicated to climate action and environmental protection. I have also been an active member of the Allston-Brighton node of 350 Mass. Further, I am deeply invested in the intersection of clean, public transportation and climate. In Allston-Brighton I have worked for the expansion of bus lanes, recently on the successful campaign to create a bus and bike-only lane on Brighton Ave in Allston.

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

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** YES.

We should absolutely abolish the cap on net metering. Utility reform should also play a large role here. Massachusetts should follow the lead of Washington state and shift our utilities away from a return-on-capital model to a performance based model that rewards utilities for achieving energy efficiency, clean energy, and equity goals.

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

**JM:** 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?**

**JM:** YES.

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

**JM:** YES.

We need a full moratorium on new fossil fuel infrastructure in Massachusetts.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

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?**

**JM:** YES.

fund, and expand our transit network, the construction of West Station in Allston, transforming our commuter rail system to Regional Rail, and more. My transit plan can be viewed here: <https://medium.com/@jordanforma/public-transit-is-a-public-good-1095ae7df8e9>

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?**

**JM:** YES.

Regional Transit Authorities already do not get the attention they deserve in our conversations around public transit, nor do they get the funding they desperately need despite serving huge populations. Regional ballot initiatives are critical to raising new revenue for regional transit projects without relying on the approval by the legislature.

### **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.

**JM:** As an advocate for safer bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, I support the pedestrian- and bike-friendly design and development of our roadways. Funding for Safe Routes to Schools and Complete Streets programs should be distributed equitably, ensuring that low-income communities and communities of color have equal access to these funds.