



**PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS  
2020 LEGISLATIVE  
ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Date:** 5/24/2020

**Candidate:** Charlene DiCalogero

**Office Sought:** State Representative, 12th Worcester

**Party:** Green-Rainbow

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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?**

**CD:** Top priorities

1. Democratic reform: Get private money and corporate influence out of elections and government; transparency in state legislature; expand access to voting, drop voter ID requirements, pass Ranked Choice Voting.
2. Pandemic health and economic response and recovery: with particular attention to Black, Brown, immigrant, unemployed and essential services workers, and people living and working in group living situations; paid sick leave for all workers; adapting education, healthcare, social services, etc.
3. Economic and environmental justice: propose a true living wage rather than a starvation minimum wage; reconfigure tax system to be fair; prioritize spending toward human needs and stemming the climate emergency; advocate for universal basic income.

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

**CD:** I have enough understanding of the seriousness of our situation, I have the courage, and I have the persistence, to move the progressive agenda forward.

At key moments in my professional, political and personal life, I have been the lone voice taking a principled stand on an issue, against significant pressure to bow to convenience, prejudice and fear. In 2016, I ran against a long-time incumbent for State Rep; now putting me in a better position to reach the voters.

In Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Ralph Nader, we have seen the surprising power a lone voice can have. Certainly there are State legislators with whom I can and will work. None of them occupy the unique position of being a leader of an alternative party, whose Green Ten Key Values and platform challenge the "same-old" thinking and policy that drove us straight into the emergencies we now face.

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

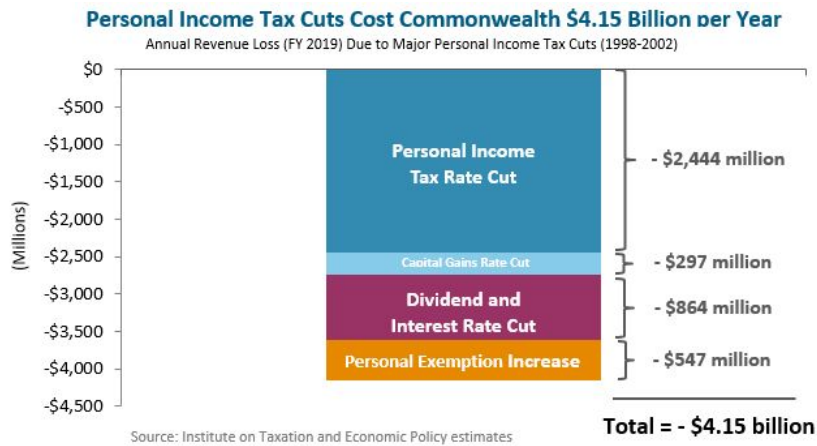
- CD:**
1. Lack of transparency, responsibility and courage in the legislative process, including votes for bills and budgets.
  2. Campaign money "arms race," hidden ('dark') money and corporate lobbyists corrupting campaigns and day-to-day government.
  3. Near-total lack of Fourth Estate investigation and reporting of state government, and legislative elections.
  4. Candidate suppression and party suppression, which contributes to voter suppression. When people feel that the 1 or 2 candidates from the same two parties who hurt them before won't help them, they don't vote.

## II. The Issues

### A. Revenue and Taxation

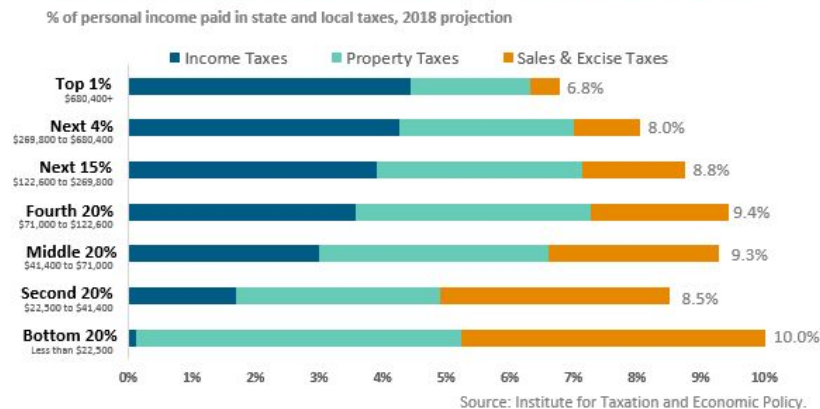
Between 1977 and 2016, Massachusetts [reduced state taxes](#) by more than all but two other states. Because of income tax cuts enacted between 1998 and 2002, Massachusetts loses over \$4 billion in tax revenue *each year*--\$4 billion that is not invested in our roads, bridges, schools, parks, and services, 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.**

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



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

**CD:** I support a progressive tax code including fair share graduated income tax and inheritance taxes on \$1 million+. I support a tax on investment transactions, with exemptions for state and municipal bonds. We need businesses to pay their fair share as well, since they benefit from public expenditures on infrastructure, health care, the environment, education, etc. No corporation should be paying less tax than the average wage earner! We should minimize regressive taxes such as the sales tax, which disproportionately affects poor people.

I collected signatures for the Fair Share Amendment in collaboration with SEIU 509, and publicized it on social media. I see this as an interim solution.

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

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

- 3. Fair Share. Would you support a constitutional amendment to increase the income tax on income over \$1 million by 4% (Fair Share Amendment, sometimes referred to as the "Millionaire's Tax")?**

**CD:** YES.

As mentioned, I see this as an interim solution. This focuses only on annual income, rather than wealth; is not a graduated income tax system; and limits what the funds can be spent on.

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

**CD:** I am strongly in favor of removing nonprofit status from universities with huge endowments and large facilities/land area, who nevertheless pay, at most, PILOT fees, while taking advantage of the public services the state and localities provide their staff, students and projects.

## 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

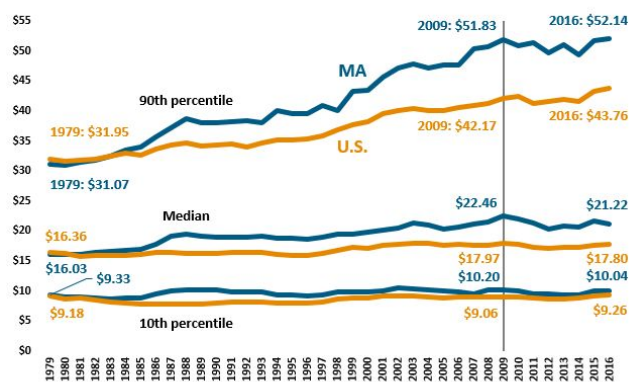


Source: Economic Policy Institute analysis of unpublished Total Economy Productivity data from Bureau of Labor Statistics' Labor Productivity and Costs program, wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Cost Trends data, and the 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.).**

**CD:** We must create a fairer economy by modernizing wages and working conditions policies. A minimum wage that is a living wage for a worker to support a family of 3 can go a long way to fixing many problems in the economy, health care, housing, education, and other areas, problems that tax policy changes alone will not fix. One way to do that is to set maximum compensation for the top employees and executives.

Past member, Pittsburgh Musicians Union, AFM Local 60-471, 1997-1998 (resigned in good standing due to relocation); signed up to support new graduate students union at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA in 1998 or 1999

Posted on the racist history of tipping, Central Mass Green-Rainbow FB page.

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

**CD:** 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?**

**CD:** YES.

We need to make it easier for workers to get justice and compensation for stolen wages. Penalties should be set high enough to discourage businesses from doing it.

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?**

**CD:** YES.

I also want to talk to higher-income workers, e.g., in higher ed and technology, who may earn "good" incomes, but often have terrible hours, and often have or take little time off. This is a way of employers avoiding hiring the number of workers they really need to do the work, threatens the health of these workers, and damages workers' family life and ability to participate in the civic life of their communities. The concept of "middle class" used to have this element of limits on work time, even if there was no overtime pay.

5. **Fair Scheduling. Many workers in the service sector face irregular working hours, making it difficult to plan for other life events. Do you support providing workers the right to 14 days advance notice of hours and the right to request specific hours without retaliation from the employer?**

**CD:** 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?**

**CD:** 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?**

**CD: YES.**



### C. Education

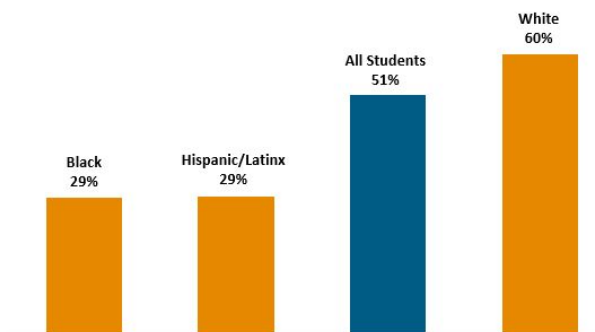
The promise of public education has always been as a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. Although our public education system gets high marks overall, it remains one of the [most unequal](#) in the country.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

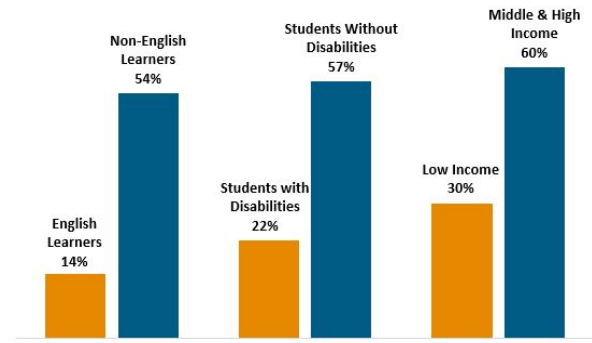
Share of MA 4th Graders Proficient on the 2017 NAEP Reading Exam, by Student Race, all students



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

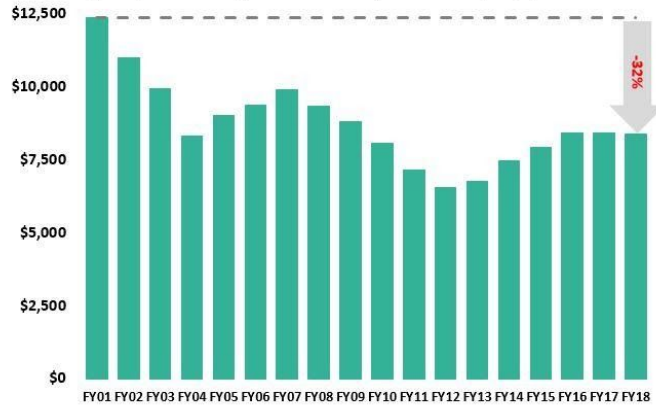


Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2017

#### 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.).**

**CD:** Most of my professional work has been in education, from pre-K through higher education research, development and training, and adult basic and popular education. I witnessed the imposition of destructive federal and state policies, particularly in educator professional development, school improvement, and literacy teaching and learning. I attended MA DESE meetings on federal programs (No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top), and forums on charter schools and innovation schools, which I saw as veiled attacks on public education.

We need better ways of funding K-12 education that do not primarily depend on local property taxes, which create inherently unequal and segregated schools. One proposal: aggregate and distribute property taxes on a statewide basis. The MA education system over-dependes on lotteries, which disproportionately impact low-income people who gamble.

I publicly supported No on 2 in 2016 (see photo with EAW teachers, posted to my FB page).

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

**CD:** 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?**

**CD:** We have to create a much fairer taxation system, in order to begin making up for the broad economic impact of the pandemic. If the education budget as a whole is cut, then I will push to prioritize the lowest-income districts in funding staff, building improvement, and student supports so they do not bear the brunt any more than they already have.

We may need to have smaller classrooms as part of the pandemic response, so we'll need to hire more teachers. Those teachers in low-income districts should be paid higher wages by supplementing the local tax base with state funds, while keeping local control of school policies in the community, and including more parents and students in decision making.

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.)

**CD:** YES.

High stakes testing is neither valid nor reliable--it tells us very little about what children are learning and teachers teaching, and is antithetical to high quality, in-depth learning practices.

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

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

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

**CD:** YES.

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

**CD:** YES.

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

**CD:** YES.

College students have told me there are additional affordability issues, such as having to buy expensive e-text books that are not possible to resell.

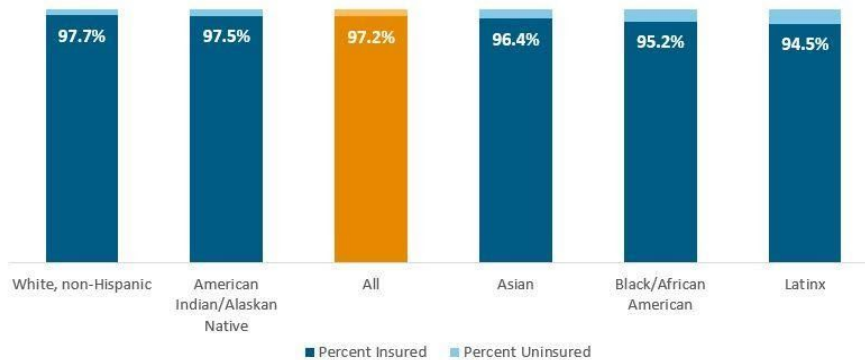
## D. Health Care

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

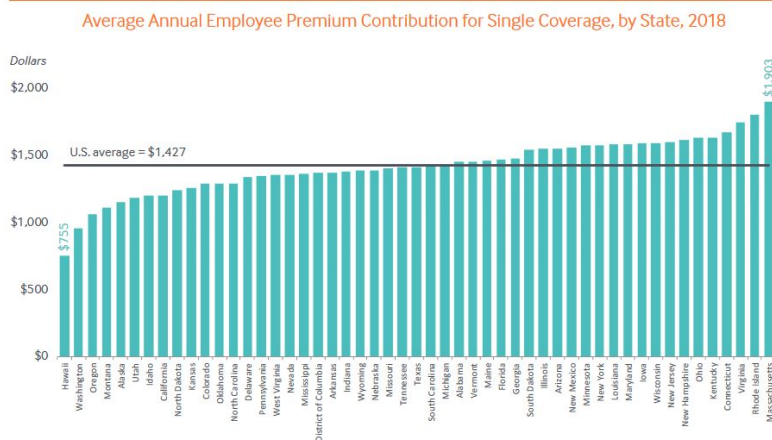
Percent with health insurance in Massachusetts, by race, 2017.



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.).**

**CD:** Healthcare is a basic human need. Single Payer has long been in the Green Party platform, which I fully support. Single Payer will make it easier to deal with pandemics, since overall population health would improve.

Many Central Mass families have been affected by opioids flooding our communities. I propose shifting more resources to addiction prevention and treatment by reducing incarceration in prisons.

I support a woman's right to choose, and sexual and reproductive health care for all, including LGBTQ people. I have demonstrated at women's and LGBTQ marches on Washington, Boston and elsewhere, and made calls to legislators in favor of women's and LGBTQ rights, and for gun control (supported MA Red Flag law), very much a public health issue. Violence against women of all colors, Black and Brown, immigrants, LGBTQ, and people with disabilities, is a health issue I am informed about as an anti-violence activist.

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

**CD:** YES.

- 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?**

**CD:** YES.

- 4. Harm Reduction. An essential part of addressing the opioid crisis, safe consumption sites allow medical professionals to respond to overdoses and engage participants in medical and behavioral health services. Would you support the legalization of SCSs?**

**CD:** YES.

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

**CD:** Better than some states, still inadequate—and this shouldn't even be a question, since the federal government has the most money and could have mobilized all kinds of resources before the crisis and from its earliest stages.

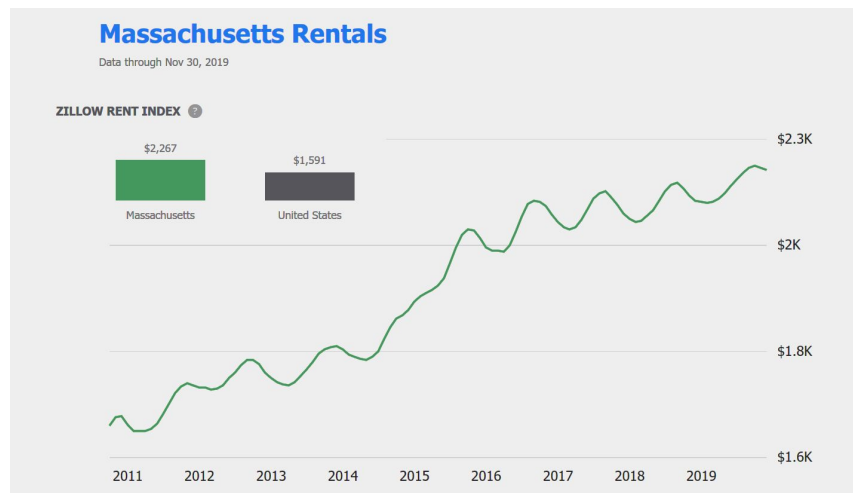
Many people, including medical, epidemiological and history scholars in our state and elsewhere, foresaw the possibility of a pandemic. In 2003, I was working at Lesley University during SARS, when my supervisor asked me whether we should plan for its arrival.

Our wealth of academic and medical professionals should have put MA in a good position to anticipate the early arrival of the virus given a high amount of international travel, and where the hot spots might be, such as long-term care facilities and health-challenged and direct-services-working communities of color. Unfortunately, the Governor's Reopening Advisory Board seems to have very few such advisors, and a lot of big business people.

## 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.).**

**CD:** Everyone has a right to a decent, stable home. I experienced housing instability and substandard conditions in Greater Boston, where as a nonprofit professional, I could not afford an Arlington 2 BR rental without a roommate; and lived in an uninsulated attic through frigid winters and some 100+F days.

As a MA Alliance Against Predatory Lending Board member (2 year term), I testified at a State House hearing on foreclosures in my district, supporting legislation to prevent illegal and unnecessary foreclosures; and protested evictions of owners and their tenants. Female-headed, Black, Brown and immigrant households and others with subprime mortgages were hit hard by the 2008 financial fraud crisis, and are still losing homes.

From 2005-2014, I participated in building and marketing 68 Green-built cohousing condos, including 17 Ch. 40B affordable 1 to 3 BRs (Co-chair, Membership & Marketing, Sawyer Hill EcoVillage). I mentored buyers through the 40B process.

- 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?**

**CD:** 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?

CD: YES.

4. **Zoning Reform/Housing Production.** Do you support requiring cities and towns to allow multifamily housing to be built as of right within 1 mile of transit stations?

CD: UNDECIDED.

I'd like to know where this has been done already, and how it's working. I can imagine big real estate developers exploiting such a provision, and displacing the people who may be low- or moderate-income who already live there; as well as communities being unable to control such development, which might work better as mixed-income and mixed use, for an overall socially and economically healthier district.

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?

CD: 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.

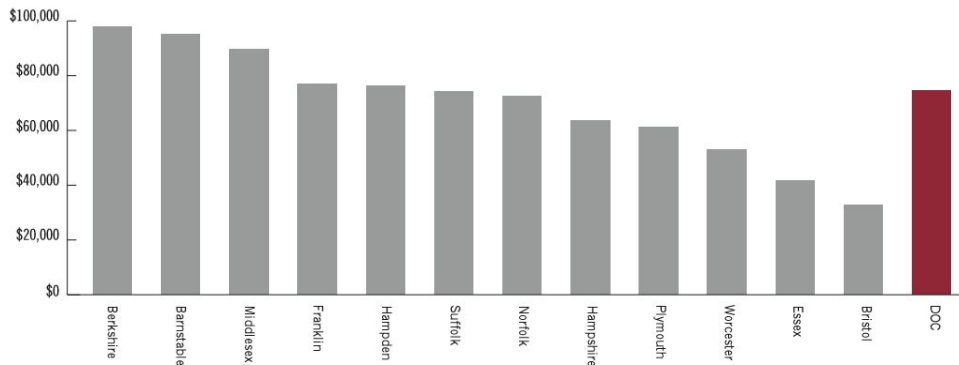
### Significant racial disparities exist in incarceration in Massachusetts.

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.).**

**CD:** As long as race, ethnicity, gender, culture, inherited wealth or lack thereof, or other characteristics are misused to unfairly distribute power and wealth, we have serious problems. I learned to recognize my unearned white middle class privilege. As a queer Jewish woman, I have experienced oppression, including threat of physical violence, based on those identities. In office I will actively pursue equity, insisting that underrepresented communities be invited to the table, be empowered to advocate for themselves, and help shape public policy.

In January, I attended the LWV Juvenile Justice forum, and before that, "What a Difference a DA makes" conference at Harvard Law. In 2016, Phil Stone, JD, spoke at the Central Mass Regional Convention on mass incarceration, for-profit prisons, and companies exploiting prisoner labor in MA prisons. I visited the Worcester Islamic Center to show support after the ChristChurch shootings.

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

**CD:** YES.

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

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

- 4. Solitary Confinement. In Massachusetts, prisoners can be sentenced to 10 years of solitary confinement—per infraction. The UN defines holding someone in solitary**

**confinement for more than 15 days as torture. Do you support limiting the use of solitary to no more than 15 consecutive days?**

**CD: 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?**

**CD: YES.**

Right now I assume these visits are limited or eliminated because of the pandemic. How else can we support these contacts during this time?

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?**

**CD: YES.**

My understanding is that for-profits and government also exploit MA prisoners' labor, paying them far less than minimum wage, and often are not providing vocational training with these jobs that could help them get self-supporting work after release. The prisoners should be able to earn at least minimum wage that could be saved in an interest-bearing account for them to receive on their release.

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?**

**CD: 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?**

**CD: YES.**

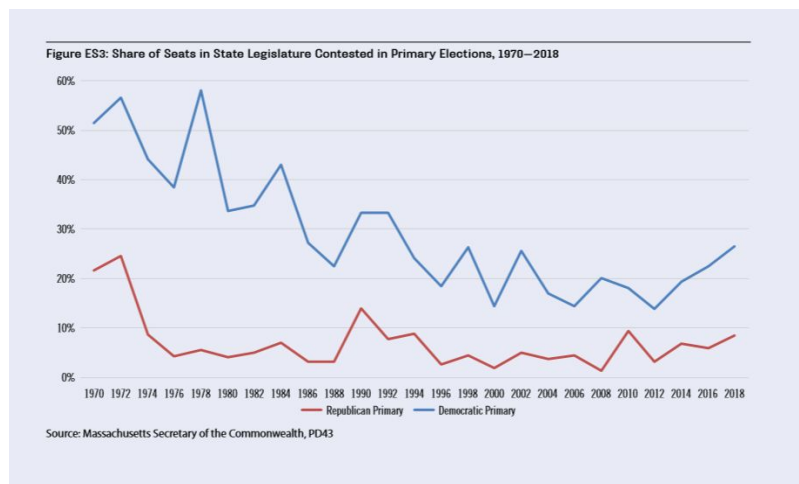
This is good for everyone's safety, as it helps make sure all people on the road meet minimum driving standards.

## G. Good Government and Strong Democracy

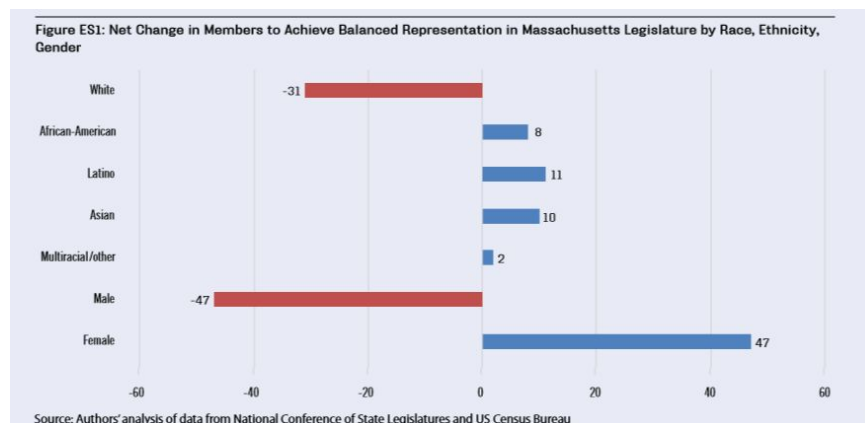
A strong democracy depends on a transparent and representative government and an engaged public. Too often, however, we see centralized, unaccountable power and barriers to participation. An undemocratic, centralized power structure on Beacon Hill makes it easier for lobbyists to target the top and undermine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

**CD:** Massachusetts government and elections are deeply flawed. They need to be transformed. Fortunately, I have encountered increasing understanding and support for this in my district.

I collected signatures for:

- The PassMass amendment, to say that money is not speech and corporations may be regulated by the state.
- Ranked Choice Voting ballot initiative, 2019 and 2020

I ran in 2016 for State Representative in this district, which was one of only 33% of all state legislative races to be contested in the general election (source: Worcester Telegram editorial, "And the Winners Are..." June 8, 2016).

I write on these issues on my website, and post on issues of State House lack of transparency, Ranked Choice Voting, and PassMass on the Central Mass Green-Rainbow FB page.

- 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?**

**CD:** 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?

**CD:** I am taking the Act on Mass pledge, as soon as I can arrange for someone to photograph me signing it (as required by Act on Mass).

- 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?**

**CD:** 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?**

**CD:** YES.

I support full public financing of all MA elections. If each candidate in a given race can only spend a set amount of money to reach the voters, then the playing field might be relatively level. I would also like to see "equal time" reinstated in broadcast and print media.

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?

CD: 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?

CD: 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?

CD: YES.

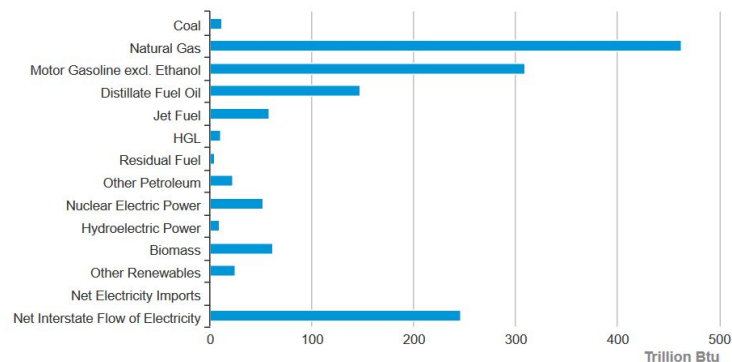
## H. Sustainable Infrastructure and Environmental Protection


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.

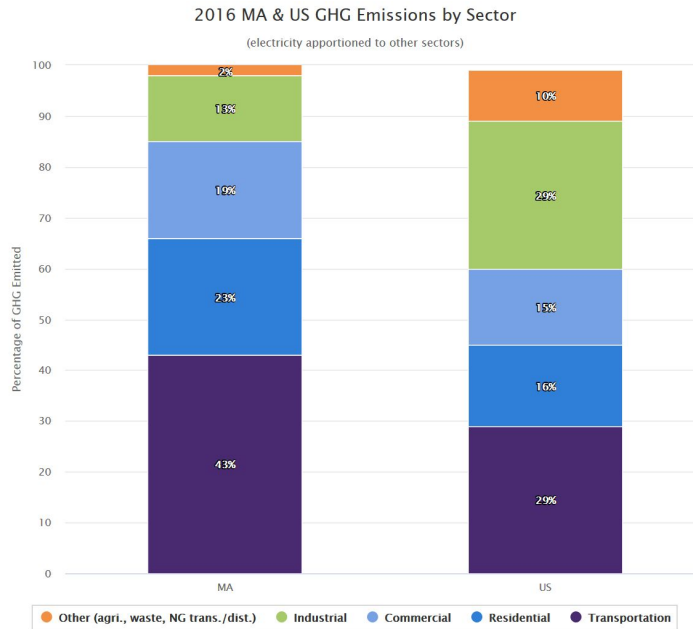
**Despite recent progress, Massachusetts is still overwhelmingly dependent on fossil fuels.**

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.).**

**CD:** We are in a climate emergency, and the State Legislature has a key role to play in either stemming or exacerbating it. So far it has been ineffective, and often obstructive. We have 10 years to act as a state, country and planet to make a difference.

This has been a major focus of my community work. As a member of 350 Central Mass since 2016, and co-founder of the Worcester Climate Strike Coalition, I organized multiple demonstrations and educational events, and two climate strikes in Worcester, starting in July 2019, events in August and Sept. 2019. I spoke at the Mock Funeral for the Earth (see article and phone, Worcester Telegram, 9/13/20), and as a coalition spokesperson was interviewed on WICN with a Youth Climate Strike organizer (see photo). I helped shape the Declaration of Climate Emergency passed by the Worcester City Council on 9/16/20.

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

**CD:** 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?**

**CD:** YES.

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

**CD:** YES.

I think we need to accelerate to 2030.

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?

CD: YES.

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

CD: YES.

I have actively opposed new gas pipelines and the Weymouth compressor station as a member of 350 Central Mass. See photo, Stop Gas Pipelines, Worcester State U., 2016.

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?

CD: NO.

This won't help fast enough. I have concerns that "market-based solutions" such as carbon fees will do little to abate the climate emergency at this late date, and are too complicated to be workable. I would advocate for a fast expansion of mass transit, including "last mile" small vans or buses to more rural areas, connecting to expanded commuter rail and bus systems; and more rebates for electric and hybrid vehicles, looking toward a complete phase-out of gasoline-powered cars.

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?

CD: YES.

9. **Regional Transportation Funding.** The unavailability of state funds for infrastructure spending has meant the deterioration of regional transportation systems. Do you support allowing municipalities to place a question on the ballot to raise revenue for local and regional transportation projects?

CD: YES.

That said, state money is what's going to make it possible, especially now, considering the burden localities are carrying because of the pandemic. The communities that need it most are generally the least able to afford it.



### **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.

**CD:** As you can see, I have engaged on a multitude of issues important to my district and the Commonwealth. The office of State Representative should be a full-time commitment, and I am prepared to give it.

I loved serving as elected Library Trustee, and advocated effectively for libraries with local and state officials and at Town Meeting for funding. The nuts-and-bolts experience of governing, such as learning local and state regulations, and negotiating with the MassDEP and local Boards to replace our library septic system, has been invaluable.

The state legislature is where I believe my skills and talents would best serve the public, especially my knowledge of education, my commitment to healthy democracy, and my care for the many impacted by the pandemic and the climate emergency.

My experience and informed leadership, passion and commitment, will win in the 12th Worcester, with your help.