

<p>Background and Priorities</p>	<p>0. Please tell us anything you would like us to know about you including your motivation, preparation, priorities, and vision for the campaign and office.</p> <p>I am running for State Representative to be a strong leader to serve the needs of Somerville and Medford residents, and to bring progressive values to state policy. I have the experience and knowledge to be an effective legislator. For years, I have been a committed advocate for working people in the community at local, state and national levels.</p> <p>One thing that I have learned from my experiences is that it is possible to create good policies that address issues. As a research analyst in the House of Representatives, I played a key role in the largest expansion of health care coverage in Massachusetts's history by helping draft our historic reform legislation. My team worked closely with House and Senate leadership and people on across the aisle to craft the best plan we could, one that has now provided quality, affordable health coverage to hundreds of thousands of people. It was an incredible experience to be part of, and what it taught me what that by working hard to learn the issues, listen all sides, and bring expertise to the debate, we can create real solutions to social issues.</p> <p>I am ready to stand up for our communities and make sure that state policy reflects our needs and values. As State Rep., I will work to ensure the Green Line extension is fully funded and built all the way to Route 16 in Medford; that we continue to preserve the Mystic River an a valuable resource for our communities; and importantly, that we address the affordability of Medford and Somerville through affordable housing and good jobs so residents can continue to live and thrive in our diverse neighborhoods.</p> <p>Like Carl, I will be a strong voice for the progressive issues we care about at the state level. I will be a leader on women's health and reproductive rights, on progressive taxation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And, following Carl's impressive leadership, I will work on ending discrimination for transgender people. Somerville and Medford are showing the way in a lot of these areas, and I will bring those values to the State House.</p> <p>We live in an amazing community, but there are still critical issues that we need to address. We need to do what our community does well – work</p>
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	<p>together to continue to build strong neighborhoods and to support one another. And I know from my experience that it's possible to create good policy to address some of the issues we are faced with. I would like to work with our communities to bring our voices to the state level.</p>
<p>Transportation and Infrastructure</p>	<p>1. Former Rep. Carl Sciortino was a leading advocate for public transit and a champion for the Green Line Extension project, in particular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What kinds of legislative efforts would you undertake to put the MBTA on more stable financial footing? <p>The MBTA is saddled with debt. In 2013, the Mass. legislature relieved the MBTA of some of its unmanageable capital debt, but residual debt service continues to constitute a huge financial burden. The \$424 million in annual debt service will consume 65% of the MBTA's projected \$646 million in operating revenues in FY 2015, leaving the MBTA dependent upon \$1.25 billion in state and local government funding.</p> <p>One way to help the MBTA become more financially secure is to have the Commonwealth help assume the costs of the annual debt service, and treat the capital cost of future repairs and equipment acquisition as a capital cost to be borne by the Commonwealth, and not by the MBTA alone. To ensure fairness, the state would need to provide assistance to all regional transit authorities, not just the MBTA.</p> <p>To the extent that the capital costs of road, bridge, and tunnel construction is treated as a shared expense, this proposal would mean that public transportation would receive equal treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What would you do to keep the Green Line Extension project moving forward? <p>Keeping the Green Line moving forward will require constant advocacy for the project. It will require the ability to stay on top of all of the relevant planning and budgeting cycles at the MassDOT and the legislative funding process; as well as provide information that the elected officials, businesses, and residents of Somerville and Medford need in order to effectively advocate for continued progress. I will join with those diverse constituencies in advocating with the Mass DOT and MBTA for continued forward progress and work with my colleagues at the State House to sustain and even broaden legislative support for the project.</p> <p>I would work closely with community members, as well as staff at DOT and members of the legislature to keep the Green Line at the top of the agenda.</p>

- How far should the Green Line be extended (and why)?

The Green Line Extension to Route 16 is critical; it would mean economic growth, greater mobility for residents, fewer cars on the road, and more healthy options to get to work, school, and play. I would fight to ensure there are resources to extend the Green Line all the way to Rt 16 in Medford.

2. Numerous studies have reported on the backlog of maintenance of the Commonwealth's roads, dams, transit systems, pipelines, along with increased demand for bicycle and pedestrian right-of-ways.

- What would be your priorities?

Addressing infrastructure problems that jeopardize the safety of Commonwealth residents should be the first priority; addressing infrastructure problems that jeopardize the economic well being of the Commonwealth is a close second.

When the legislature addresses roadway or transit infrastructure issues, I will work to ensure that we capitalized on opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian access along those roads. When we address dams and pipelines, we should ensure that we have capitalized on opportunities to create/improve pedestrian access to the green spaces where that infrastructure is located.

- How would you pay for infrastructure improvements?

Infrastructure improvement requires bonds and an understanding of the bonding and capital plan process. Infrastructure improvement is also a jobs generator: it creates the construction jobs and well-functioning infrastructure supports economic growth.

I would also examine the adequacy of our revenue system and determine if it is sufficient to support what we want our Commonwealth to be. Looking at recent trends, revenue has declined as a percent of personal income over the past two decades. I would lead in the difficult conversation about revenue to ensure we have funds to support necessary infrastructure.

<p>Taxation and Revenue</p>	<p>3. Rep. Sciortino was a dedicated advocate for fair taxation policy. What changes in Massachusetts tax policy would you advocate? Please be specific about what taxes (and tax expenditures) you would change and how.</p> <p>Massachusetts has passed numerous tax cuts over the last ten years, which have mainly benefited corporations and the wealthiest people. I recognize our need for tax reform in Massachusetts to ensure we are raising funds more equitably and have revenue for the services that families need and that keep our communities strong. I support moving to a graduated income tax, as well as closing loopholes and raising the tax rate for investment income, such as capital gains and dividends.</p> <p>I would also support the elimination of the sales tax exemption on sugar-sweetened beverages and snacks, which would increase revenue while reducing obesity, especially in children.</p> <p>We also need to examine tax expenditures, which are a form of spending program through the tax code. Some are not justified and would restore revenue and help balance the budget. These tax expenditures should have the same level of scrutiny as spending programs in the budget. For example, special business tax breaks, including the film tax credit, should be examined for their usefulness in bringing jobs and economic growth to the Commonwealth.</p>
<p>Veterans</p>	<p>4. There is nationwide concern about the adequacy of efforts to link veterans with the benefits, job training, and health and mental health care they need. What would you do to ensure that veterans get the full range of help they deserve?</p> <p>As the daughter and granddaughter of veterans, I strongly support ensuring that veterans receive the care and services they are entitled to. A few ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistent with the provisions of H. 3210 filed by Rep. Sciortino, the state should do everything possible to ensure that veterans discharged because of consensual relations with another adult, under the military's anti-gay provisions, should be entitled to the full range of benefits accorded other veterans with an honorable discharge. ● Massachusetts's veterans have received better access to health care than veterans in other states, and have not been subject to the kinds of delays and denials that have been the subject of recent adverse publicity. However, to ensure that veterans have the

	<p>necessary support for accessing the full range of benefits to which they are entitled, the state should increase funding for regional independent veterans' advocacy centers, like the Veteran's Benefits Clearinghouse Corporation, Veterans Advocacy Service, local advocates affiliated with the National Organization of Veterans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses, partners, and families of returning veterans (or veterans killed in action) need and deserve assistance in accessing the full range of federal and state benefits to which they are entitled. I would support legislation to require that applications for health coverage, housing services, and state-administered benefits programs ask whether the applicant is a veteran's dependent, and if they are, to provide information about the assistance to which they are entitled.
<p>Civil and Voting Rights</p>	<p>5. Rep. Sciortino was known for his civil rights advocacy on behalf of members of the GLBTQ community. What are some of the ongoing civil rights issues that you would use a seat in the House to address?</p> <p>In my work as a health policy analyst at Community Catalyst, I worked closely on the Affordable Care Act, which has covered over 12 million people and ensures that people with chronic health conditions can still get coverage. I have worked with LGBT organizations at the national and local levels to ensure that the LGBT community has tailored outreach and enrollment support to ensure that people get the care they need.</p> <p>In my current work, I also have received an education in the numerous barriers to health care for transgender people. It has helped me to better understand the many challenges and lack of basic equitable treatment for transgender people. I am proud of work our team has done at Community Catalyst to promote coverage for equitable health services for transgender people around the country through successful advocacy with MassHealth and the Department of Insurance to cover all necessary services. Rep. Sciortino was a strong advocate for this population and I would like to lead on this issue and continue the fight for fair treatment.</p> <p>Finally, LGBT youth are at greater risk of homelessness and violence. This is an area in which greater action at the state level.</p> <p>6. Although immigration reform is largely a federal issue, states can pass laws and implement policies which afford immigrants rights and protections, regardless of their documentation status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should Massachusetts policy towards undocumented immigrants be with respect to: issuing driver's licenses, accessing

	<p>in-state tuition rates in state colleges and universities, accessing state-funded housing subsidies, health coverage, and the protections afforded to citizens and documented workers</p> <p>Immigrants who live in our communities should be able to gain drivers' licenses, attend college at in-state rates, and access the same housing, health care, and workers' protections as people who are citizens.</p> <p>These are issues of basic fairness and rewarding families who work hard and are members of our communities.</p>
Criminal Justice	<p>7. What kinds of reforms would you advocate for in the Massachusetts criminal justice and corrections systems, and why?</p> <p>Our criminal justice system needs a major overhaul. For too long, the "tough on crime" slogan has led to policymaking by talking point and press release. As a result, our prison population keeps expanding, more inmates are in even higher security settings, and the fiscal cost to society keeps increasing. Yet, careful studies have shown no benefit to public safety flowing from this focus on incarceration.</p> <p>Because of my strong background in health care, one area of particular concern for me is the nexus between our deficient health care system and criminal justice. Estimates are that 85% of those in prison have a substance abuse problem. Jails should not be our preferred setting for detox services. Other mental health concerns are also behind much of the criminal activity in our state. We should see investments in effective drug and alcohol abuse treatment problems as a critical public safety as well as a health imperative. Expanded prison mental health services are also crucial.</p> <p>I support the approach being led by the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, which includes reducing prison terms where appropriate, and using more alternatives to jails, like pre-release programs. We should invest much more in reintegration and re-entry programs. Evidence shows that this approach can reduce crime rates and enhance public safety.</p> <p>Finally, I oppose the death penalty under all circumstances and I will not vote to reinstate capital punishment in Massachusetts.</p>
Gambling	<p>8. Please explain your position on the ballot initiative to repeal the Massachusetts Expanded Gaming Act. If casino gambling moves forward,</p>

	<p>what legislative or advocacy efforts would you undertake to improve the law and/or to protect Somerville and Medford residents and businesses from the adverse impacts of a casino in Everett or Revere?</p> <p>I am in favor of a repeal of the Massachusetts Expanded Gaming Act. While good jobs and economic development are top priorities for Medford and Somerville, there are better ways to create strong jobs than investing funds into gambling. Gambling has severe social consequences for local communities and the profits from a casino nearby would leave our cities. Casinos mean more strain on our mental health and criminal justice systems, with little benefit to our local communities.</p>
<p>Health Care</p>	<p>9. Although Massachusetts was a pioneer in health insurance reform, many challenges remain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are some of the most pressing issues in health care coverage, access, and financing, and what can the state do to address those challenges? ● Should implementing a single payer system be part of the solution? If so, what should be the roles of the state and private insurers in that system? <p>Massachusetts leads the country in health care coverage, with some 98% of our residents covered. I am proud that I played a central role in the passage of comprehensive health care reform in 2006. As a senior staff member for the key House committee drafting the bill, I worked hard to make sure the final law strengthened our safety net and included coverage for legal immigrants. Our bill in Massachusetts provided the model for the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare"), and since 2010 I have worked for a national organization dedicated to supporting and strengthening the ACA.</p> <p>I know the right path in health care policy depends on both a detailed understanding of the complex health care system we have, and having the values that puts patients and their needs first. Our healthcare system must reflect our values. If elected, I hope to devote considerable energy to health care, and hope to serve on a committee dealing with health and health care.</p> <p>However, challenges around coverage remain. For me, the biggest issue is the growing problem of underinsurance. People may have coverage, but increasing copays and deductibles can make the coverage too expensive to use. Lowering premiums by shifting more and more costs to patients who are sick is not a tradeoff I support. This is most pressing for people with chronic disease, who must every month for medications and treatments to</p>

keep them healthy. Insurance companies should not discourage people from getting these cost-effective treatments by charging copays and deductibles. I support legislation introduced by Senator Jehlen to eliminate copays and deductibles for cost-effective care for chronic disease, like asthma, diabetes or HIV.

Beyond coverage, Massachusetts must address the cost issue. For while we are number one in coverage, we are last in cost - the most expensive medical care in the country. Governor Patrick took the lead on this issue, and I support his efforts. His policy is grounded in changing the models of care so that patients are at the center, and not the insurance company.

Massachusetts is leading the way with coordinated care, so tests don't get repeated and patients have more time with their doctor or nurse. I work closely with an innovative care plan that shows that these new ways of providing care can both save money and improve health outcomes. The plan, called the "Commonwealth Care Alliance," is run for the benefit of its members. The care managers are able to throw out the insurance rulebook, and provide patients with what they need to stay healthy. So if a patient with asthma needs an air conditioner, it doesn't matter that it's not a covered benefit. She gets the air conditioner, because it keeps her healthy.

I am also acutely aware of the serious disparities in health care for people of color in Massachusetts. I support legislation pending to create a state Office of Health Equity which would be empowered to examine the impact on disparities of health care and other policy initiatives. We also need to make sure health care works for immigrant communities, by providing translation assistance and culturally appropriate care. We can also lower costs by investing more in public health. It's shameful that Massachusetts has consistently cut its public health funding. From vaccines to radiation monitoring to helping Somerville and Medford provide safe opportunities for exercise, we all depend on public health. I understand how investments in public health lead to lower costs for medical care, and I will make that case in the legislature.

We must also do something about the high cost of prescription drugs. While every other country negotiates bargains with drug companies, we are getting fleeced in America because the drug industry is allowed to set their own price. It's time we all banded together and negotiated as a state for affordable drugs. I strongly support putting limits on some of the outrageous marketing excesses drug companies use to push their most expensive drugs, at the expense of generics which work just as well. For starters, we

should ban drug companies from serving alcohol and fancy meals at their "educational seminars" which are really advertising sessions.

I am a supporter of single payer health care. First up in this area is Vermont, which is scheduled to vote on their plan next year, with implementation to start in 2017. I have talked with Vermont leaders about their plan, and I think it has the promise of showing us how to do single payer in an American context. Vermont's success will prime the pump for Massachusetts to be next, and I think that we should be working toward that as one part of the solution. For me, this is a dual track solution - work aggressively for single payer, while at the same time work just as hard to make our current system work as best as it can.

10. Reproductive rights are being threatened across the country. What are the most significant challenges to protecting reproductive rights in Massachusetts and what would you do to address those challenges?

I have been a lifelong supporter for women's reproductive health.

As a researcher for the Health Care Financing Committee, I worked closely on the emergency contraception bill to make sure the bill moved through the legislative process. I am proud that it became law in 2005. I worked on legislation to allow the state to apply for a Family Planning waiver to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to ensure Massachusetts could fund adequately family planning services. I was on the team that drafted the landmark 2006 health reform bill, which provided access to health care for hundreds of thousands of people in Massachusetts, primarily those with low-incomes. This law has helped to provide primary, preventive and specialty care that women and families need to ensure high-quality reproductive and sexual health.

At Community Catalyst, I have partnered with women's health organizations in the larger health care reform agenda. During the debate over the Affordable Care Act, I worked with these groups to write comments and defeat some of the more egregious attempts to restrict access to family planning and abortion services.

There is a current movement nationally to reduce access to reproductive health services and allow families to make their own decisions about having children. I would strongly oppose any legislative efforts to further encroach on women's rights. I support comprehensive sexual education being taught

	<p>13. What can the Commonwealth do to help Massachusetts High School graduates complete the college education they start?</p> <p>As a graduate of UMass Amherst, I am a strong supporter of public higher education. I would be a leader on funding for our public universities, and encourage greater partnerships between K-12 and higher education facilities to encourage children to set a goal of attending college.</p> <p>The primary barrier to completion is the need to hold a paying job. Students who need to work more hours are less likely to finish school than students who need to work fewer hours. I would strongly support better funding for public higher education so more people can afford to stay in school.</p> <p>14. What can the Commonwealth do to strengthen early childhood programming and make it more affordable to residents?</p> <p>Early childhood education and full-day kindergarten have been shown to be critical to improving student performance, particularly in low-income communities. These programs are a way to begin to close the achievement gap and provide important care and learning for children and often social supports to help families succeed.</p> <p>But early childhood education has a funding issue. We need to make decisions about how we want to invest in the future of our Commonwealth and ensure that our revenue system has adequate resources to give children the education they need to succeed. I would be a leader in supporting funding for these programs.</p> <p>We also need to support teachers at early childhood and child care centers to ensure they are compensated adequately in their work with children.</p>
<p>Housing and Homelessness</p>	<p>15. Greater Boston is facing an acute shortage of housing, and in particular, housing that is affordable to low and moderate income individuals and families. What steps would you advocate to address the shortage of housing? In your answer, please address the needs of individuals, families, renters, and buyers across income levels.</p> <p>Massachusetts has a number of strong programs to build upon to create greater affordable housing options - Chapter 40B and rental subsidies like Mass Rental Voucher Program and the low income housing tax credit. But these are not enough to stem the tide of rising housing costs and housing shortages.</p>

	<p>I would support strengthening the current affordable housing programs and engaging in regional planning to address the housing shortage.</p> <p>In my work to create supports for families, I have also learned that homelessness is often due to additional costs beyond housing, including child care, transportation and health care. We need to continue to insure that families have the supports they need to remain in their homes.</p> <p>16. Family homelessness in Massachusetts has remained at unacceptably high levels, with 2,000 families in shelter and another 1,500 to 2,000 families being sheltered in motels. What would you do to address family homelessness?</p> <p>It is unconscionable that so many families are living in hotels, which are unstable for children and present questionable food and safety standards.</p> <p>For every family in a motel, Massachusetts spends over \$100/night, not including the cost of case management and services. Many of the families in motels get little in the way of case management support. Instead of spending \$3,000 to \$4,000/month on motels, the State could subsidize these families in rental housing for less than half that amount.</p> <p>I support expanding rental housing vouchers to lift families out of motels and into more stable and appropriate housing.</p>
<p>Energy and the Environment</p>	<p>17. Metro Boston is uniquely vulnerable to climate change impacts, particularly sea level rise and flooding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What should the Commonwealth do to enhance the safety and resiliency of our communities in the face of threats from climate change? <p>Climate change poses a severe threat to Massachusetts. While the federal government grapples with this issue, Massachusetts needs to continue to lead the way and set an example for other states and the nation. As a State Representative, I will fight for energy, land use, transportation and other policies to reduce our carbon pollution. It must be a top priority.</p> <p>I support Governor Patrick’s leadership in this area, from the greenhouse gas reduction targets to the aggressive implementation of the Global Warming Solutions Act.</p>

<p>Energy and the Environment (ctd.)</p>	<p>But even with the best policies in place, we still must face the fact that we will face higher sea levels, more intense storms, and increased temperatures. I support taking a comprehensive approach to these issues. It starts with a detailed inventory of the impacts of climate change. What areas are most vulnerable to floods? What key infrastructure is most threatened? The inventory should then inform a response plan that prioritizes are most critical vulnerabilities. I would focus on using natural responses, like restoring wetlands, whenever possible.</p> <p>As an expert in health care, I would also focus on the health impacts. How will increased heat waves affect public health? We know that heat can lead to increased respiratory and cardiac stress. Asthma is already a crisis in our district, and it is exacerbated by increased heat. Climate change may lead to increased infectious disease borne by insects, and more shellfish pathogens. Monitoring and taking action to preserve clean air and clean water will be made more difficult by warming. Our public health infrastructure must have the capacity to respond to emerging challenges of climate change.</p> <p>18. What are the most pressing concerns with respect to the Mystic River and its watershed, and what will you do as a legislator to address those concerns?</p> <p>Some of the major issues affecting the Mystic River include the combined sewer overflow and disproportionate environmental hazards, which lead to invasive species like the water chestnut.</p> <p>As a major environmental resource in this district, I will fight to ensure that available funds are invested into the watershed. The Mystic River Master Plan can be converted into shovel-ready projects for when state and federal funding becomes available.</p> <p>I would work closely with other legislators, as well as local organizations and members of the community, to make the preservation of the Mystic a priority for our community.</p> <p>19. What would be your top energy-related priorities?</p> <p>We are the best state in the country in energy efficiency. Efficiency is the most cost-effective and most environmentally friendly source of energy. State data show that for every one dollar invested in efficiency, the average</p>
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	<p>benefit was \$4.17 for homeowners and \$5.10 for businesses. We need to continue to invest in supporting energy efficiency.</p> <p>We should be proud that both Somerville and Medford were among the pioneer “Green Communities” in the Commonwealth. The program supports local efforts to become more energy efficient, such as Somerville’s use of fuel-efficient vehicles, or Medford’s use of wind power at the McGlynn School. I support expanding the program to all cities and towns in the state.</p> <p>Among the top of my list would be to accelerate the end of the use of coal for power generation in Massachusetts. Two coal plants have closed in recent years, including the Salem plant which just closed in June. We have just two plants remaining, and we should end the use of dirty, imported coal in Massachusetts as soon as possible.</p> <p>I was disturbed to read recently that thousands of natural gas leaks have been identified throughout the state, including many in Medford and Somerville. These leaks not only contribute to climate change, cost ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars, they also pose a serious public safety threat. I support legislation (recently passed unanimously by the Senate) to strengthen our ability to detect and repair these leaks.</p> <p>Transportation policy must take energy efficiency into account. Representative Sciortino was a lead sponsor of legislation to require DOT to look at factors like equity, energy consumption and public health in making transportation decisions. I support this approach.</p> <p>Solar energy in Massachusetts relies on the Net Metering Tax Credit to ensure that utilities are forced to pay a fair rate to solar energy producers for electricity added to the grid. This tax credit is currently nearing its legislative cap and needs to be extended so that key incentives for solar energy development remain.</p> <p>I am pleased that the Cape Wind project is proceeding, and support increased development of offshore wind resources. I also support updating the bottle bill to promote more recycling of water, juice and other beverages.</p>
<p>Arts and Culture</p>	<p>20. What is the Commonwealth’s role in promoting the arts and arts education, and how should it be funded?</p> <p>Our Commonwealth’s creative economy is a linchpin of the state. Policy to support arts and culture should not be siloed, but rather integrated</p>

throughout the policy process. Statewide, nonprofit art and cultural organizations support 45,000 direct jobs, and generates \$4.6 billion in economic activity. For the Somerville and Medford communities, arts are an absolutely vital component of our lives, and well as major force in our economy.

Yet state investment in this area is down 60% over the past 25 years. As a representative, I would join the State House Cultural Caucus so I can work in coalition with other representatives on these issues.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council has been hobbled by inadequate budget allocations for years. This year, the Senate reversed a committee recommendation and included a modest increase in their budget, while the House would further cut the budget. I support increasing the state's investment in the MCC.