

# PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

## 2014 LEGISLATIVE RACES QUESTIONNAIRE



### CANDIDATE:

**Matthew C. Patrick**

Democrat for State Senator

Plymouth and Barnstable

**[electmattpatrick.org](http://electmattpatrick.org)**

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### **About the Candidate**

1. Why are you running for office? And what will your top 3 priorities be if elected?

I want to represent the Plymouth and Barnstable District to keep us moving forward. My top three priorities are Jobs, Education and Economic Fairness, especially equitable taxes.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I am a five-term former State Representative from the 3rd Barnstable District; I was a Selectman in Falmouth for two three-year terms prior to that. I have been working for progressive causes for more than 30 years.

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### **The Issues**

*Our questionnaire is focused on economic justice and inequality, as outlined in our Shared Prosperity Agenda. We are interested in your overall philosophy and approach to the components of the Shared Prosperity Agenda, as well as your views on specific policy and legislation.*

*In each section, the first question seeks your overall view, values, principles and priorities. You do not need to address each item embedded in these first questions; they are suggestions.*

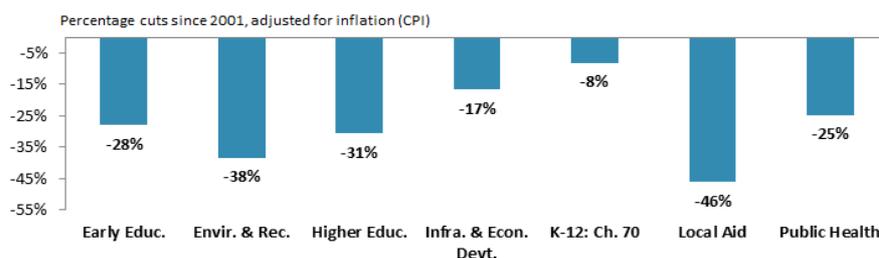
*In each section, the second question asks about your advocacy experience; you may leave it blank if appropriate—we do not expect candidates to have a record on every issue. Current or former elected officials: please outline your leadership roles, as opposed to simply your voting record.*

*Each section features a chart or graph that illustrates one facet of the issue under discussion and is not intended to be comprehensive. All images and data are from Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center ([massbudget.org](http://massbudget.org)).*

### **A. Revenue and Taxation**

Because of income tax cuts and the effects of the recession, Massachusetts has lost nearly \$3 billion in revenue over the last 12 years. We now collect less revenue than 21 other states, and our tax revenue is below the national average. Since 1982, local aid has dropped 58%. Cuts to the moderately progressive state income tax has meant increasing reliance on fees, sales, gas and property taxes, exacerbating the overall regressiveness of our revenue. 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 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.***  
**Select cuts across the state budget (FY2001 - FY2012)**



\*Ch. 70 figures are adjusted using the inflation factor specified in Chapter 70

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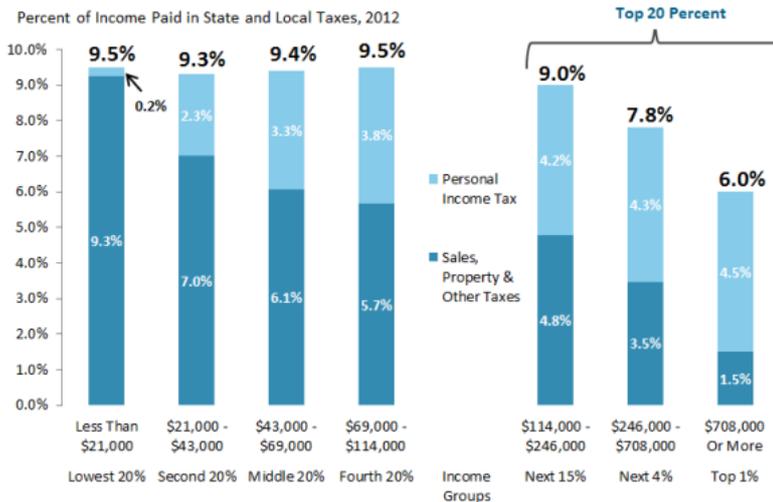
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**Massachusetts state and local taxes are regressive.**

**Top Earners in Massachusetts Pay Less of Their Personal Income in State and Local Taxes than Do Low Income Earners**



3. What principles do you bring to considerations of state revenue and tax reform (individual and corporate)? *How should we raise more revenue to adequately fund our communities for the future?*

We need to raise the taxes on stock dividends. Money you work for and earn should not be taxed at the same rate as money making money.

4. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on revenue and taxation (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).

I led the fight to close corporate tax loopholes resulting in \$200 Million in revenue for the Commonwealth that didn't cost individuals or families a cent. I have published numerous articles on this issue and others related to it.

5. **Progressive Taxation.** "An Act to Invest in Our Communities" was designed to raise significant revenue while making our tax code more progressive, but it has not passed the legislature. Would you support a renewed effort to pass this or similar legislation?

Yes

I would sponsor it.

6. **Graduated Income Tax.** Would you support a state constitutional amendment creating a Massachusetts progressive income tax?

Yes

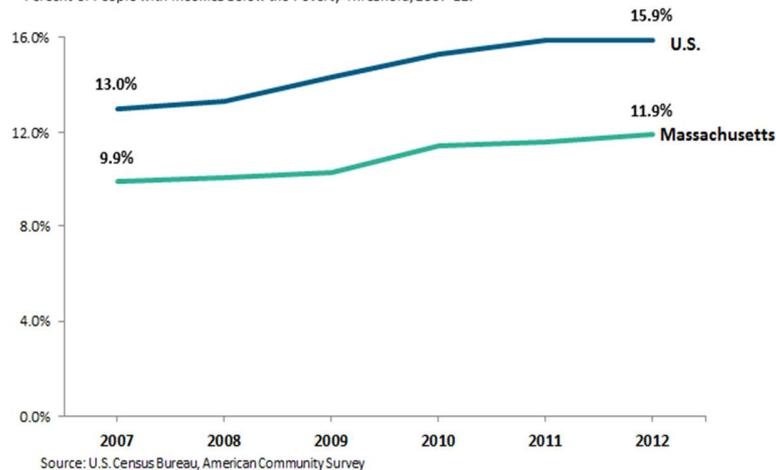


## B. Job Growth and the Economy

The Massachusetts economy has continued to grow and recover from the Great Recession, but the gains have not been shared equally. Poverty levels continue to increase, while the minimum wage loses value every year. Massachusetts now ranks 8th in the nation for income inequality.

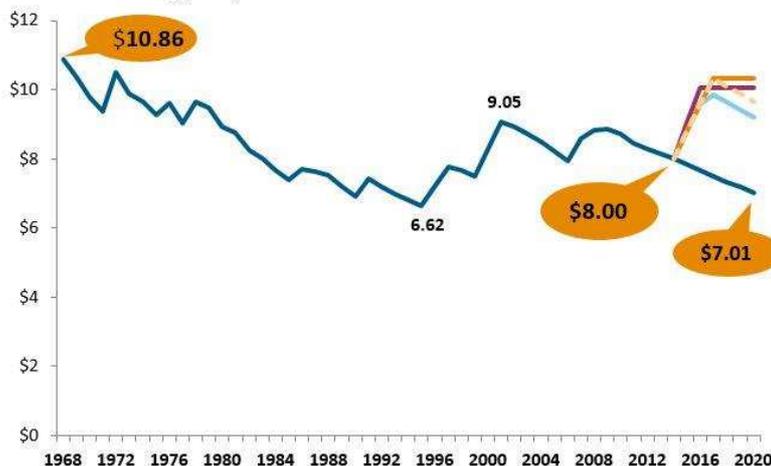
### Poverty Rates Still Elevated Since Onset of Recession

Percent of People with Incomes Below the Poverty Threshold, 2007-12.



### The Minimum Wage loses value every year to inflation; it is currently 24% lower than 1968 levels.

MA minimum wage, 2014 \$s



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7. Share your personal values and principles on job growth and the economy.  
*How can we improve the economy and economic security for all people? How do we grow the number of good paying jobs in the Commonwealth? How do you view wealth and income inequality, and what would you do about it, if anything?*

It starts with our kids. They need a quality education and we need to keep the momentum going with clean energy projects like Cape Wind that will keep good paying jobs here for them when they graduate.

8. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on job growth and the economy (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).

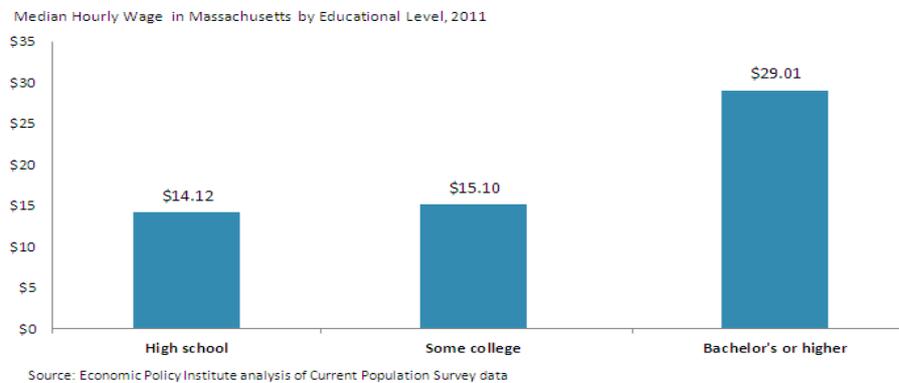
I was the lone legislator from the Cape to support Cape Wind, which will bring in numerous local, good paying jobs on the south shore. I wrote many important parts of the Green Communities Act making Massachusetts the national leader in clean energy job creation with almost 5,000 companies in the field employing over 71,000 people.



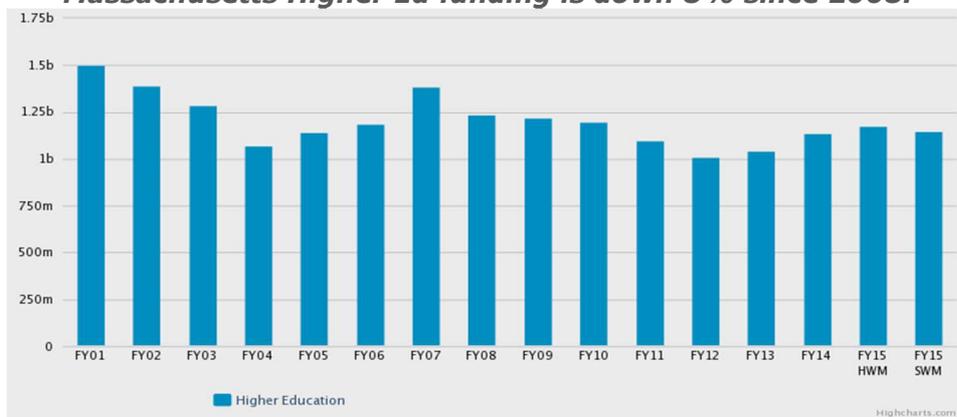
### C. Education and Workforce Development

Public education has always been a gateway to opportunity and mobility for all, regardless of economic circumstances, a cornerstone of the American dream for all residents. However, the soaring price of higher education over the last several decades has made access to this opportunity increasingly out of reach, at the very moment when higher education makes a greater difference to one’s economic future. Meanwhile, powerful corporate interests have been steadily undermining public school teachers and unions and siphoning money from our public K-12 system.

#### Wages and Education



#### Massachusetts Higher Ed funding is down 8% since 2008.



9. Please share your personal values and principles regarding public education and workforce training.

*What value does public education and workforce development have in improving our economy as well as in addressing matters of economic justice? What measures should the Commonwealth take on these issues? You might address, for example, charter schools,*

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*school vouchers, standardized testing and federal programs like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top.*

I am a strong proponent of our public schools and always have been. It is important that we provide all children with a quality education.

10. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on education and workforce development (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).

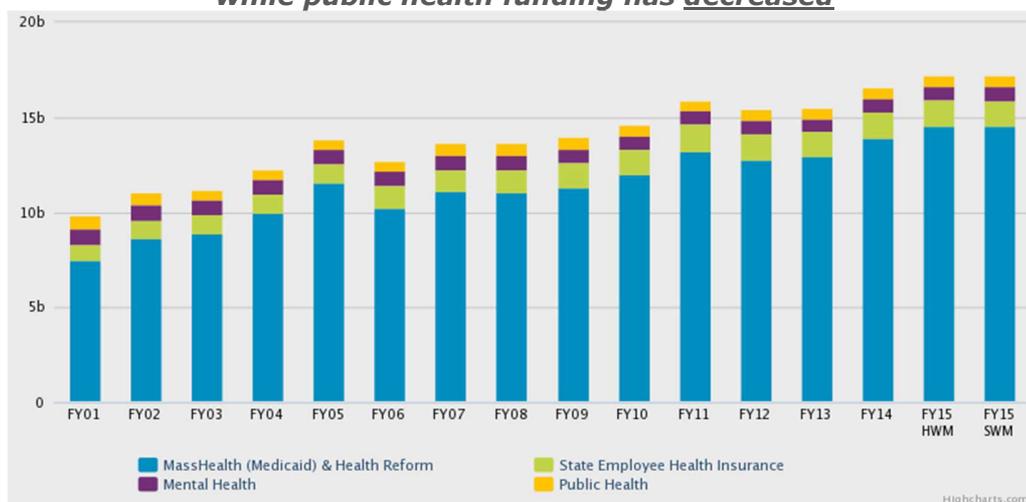
Many pro education votes in 5 terms as a state representative.



### D. Health Care

Massachusetts has led the way in providing near universal health care insurance coverage. However, we still spend an oversized portion of public and private money on health care, without necessarily achieving better health outcomes. In 2013, 43% of state expenditures were for health care, a number that is rising while other state expenditures are falling. Ultimately, a single payer system will remove complexity - and reduce costs, while providing better and more consistent care to all Massachusetts residents.

**Massachusetts Health Care spending has increased 74% since 2001— while public health funding has decreased**



11. Please share your personal values and principles regarding health care insurance, delivery and outcomes.

I supported MassHealth in 2006 and continue to do so. I think we can do better and work toward Single Payer, which I sponsored as well.

12. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on health care (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).

Voted for them.

13. Would you support legislation to enact a single payer health care system in Massachusetts?

Yes

Sponsored it!

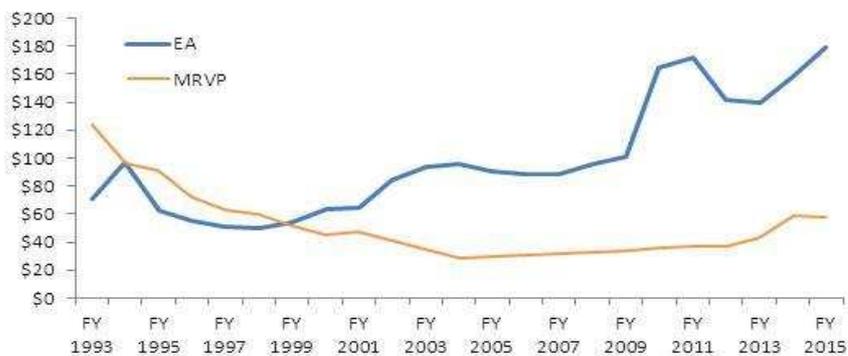


**E. Housing**

Over the last ten years, the need for affordable housing has increased, while funds for affordable housing have decreased, federal and state. Currently there is a 10-year waiting list for a rental voucher, and the average rent for a two bedroom apartment requires a wage 50% higher than the median Massachusetts wage. Half of families in Greater Boston alone pay over 30% of their income in housing and utilities costs—and 25% of households pay *more than half* their income to housing. 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.

**Funding for housing vouchers has fallen-- costs for shelter has increased**

(inflation adjusted to 2014 dollars)



Funding for Shelter (EA) and MRVP has moved around since FY 1993. This chart includes funding from the following line items for MRVP: 3222-9024, 3722-9024 & 7004-9024. Line items for EA include: 4403-2100, 4403-2120, 4403-2130, 7004-0101 & 7004-0103.

14. Please share your personal values and principles regarding affordable housing. *How would you ensure that there is suitable housing for all who need it, within reasonable distance of job opportunities? How would you address the need to link housing, jobs and transportation? How would you tackle homelessness?*

Good jobs are essential to help people afford housing. I support smart growth.

15. *Optional/As Applicable*: Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on housing (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).

I made the bricks and built affordable housing with them in Ghana while in the Peace Corps.

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**Additional Comments**

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.