

# PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

## 2014 LEGISLATIVE RACES QUESTIONNAIRE



### CANDIDATE:

**Matthew Terry**

Democrat for State Representative

5th Barnstable

**[voteforterry.com](http://voteforterry.com)**

About the Candidate.....	2
The Issues .....	3
A. Revenue and Taxation .....	3
B. Job Growth and the Economy .....	5
C. Education and Workforce Development .....	7
D. Health Care .....	9
E. Housing .....	10
Additional Comments .....	12

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### **About the Candidate**

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

There has been a dearth of dedicated, effective leadership in the 5th Barnstable District over the last 12 years and I'm running to solve the significant local problems that have accumulated over that time period.

I'm focused on addressing

- (i) the restoration of our community assets; particularly our vanishing beaches, crumbling and crowded roads and declining school quality,
- (ii) establishing a stronger year-round Cape Cod economy that is less dependent on tourism revenues and
- (iii) attracting young professionals and families to Cape Cod to fill a significant generational gap that threatens our civic and economic well-being.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I've spent the last 11 years as an attorney, 10 of those at large Boston law firms where I was thoroughly trained in advocating for my constituencies and pursuing the successful completion of numerous deals simultaneously. I am a zealous fighter for my clients and will bring the same energy and determination to the voters of the 5th Barnstable. I've held a number of governmental internships, including with Senator Kennedy, AG O'Reilly, State Senator O'Leary and Rep Tom Cahir. I currently serve on the Town of Sandwich Finance Committee and Governor Patrick appointed me as the Cape & Islands representative to the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council; a state-wide commission that creates job growth across the Commonwealth. The combination of my private-sector and civic experience will position me well to bring new approaches to navigating a political and governmental world with which I am already intimately familiar.

## 2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Matthew Terry

OFFICE: State Representative, 5th Barnstable



### **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.*

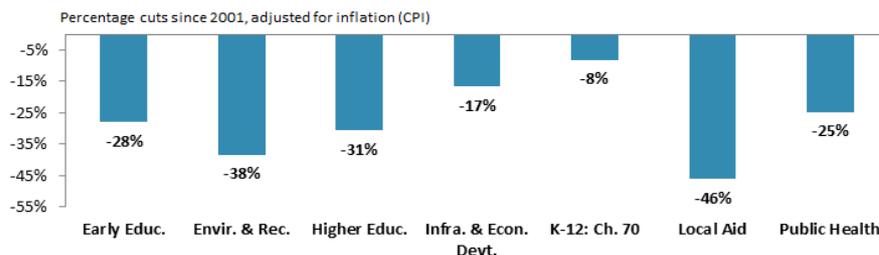
*In each section, the second question asks about your advocacy experience; you may leave it blank if appropriate—we do not expect candidates to have a record on every issue. Current or former elected officials: please outline your leadership roles, as opposed to simply your voting record.*

*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

**2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE**

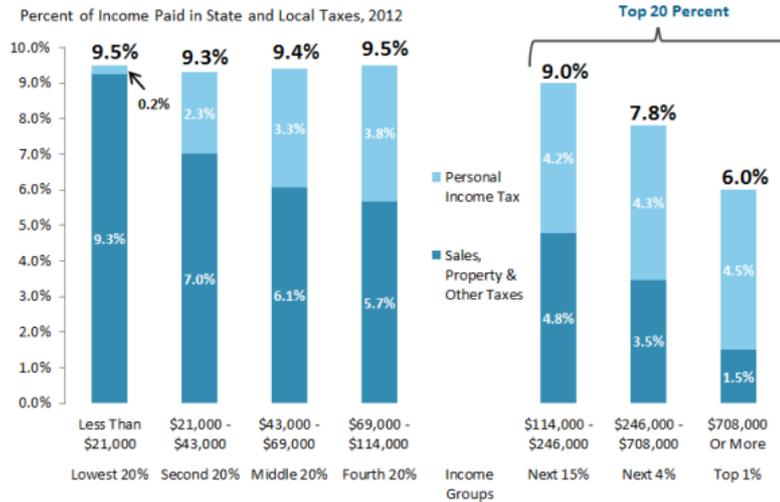
CANDIDATE: Matthew Terry

OFFICE: State Representative, 5th Barnstable



**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?*

I am a strong proponent of reducing income inequality in the Commonwealth and would support doing so by increasing taxes on the top income earners, closing corporate and individual tax loopholes and reforming how we tax carried interest income.

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).

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

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

Yes

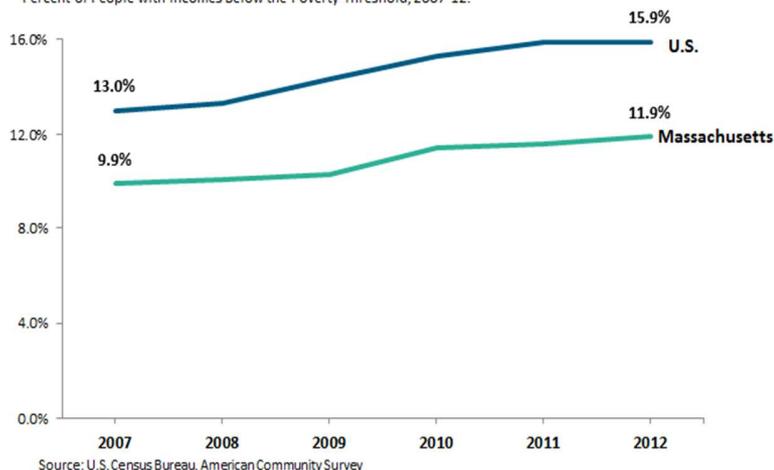


## B. Job Growth and the Economy

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.

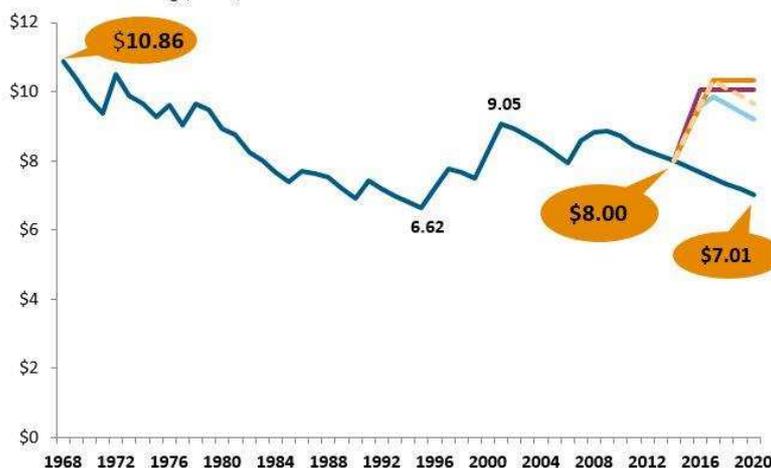
### Poverty Rates Still Elevated Since Onset of Recession

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



## 2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Matthew Terry

OFFICE: State Representative, 5th Barnstable

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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?*

In addition to the principles and ideas I shared in the previous answer, I believe that we need to do a better job as a Commonwealth of shoring up the social safety net and rebuilding the middle class. I intend to lead by advocating for making sure that all of our citizens have the ability to purchase reasonably priced health insurance and that employers, to the greatest extent possible, are removed from the business of providing health insurance. I also believe that we need to be vigilant in making sure that the minimum wage is a livable wage and is increased as soon as that may no longer be the case. We should also take into account the diminished purchasing power of the dollar (i.e., more than just inflation) when setting minimum wage increases. With respect to job growth, I believe we need to continue to foster the growth of new industries like technology and our core health care and social services industries.

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).

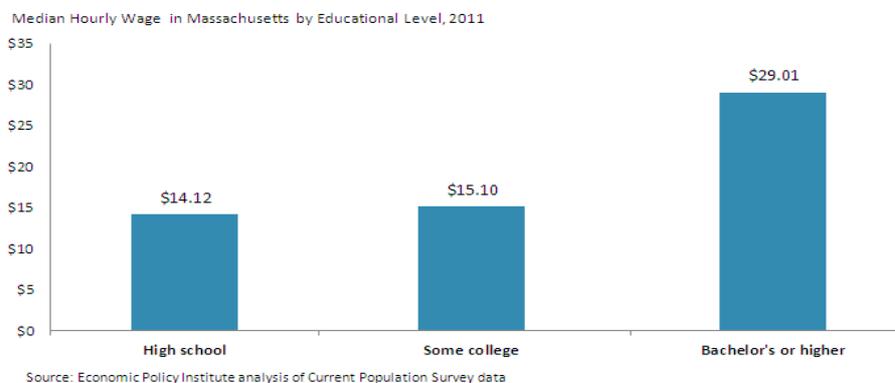
As a member of the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council, I review, deliberate and vote on the issuance of tax credits to businesses across Massachusetts that promise to create a certain number of jobs in the Commonwealth in a rolling five year time period. Our Council also tracks whether these promises are kept and withdraw and reclaim these tax credits if the projected job creation targets are not met. This program has been very successful over the last few years and has resulted in the creation of thousands of jobs.



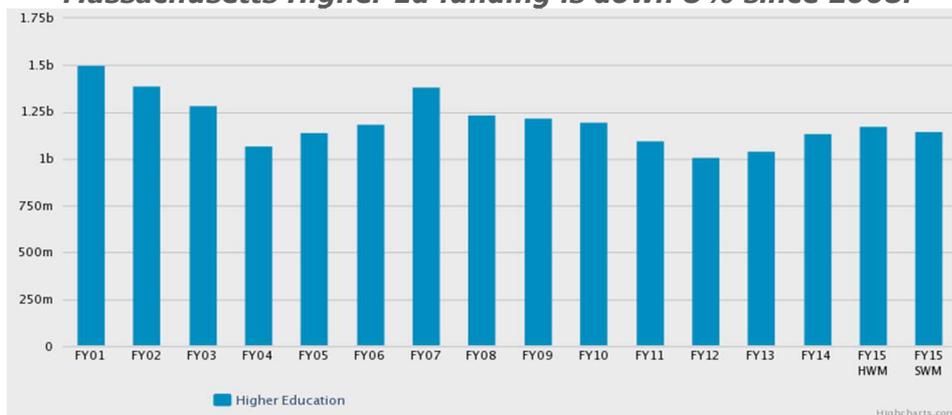
### C. Education and Workforce Development

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,*

## 2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Matthew Terry

OFFICE: State Representative, 5th Barnstable



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

I am a product of public education and owe much of my personal and professional success to the strong education I was provided with in Sandwich. I believe strongly that a well-funded and comprehensive education for all children in the Commonwealth should be one of our highest priorities. As the charts above indicate, disparities in educational opportunities lead to significant inequalities throughout the rest of our citizens' lives. We need to work to make our public schools stronger and to provide affordable higher education opportunities for all of our students. I also believe that we need to provide universal pre-kindergarten and additional early development programs for the crucial first few years of life.

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).

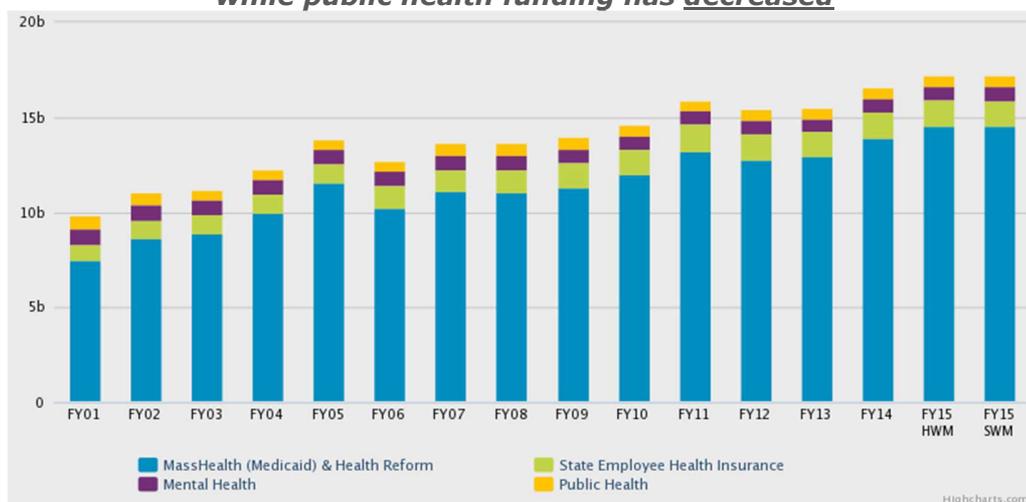
In addition to my work on the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council, I have worked locally on providing additional funding for public education through (i) working on Proposition 2 1/2 overrides for the school department budget and (ii) advocating for reasonable increases in the school budget as a member of the Town of Sandwich Finance Committee. I've also done a significant amount of pro bono legal work over the years on both education and work force development issues; specifically in leading small business legal workshops, negotiating commercial leases for small business owners in Jamaica Plains and serving as the lead lawyer for Codman Academy in their development of a permanent school building.



### 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.

Please see my thoughts in the earlier answer on economic equality and the role that the Commonwealth can play in achieving greater economic parity. I agree the we need to be more aggressive in containing health care costs and specifically the growing trend of passing those increased costs onto our employees.

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

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

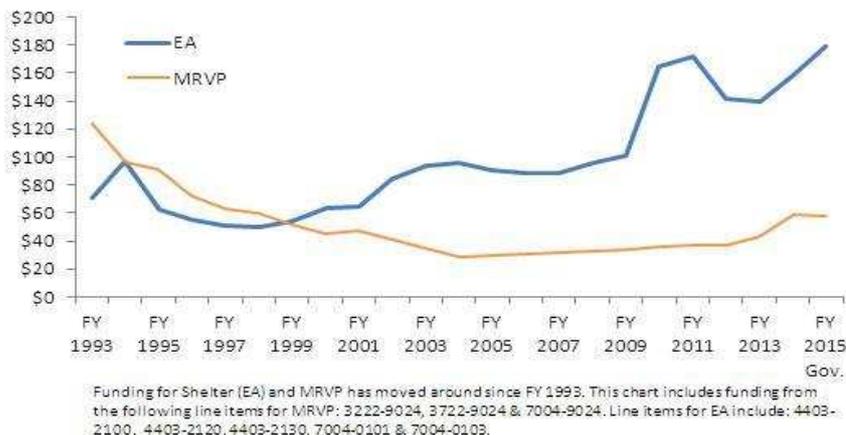
Yes



**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)



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?*

As a Commonwealth, we need to be more aggressive with the creation and preservation of affordable housing. Chapter 40B has been around long enough for us to conclude that it has only been partially successful and that many communities remain below a unit threshold that has now become outdated and not reflective of the growing percentage of our population that is struggling to afford housing.

We need to encourage smart, mixed-use redevelopment in underserved, urban communities so that good jobs are located close to affordable housing. In addition, we need to develop additional public transportation options so that employees have inexpensive and reliable ways to get to their jobs.

With respect to homelessness, we need to focus on improving our temporary and long-term transitional housing options so that (i) homeless people have a roof over their heads

**2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE**

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and (ii) people (especially families) who are in danger of becoming homeless have a place to stay while they seek more permanent housing.

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

## 2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

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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.

I believe that Massachusetts has been, and should continue to be, a place that shows the rest of the nation that progressive values work when implemented as public policy. We need to look no further than the recent groundswell of support across the nation for marriage equality to prove this point. I want to help Massachusetts lead on issues of equal rights, economic justice and environmental protection.