

PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

2014 LEGISLATIVE RACES QUESTIONNAIRE



CANDIDATE:

Daniel A. Wolf

Democrat for State Senator

Cape and Islands

danwolfforsenate.com

About the Candidate.....	2
The Issues	3
A. Revenue and Taxation	3
B. Job Growth and the Economy	6
C. Education and Workforce Development	8
D. Health Care	10
E. Housing	12
Additional Comments	14

Available on the web at

<http://ProgressiveMass.com/2014legislative>

please distribute with attribution

2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



About the Candidate

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

I see my life in thirds. The first was growth and education. The second was building a great family and business. Now comes the last third, giving back. And so I'm running for re-election because I want to help shape a legacy we can proudly pass to our children and grandchildren. Most importantly, that means using public policy to reverse an increasing disparity of wealth, rebuilding our economy from the bottom up and the middle out, and doing everything possible to ensure that all people have a decent standard of living, affordable health care, and opportunity for growth and success.

Every position on every issue is seen by me through the prism of a question: How can my position further social and economic justice and opportunity? This includes fully funding public education, and creating jobs improving our public infrastructure.

Environmental issues also are very important to me, particularly stopping and reversing the effects of wastewater pollution across the Cape and Islands.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

Having created and run a business that now has more than 1200 employees, many of whom share ownership, I bring private sector experience to my public sector commitment. Having served in the legislature for four years, I believe I have a strong track record and proven capacity to advocate for change. Most recently, legislation raising the minimum wage, which I championed and shepherded through my committee, is an achievement of which I'm very proud.

2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



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.

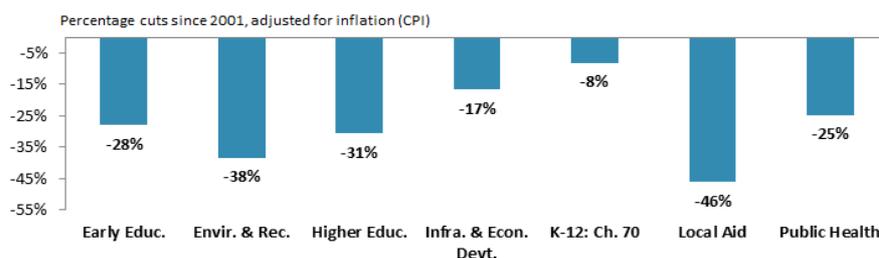
In each section, the second question asks about your advocacy experience; you may leave it blank if appropriate—we do not expect candidates to have a record on every issue. Current or former elected officials: please outline your leadership roles, as opposed to simply your voting record.

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).

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)**

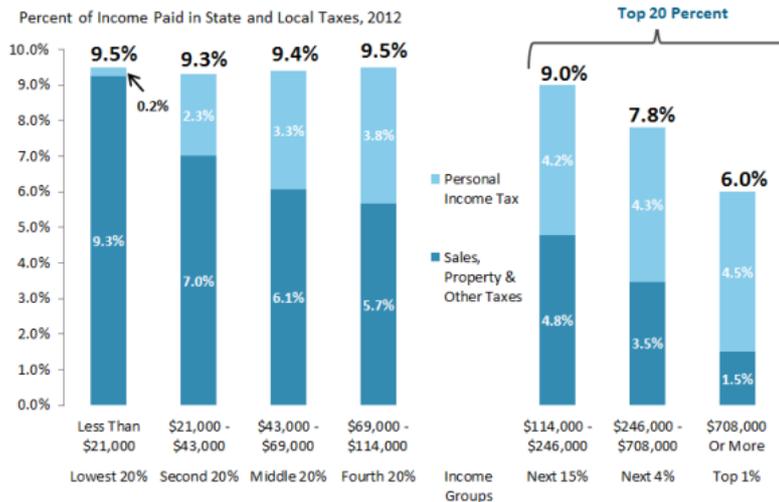


*Ch. 70 figures are adjusted using the inflation factor specified in Chapter 70



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?*

As Thomas Piketty’s recent book has proven, income inequality in our nation has reached the point where concentrated capital and inherited wealth threaten the core values on which we should build our economy and democracy --- equal opportunity and social mobility are being eliminated. My successful efforts to raise the minimum wage are a beginning, but only that. We must invest in education and infrastructure to create jobs, support the role of organized labor, and create incentives for businesses that remain rooted in our communities rather than extracting and exporting wealth. To do this, we must have an honest discussion about revenue, how and at what level we fund government.

In this context, I am a co-sponsor of the Act to Invest in our Communities, and so obviously support its approach. I believe we should have a Constitutional convention to initiate progressive income tax, and would pledge to work for its adoption in a ballot referendum.

Taking a step back, we must recognize that our tax code and tax policies worked when our economy was more horizontally structured. As wealth and assets have concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, we must reflect that truth in our tax structure. Middle class and working class families cannot be expected to pay more in order the fund government. We must expect those who have benefited most to contribute their fair share.

2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



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).

An article I have written and expect to be published in Commonwealth Magazine later this month highlights 5 areas in which we can apply Thomas Piketty's insights to specific efforts in our state, including revenue policy. As indicated, I have sponsored and co-sponsored legislative efforts to reform our tax structure. I also support an earned income tax credit, reforms on capital gains and unearned income taxes to bring those in line with tax rates paid by most working people.

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 am a co-sponsor of this legislation.

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

Yes

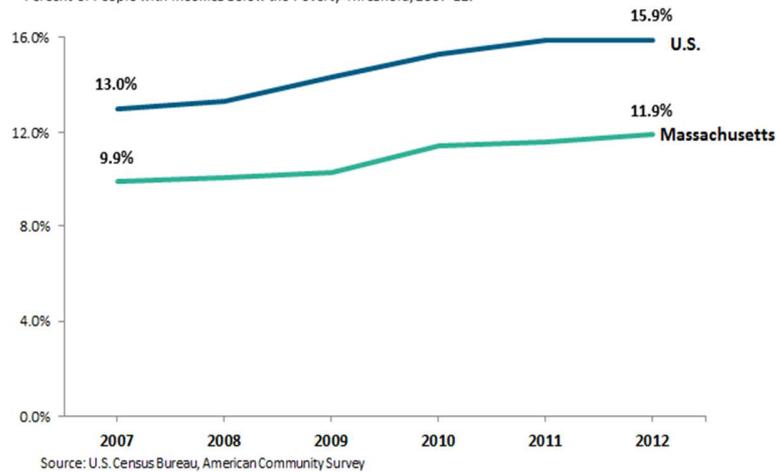


B. Job Growth and the Economy

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.

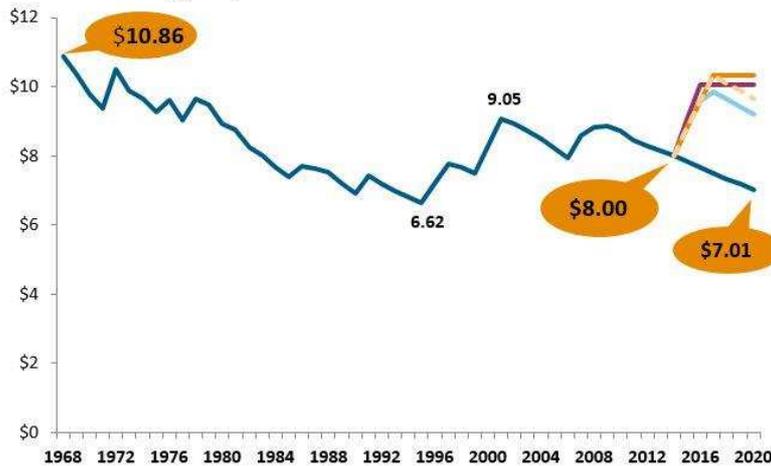
Poverty Rates Still Elevated Since Onset of Recession

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: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



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?

True job creation must come from a strong middle class and working class, not from discredited “trickle down” notions that as the wealthiest accrue more, we’ll all do better. Investing in public infrastructure and education are two key areas. Renewable and alternative energy also holds great promise. The gap between minimum wage and a livable wage must be closed. Capitalism is a remarkable engine for prosperity, driving innovation and efficiency, but government must define our common goals and ensure that the drive for profit and return also brings us a more just society.

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).

In my business career, I was able to start a small airline with six employees, one plane, and help create a company that 25 years later has more than 1200 employees, many of whom share ownership via an employee ownership stock plan. Inclusive ownership and governance models are crucial to define the healthy decisions and directions businesses should take.

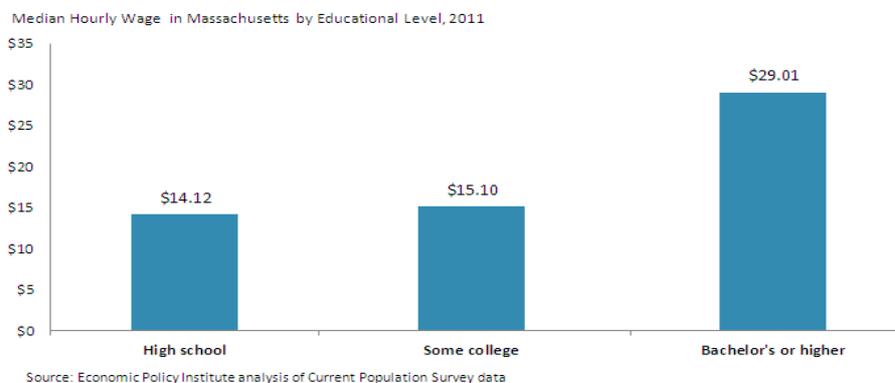
In the legislature, I have pushed hard for these principles, as well as fundamental improvements in working benefits and conditions that I believe will make our economy stronger and fairer, such as raising the minimum wage, requiring earned sick time, and a reformed tax structure that makes job investment possible without adding to the support required of middleclass taxpayers.



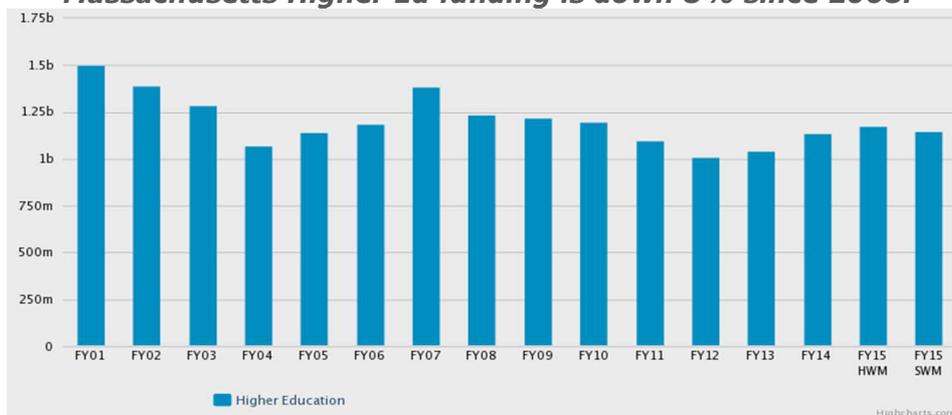
C. Education and Workforce Development

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: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



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

At one end of the education spectrum, we have 40,000 young children waitlisted to attend early education programs, which we know help children develop and succeed. At the other end, our public universities are priced so high that it's hard to refer to them as "public": the University of Massachusetts at Amherst costs roughly \$24,000 a year for in-state tuition, forcing students into deep debt. Higher public education must become affordable again. Substantial additional public investment is necessary.

In addition, standardized testing is not the best or only way to measure teacher success and student productivity, in fact a focus on such tests may reduce the quality of education. No teacher chooses the profession out of a desire to become rich; teachers teach because of a commitment to students and education. We should release teachers from unnecessary restrictions, and engage them to define our educational priorities and direction.

We also should understand and celebrate the creative arts and make sure they are part of our core curriculum; STEM should become STEAM, to include Arts.

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).

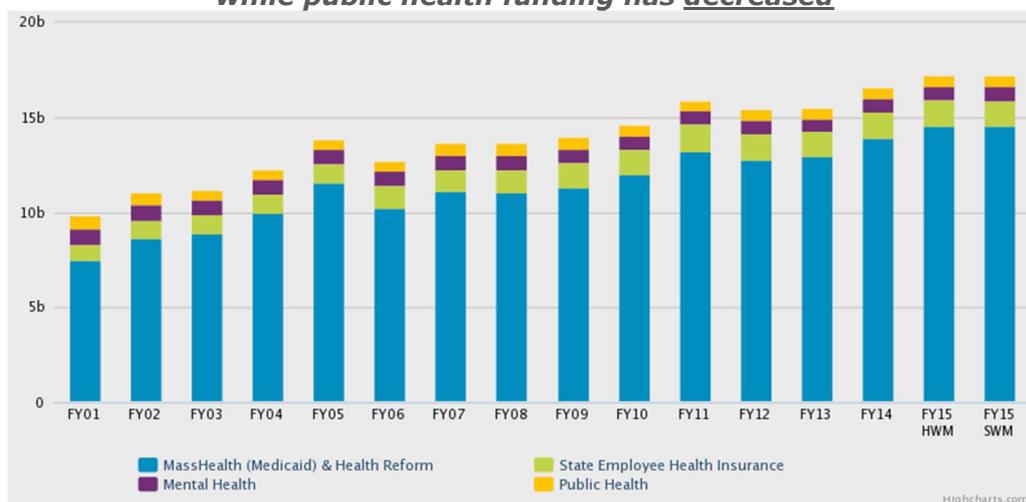
As Chair of the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development, I have championed significant funding support and increases for workforce training programs across the state, working closely with WIBs as well as vocational schools and community colleges to build job training.



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.

Health care should be built on three basic principles: access for all, excellent care for all, and affordability for all. While we have made great strides in the first of these goals, we have not moved forward sufficiently with the second two.

The best and perhaps only way to accomplish all these goals is to work as quickly as possible toward a single payer health care system. The additional value of a single payer system is that once health care is disconnected from employment, businesses will be free of one of the most serious inhibitors to job creation and economic growth. In simple terms, for humanitarian as well as economic reasons, we should be moving toward a Medicare for all program, and Massachusetts should once again lead the way and become a national model.

2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



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

I have supported every legislative initiative to move us toward single payer. Also believe strongly that Don Berwick should be our next governor, in part because of his positions and experience on this.

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

Yes

See above. Strongly believe in it.

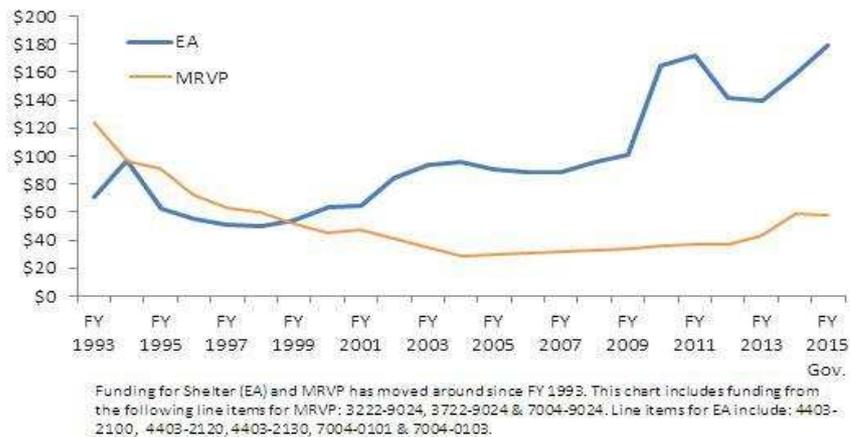


E. Housing

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)



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?*

Affordable housing is a crucial foundation for any healthy community. Zoning reform legislation I have sponsored would encourage the creation of affordable housing in village centers and downtowns by allowing more density in these areas in return for more protections and open space in areas that historically have been developed in grid and sprawl patterns. Commercial centers that are accessible both on foot and via public transportation are essential elements in a successful affordable housing plan that integrates our communities rather than creating de facto forms of segregation.

Homeless needs to be addressed holistically, with a combination of housing as well as social, medical, psychological, and employment support. The Cape and Islands has made good strides keeping people in crisis out of motel rooms, but we need to do much more. Presently there is a Day Center program coming together in Hyannis, with our strong support and financial assistance, that will connect shelters, medical facilities, and other

2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



support for people facing homelessness. This is an integrated model that holds great promise.

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

Having served for many years on the board of the Housing Assistance Corporation, which has done superb work on affordable housing issues on the Cape and Islands, I have a long history and commitment to this issue.

2014 PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE: Daniel A. Wolf

OFFICE: State Senator, Cape and Islands



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'd like to take the opportunity to thank Progressive Massachusetts for your grassroots efforts, which are crucial to moving our social agenda forward.

I also would like to add that I very much support your decisions to endorse Don Berwick, and Maura Healey.