

# PROGRESSIVE MASSACHUSETTS

## 2014 LEGISLATIVE RACES QUESTIONNAIRE



### CANDIDATE:

**Michael S. Day**

Democrat for State Representative

31st Middlesex (Winchester and Stoneham)

**electmikeday.com**

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OFFICE: State Representative, 31<sup>st</sup> Middlesex

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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 am running for State Representative to serve as a leader for economic and social justice. I believe we have the chance to make great strides toward ensuring that workers have fair economic opportunities, our students have a great public education, and our continued economic development is environmentally safe and sustainable. I am committed to protecting collective bargaining rights, expanding jobs in Massachusetts and supporting safe conditions for all workers. I will work to introduce new approaches and legislation that will help address the addiction epidemic that ravages the Commonwealth. My top three priorities, if elected, are: (1) Reforming the Chapter 70 education funding formula; (2) Promoting environmentally sound development and renewable energy initiatives; and (3) Initiating new approaches to the problem of drug dependency.

2. What prepares you to serve in this capacity?

I have long-standing involvements with progressive causes, and in particular, organized labor. My experience with these causes has helped to craft my dedication to the liberal values of justice and equality. Prior to becoming an attorney, I worked in government relations for a variety of institutions ranging from the World Bank to EMILY's List. As a law clerk for the United Mine Workers, International Union, I assisted in the filing of unfair labor practice charges and challenges to pension revocation decisions. Much of my work as an attorney – and almost all of my pro bono work – is devoted to working with survivors of domestic violence and drug dependency. I am also currently the co-chair of the Boston Bar Association's Civil Rights & Civil Liberties Section, which in part focuses the attention of more than 11,000 members on issues of importance in the battle for equality throughout our society. These experiences have equipped me to be a strong, effective advocate for progressive values in the State House.

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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.*

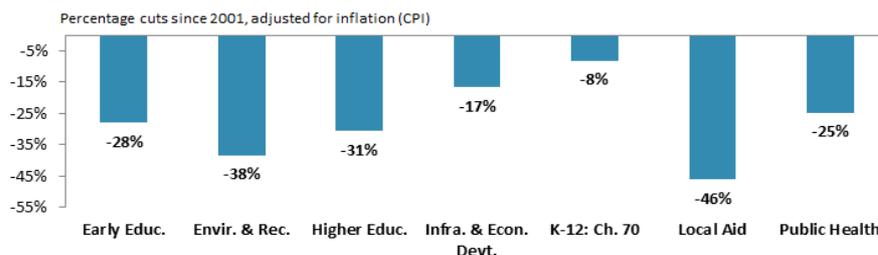
*In each section, the second question asks about your advocacy experience; you may leave it blank if appropriate—we do not expect candidates to have a record on every issue. Current or former elected officials: please outline your leadership roles, as opposed to simply your voting record.*

*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)**

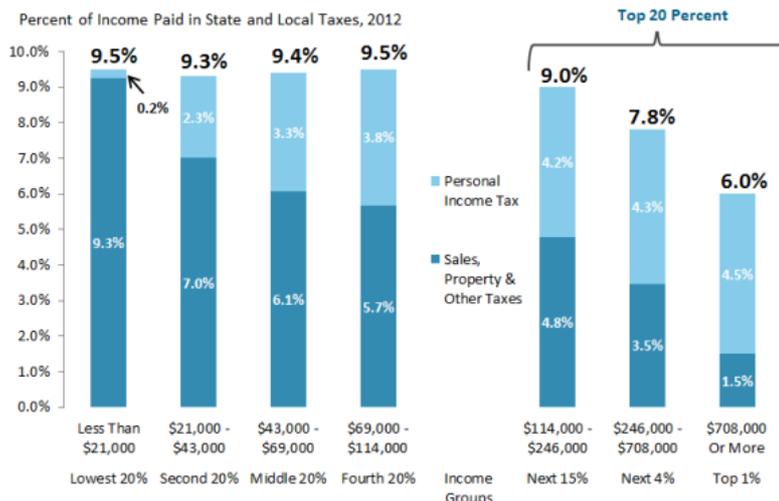


\*Ch. 70 figures are adjusted using the inflation factor specified in Chapter 70



**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 believe that we must close corporate loopholes that unfairly benefit corporations in the Commonwealth to the detriment of individuals. I will work to enact legislation that will mandate “clawbacks” of tax credits when recipients do not meet the credit requirements. These provisions give the Commonwealth more authority to recover public funds from companies that make employment promises but then ship jobs out of state or overseas. I support the implementation of a progressive tax code reform that will reduce income inequality. I would not be opposed to an increase in the state income tax rate, depending on the details of the proposal and the measures allowing for the mitigation of its impact on out low-income families.

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

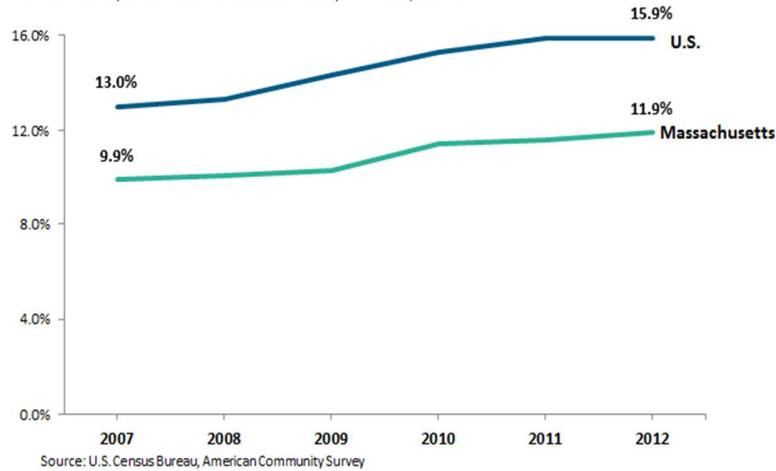


## B. Job Growth and the Economy

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.

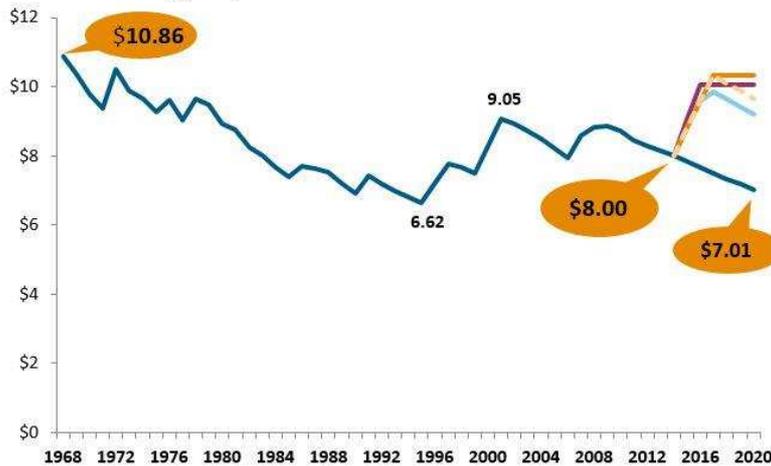
### Poverty Rates Still Elevated Since Onset of Recession

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



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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?*

I will be a leader in the State House in the effort to guarantee that all of our workers earn a livable wage. Though the Legislature has made progress by recently voting to raise the minimum wage, we must index that wage to inflation. Massachusetts residents, and Boston-area residents in particular, must survive a much higher cost of living than almost everywhere else in our country.

If elected, I will always work to ensure that our economic development produces good-paying jobs, so that our workers can continue to live and thrive in this area. To that end, I am committed to protecting collective bargaining rights, expanding jobs in Massachusetts and supporting safe conditions for all workers.

With respect to the problem of income inequality, I am profoundly concerned about the growing gap between the rich and the poor. I therefore support a progressive income tax structure and an income tax increase (provided exemptions are made for low-income earners) that works to achieve greater economic fairness.

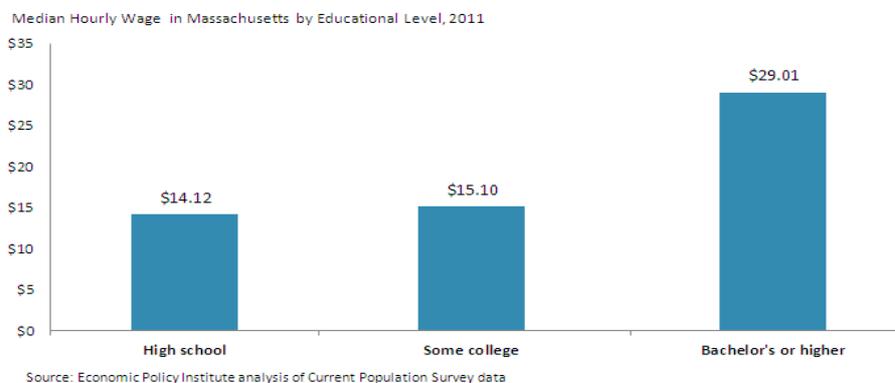
8. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on job growth and the economy (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).



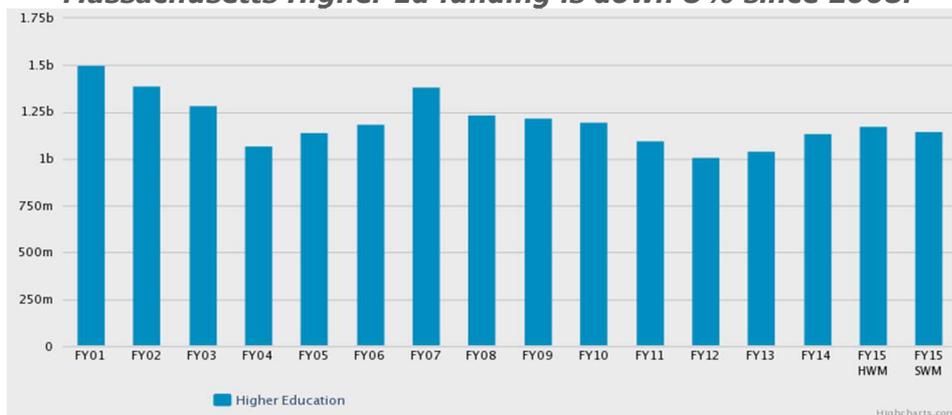
### C. Education and Workforce Development

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.*

A strong, well-funded public education system is vital to the Commonwealth's workforce and the health and development of every child. If elected, one of my top priorities will be to reform the outdated and unfair Chapter 70 education funding formula, so that our schools and our teachers will be better equipped to educate the whole child and our children will emerge from our public schools prepared to compete for jobs and careers in a global economy.

I support movement away from a one-size-fits-all standardized test to tell us whether our schools are adequately educating our children and allow our teachers more freedom to adapt and do what they do best – teach a child how to become productive citizens who bring value to our society.

A bachelor's degree is increasingly becoming a necessary means to achieve a high-paying job. I will work to make that degree more accessible to students who have demonstrated the academic requirements. As a proud graduate of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, I am committed to our public higher education institutions and will champion their causes.

As one who was saddled with more than six figures of debt from student loans when I emerged from higher education, I will work on student loan forgiveness programs and legislation and will be a dedicated champion to making college and other forms of higher education affordable and accessible to all.

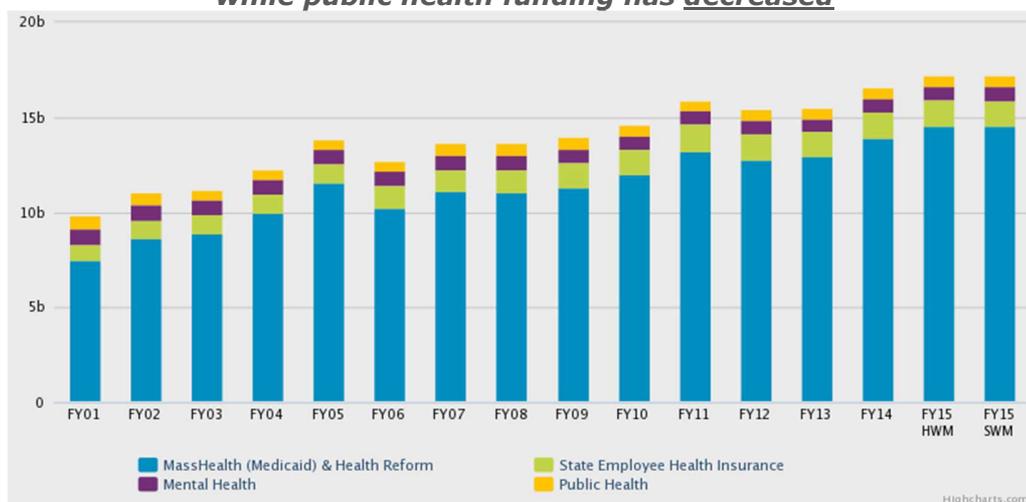
10. *Optional/As Applicable:* Please indicate work you personally have done to advance your principles on education and workforce development (legislation, community work, published writings, etc).



### 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.

Healthcare must be accessible, affordable, and high in quality. Massachusetts has made tremendous strides toward achieving these goals. However, our efforts have not gone far enough. I therefore support a single-payer system that reduces costs, improves the consistency of care, and weakens the ability of insurance companies to throw expenses on the backs of patients and consumers.

Although this is the goal towards which I will work, in the immediate absence of such a system, I will work to reduce costs by pushing to eliminate our current fee-for-service model, which improperly incentivizes care providers to add on expensive procedures and thereby drive up costs.

Additionally, I am deeply motivated to find ways to creatively and more effectively use budgetary resources to treat drug addiction. If elected, I will seek to fund harm-reduction programs and new-treatment drugs in order to tackle this issue and reduce the deleterious effect this scourge has had on lives and families in the Commonwealth.

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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

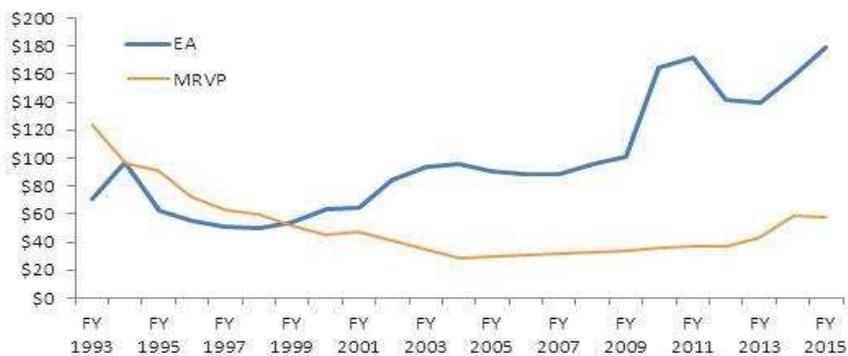


**E. Housing**

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)



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?*

We must increase our stock of affordable housing as well as the ability to access affordable housing options. I will work towards encouraging the redevelopment of our downtowns so that we reuse and repurpose our commercial properties and expand mixed-use housing options instead of constantly sprawling new developments into existing open spaces in our cities and towns.

Expanding affordable housing in our downtowns will give our seniors more opportunities to remain in the communities they built while also providing younger people opportunities to move into our towns without having to overcome the substantial barrier of the cost of home ownership.

We must encourage the trend of “re-centralization” of urban living and employment opportunities so that we can ease the already overwhelming burdens placed on our infrastructure systems.

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I am committed to changing the way we approach the issue of homelessness here in Massachusetts. Temporarily housing families in hotels and motels harms us all. Shuttling kids in and out of school districts unnecessarily overburdens our schools and disrupts the children's abilities to learn.

In my district, there are 293 homes in Stoneham currently under water, and 180 in Winchester. That means close to 500 families from two towns alone owe more than their homes are worth, and 4% of those families are currently more than three months delinquent and in danger of being foreclosed upon. I will work to make sure that individuals are better equipped to stay in their homes and apartments rather than being turned out on the streets.

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

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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.

John Gardner, upon joining LBJ's cabinet, said "What we have before us are some breathtaking opportunities, disguised as insoluble problems." I see those breathtaking opportunities that can move us forward, and I will help us turn them into reality.

I will tackle the problem of an outdated and unfair education funding formula, so that our teachers will be equipped to educate the whole child and our children will emerge from our schools prepared to compete for jobs in a global economy. We can move away from using a standardized test that does NOT tell us whether our schools are adequately educating our children. Instead we can allow our teachers more freedom to adapt and do what they do best – teach our children how to become productive citizens who bring value to our society.

I will work to stem the tide of urban and suburban sprawl with smart growth principles and take meaningful steps to address the very real problems of air and water pollution and global warming. I will work to expand our renewable energy industry so that the jobs and companies of tomorrow start here today. I will work to reduce our carbon footprints by finally passing the bottle bill and continue our march towards zero waste.

Finally, we still operate as if a short-term hospitalization is sufficient in addressing drug dependency and crisis. It isn't. I will work to change the way we address drug addiction by mandating health care coverage for preventative wellness visits and addiction treatment.