



Lex-Wiki.Org is a local Wikipedia for Lexington, MA. Lex-wiki.Org covers Arts and Entertainment, Local Flora and Fauna, Local History, City Life as well as Town Government and other issues of public interest in Lexington.

Name: Michelle Ciccolo

Web Site Address: www.michelleciccolo.com

Phone: (781) 307-7330

Email: ciccolocampaign@gmail.com

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Biographical Question

1. *What can you tell us about yourself? Please include a brief outline of your relevant experience, whether from private or public life – including public offices held, and volunteer work.*

As a 3-term past president of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and First Vice-President of the Massachusetts Selectman's Association on the statewide Mass. Municipal Association Board and gubernatorial appointee to the Local Government Advisory Commission, I have extensive experience crafting, advocating for, and passing legislation. In my current position as Chair of the Legislative Committee of the MAPC I am very engaged in the legislative efforts now in process to improve the lives of the people in this Commonwealth.

By choice, I have committed my entire professional career to public service. From my first job out of college working for then-US Senator John Kerry, to my municipal and regional career, which spans more than twenty-five years, I have dedicated my life's work to helping communities achieve their goals. Following my master's degree in public affairs, I worked as the Assistant Town Administrator and Community Development Director for the Town of Hudson for 20 years. I also started a small consulting firm during that timeframe and am now a small business owner doing consulting for municipalities in the area of planning, community development, and project management. My current work allows me to help communities with diverse issues such as Affordable Housing, transportation, open space protection, school resource decision-making, and capital planning.

Through my work as a two-term Lexington Selectman and volunteer town-wide elected official for 7+ years, I know how to set policy and build consensus among people with differing points of view. I have direct experience in negotiating for education funding, program development, policy development for mental health and wellness, and implementation of localized strategies to combat climate change and cut carbon emissions. I look forward to taking these experiences to the State House to affect real change.

Candidate Platform

2. *Why are you running for State House?*

At a time when the Federal government is failing us, it is essential for those who believe in good government to step up and lead. I believe that effective local, regional, and state government can make a real and positive difference in people’s lives. Having chosen public service as my life-long career, I have broad and extensive experience on a wide range of issues that include improving access to transportation, addressing climate change, promoting public health initiatives, and creating affordable housing. Legislators with hands-on experience with complicated issues such as these make better, more effective legislation. I want to use my experience to improve the lives of our residents across the Commonwealth and to make our future more secure.

The massive wealth gap that exists in Massachusetts is one of the defining issues of our time. If we don’t work to address the inequities in our society, we cannot hope to continue as a prosperous commonwealth. Inequity, left unchecked, will ultimately cause decay and decline for all. Massachusetts must set an example for higher standards in educational achievement, universal healthcare, environmental sustainability, innovation, scientific discovery, and social justice. I am seeking a position in the General Court so that I can work closely with likeminded legislators, advocacy organizations, unions, businesses, and residents to enact policies that ensure Massachusetts leads and that all our residents prosper.

Policy Questions

3. *What are the largest three challenges Woburn and Lexington face over the next few years, and what can you do in the State House to address them?*

1. Keeping our communities affordable for all residents
2. Providing robust and sustainable education funding
3. Improving transportation services to reduce our carbon footprint, reduce congestion, and expand mobility for the economy

A first step to make Massachusetts communities more affordable is to make our system of taxation more progressive. Our current system, when all state and local taxes are considered, results in the wealthiest of income earners paying a far lower percentage of their income in taxes. In Massachusetts the wealthiest 1% of earners make 30 times more than 99% of the remaining income earners. This makes Massachusetts the 6th most income-disparate state in the country. Our wealthiest are not contributing enough in State income tax to ameliorate this big income disparity when it comes to paying for our shared cost of road and infrastructure building and paying for state aid for public education.

I support increasing the earned income tax credit on a regular basis to keep pace with inflation. This measure incentivizes work while allowing the lowest wage workers to keep more of their income and thus be better able to pay rent and mortgages. I also support raising personal exemptions to take into consideration the high cost of living that causes lower-income Massachusetts families to

struggle. These two progressive measures will modestly shift the tax burden to the highest income earners and make our state more affordable for those of lower income. I will also support future efforts to amend the state's constitution to require a graduated income tax. Over time, if this measure is successful, we can lower the sales tax which is regressive. A lower sales tax will ease the cost of living for lower-income residents. A lower sales tax will also help our smallest retailers survive. Small retail businesses are a crucial component of vibrant local downtown areas and the local jobs and the local tax base that they support. However, we can't consider sales tax reductions until we can ensure adequate revenues to support the local services our communities need and deserve. Finally, I believe we must continue to create and advance energy conservation measures and initiatives like Lexington's highly successful Community Choice aggregation program for electricity sourcing and local supply which is slated to result in more than a million dollars in cost savings for Lexington residents in its start-up year.

Providing robust educational funding from the state is critical to keeping our individual cities and towns more affordable. Most cities and towns spend between 65-80% of their local operating budgets on education. As the state's reimbursements under the all-important Chapter 70 school reimbursement program have declined over time, when adjusted for inflation, the burden has shifted more onto the local property tax and has become untenable for Communities like Lexington and Woburn. I support dedicating the majority of the new discretionary state revenues towards educational programming and fully implementing the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission. This Commission released a series of recommendations in 2015 that provided a roadmap for properly funding education. In addition, I believe the State should defer the implementation for another two years, of the next scheduled income tax cut in January 1, 2019, which will drop the income tax rate from 5.1 to 5.05. A two-year delay of the income tax reduction will help avoid a potentially disastrous revenue shortfall until these new revenue streams are fully in place. While exact numbers are hard to predict, the two-year deferral could result in a revenue stream of about \$1.6 billion in fund that would not otherwise be available and which could be dedicated to education. Anything we can do to increase Chapter 70 funding will help lower our municipal operating budgets and improve the sustainability of our educational funding. It will also have the effect of radically improving the educational system in towns where funding is so limited they are laying off teachers and educators. Better Chapter 70 funding will instill equity and balance back into the system and take some of the increasing enrollment pressure off the high performing schools. Improving schools state-wide is good for all communities.

Some of the most economically pressured members of our communities are elderly residents living on fixed incomes. I support creating statewide enabling legislation to allow cities and towns to institute Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemptions. Modeled after a successful program in place in Sudbury, this voter-approved exemption provides tax relief to seniors whose property tax exceeds 10% of their income, with certain qualification limits on house value and the senior's total assets. This revenue-neutral program is paid for by a modest increase in the tax rate paid by all residential property owners. As a Selectmen in Lexington, we are currently evaluating this program through the work of several of our committees and I certainly hope we will be able to advance this opportunity for our residents.

In addition to focusing on improving education reimbursements and instituting a means-tested senior property tax relief program, I will advocate for passage of a temporary relief valve for cities and towns seeing rapid residential property value increases relative to the flatter increases in commercial property values. An increase in residential values relative to commercial values creates a shift in the tax burden onto homeowners and away from commercial property owners. The currently allowable shift factor is 1.75%. A new measure could enable cities and towns to increase the shift factor up to 1.85% when doing so will keep the rate of actual tax increase consistent between the commercial and residential rate payers. Years ago, when residential values rose exponentially faster than commercial property values, and actual taxes on the aggregated commercial sector were flat or falling, the Legislature responded by allowing a temporary adjustment to equalize the system and keep it more fair. I believe we need to do this again since we've seen flat or declining actual tax payments on the commercial sector and higher than 2 1/2% increases on residential rate payers. Ensuring that commercial properties pay their fair share of property tax will make Massachusetts communities more affordable for their residents.

Below I discuss transportation and the environment at length and what I propose to do in these areas so I will refer you to questions 8 & 9 for further discussions on these topics.

4. *Lexington is in process of renovating two middle schools, building a new Hastings school, a new preschool facility, and a new fire station. The town is planning to renovate and expand the police station and will soon need either a renovated or a new high school. These projects are necessary to replace old infrastructure. At the same time, the projects result in significantly higher local taxes, approved by voters through several debt exclusion referenda.*

What do you propose to do, in the State Legislature, to reduce municipal construction costs – as well as to relieve some of the tax pressure on those least able to pay, for example people living on fixed income such as retirees living on Social Security?

There are a number of things we could do to reduce school construction costs. First, I will work to expand school construction reimbursement rates from the Mass. School Building Authority by recapitalizing that bonding authority and reforming its program. The goal is to enable MSBA to provide a higher rate of matching reimbursement funds to cities and towns and to also shorten the time a district typically needs to wait to get a school approved on the list. This will minimize cost escalation. Second, I will propose that the Legislature establish a commission to study public construction and make recommendations for streamlining the process to reduce costs. While public bidding is essential to provide competitive bids and eliminate any opportunities for fraud, and prevailing wages reflect the existing market rates, the current process is unwieldy and could likely benefit from a focus on efficiency and cost savings. Statewide procurement of construction materials through group purchasing might also achieve better pricing.

Regarding affordability for seniors and those least able to pay for debt exclusions and rising real estate taxes, there are a number of approaches that I believe would be helpful. As I described in an earlier answer, I support creating statewide enabling legislation to allow cities and towns to institute

Senior Means-Tested Property Tax Exemptions. Modeled after a successful program in place in Sudbury, this voter-approved exemption provides tax relief to seniors whose property tax exceeds 10% of their income, with certain qualification limits on house value and the senior’s total assets. This revenue-neutral program is paid for by a modest shift in the taxes paid by all the remaining residential property owners.

Also as noted earlier, increasing the State-regulated factor that allows us to fairly distribute tax burdens between the residents and the commercial property owners, will relieve residents of some of the costs of the Town’s upcoming infrastructure projects.

Finally, increasing Chapter 70 school aid to cities and towns will enable municipalities to keep their operating budgets under control and minimize property tax increases. This is another mechanism that can help keep local communities more affordable.

- 5. *Zoning that facilitates more balanced housing and more affordable housing has the benefit of reducing the high cost of housing and improving the socio-economic diversity of our community. At the same time, more housing means more traffic and an increase in school population that translates into additional pressure on local budgets.*

What are your principles in regards to zoning – and what do you plan to do to advance your principles?

As a Community Development Professional, and a former officer at MAPC and current Legislative Committee Chair, I have been advocating for zoning reform for at least 10 years and have been an active participant in testifying and lobbying for zoning reform. I have also worked locally to advance smart growth zoning in both the community I worked for and in Lexington as an elected official. Recently, I attended the Great Neighborhoods event put on by Mass. Smart Growth Alliance and other partners at the State House in support of a package of legislation aimed at modernizing our zoning and housing laws.

I support the principals of smart growth and believe there are a number of legislative and budgetary measures we need to pass to advance these objectives. The proposed Housing Choice legislation is a good place to start but there is far more that we can and should be doing to upgrade our zoning and I would refer the reader to the Mass. Smart Growth Alliance for more details.

It is vitally important for a variety of reasons that we concentrate new development in areas where there is existing infrastructure and minimize construction on raw land. To do that we need tools that will help us preserve land and also new zoning that will allow for mixed-use new development where there are good opportunities for transportation and where density makes sense because of existing infrastructure. Such mixed use zoning should allow for a variety of housing types, not just large single-family homes, so there is suitable housing for people over the course of their lifespan. Smaller units need to be available for singles and seniors and those without families. At the same time, we can’t zone out housing for families for fear of the children they bring to our community. Tools such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) offer techniques to preserve property while also allowing

for new development in places that does not require disrupting raw land. I will work to see this legislation improved and an TDR investment bank set up to facilitate these transfers. In addition, I have been advocating for the recapitalization of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) at the state level to bring the state reimbursement rate back up to at least 50% of the Town’s match. This fund is one of the primary vehicles used locally for land preservation and for the creation of affordable housing.

6. *Transgender rights: A November 2018 ballot question seeks to repeal the protection of transgender people in public places – including medical facilities, restaurants, retail shops, and bathrooms. What have you done, and will do to advance transgender non-discrimination?*

I unequivocally reject the ill-conceived ballot initiative to roll back transgender rights. I stand strong with our neighbors in Lexington who are among our LGBTQ community. I serve on the newly created SHAC (Student Health Advisory Committee) LGBTQ sub committee at LHS and am participating in meetings of the recently organized LexPride group. If elected, I will bring my caring, my concern and my support for the LGBTQ community to the State House and will work to embrace all our human rights at every opportunity.

I attended the first organizing meeting of the “LexVoteYes4TransRights” effort and have spoken with members of LexPride regarding my intent to do a Letter to the Editor in October as the ballot questions gets closer. I have pledged to galvanize my own 40+ strong campaign team to work at events for LexVoteYes4TransRights in the fall including doing a phonebank and/or canvassing in order to put some energy behind the effort.

Speaking more broadly about inclusivity and human rights, in Lexington, as a member of the Board of Selectmen, I support the strong stand we take to denounce any acts of hate, hostility, or discrimination. When we see such acts, we encourage our Police Department to investigate and when possible to actively prosecute. A year ago, the Lexington Board of Selectmen issued an Inclusivity Proclamation to make it clear to the Community what our values are and who we want to be, as a welcoming inclusive community:
https://www.lexingtonma.gov/sites/lexingtonma/files/uploads/inclusivity_proclamation_-_2017.pdf.

I was proud to make this statement. However, we recognized this was a first symbolic step and a comprehensive ongoing effort needs to be undertaken. As a member of the Board of Selectmen, I have actively sought out and regularly meet with various groups in our community to invite them to participate in our local government. For instance, I was a guest speaker at several forums sponsored by the Indian Association of Lexington and the Chinese American Association of Lexington at which I recruited individuals to volunteer for committees and run for office, especially for Town Meeting and Town-wide offices. Individuals in the community will tell you that they got involved because I personally asked them to participate. As a Selectman, I frequently speak at other programs such as Citizen’s Academy, the very popular and well-received program we run to educate the community about their municipal government. I have met with our Human Rights Commission Chair and regularly support the activities of this commission.

In the FY2019 budget, just approved by the Town, in response to a goal enumerated by the Board of Selectmen, we approved funding for a brand-new Diversity Taskforce, which will report to the

Superintendent of Schools and the Town Manger. That group will create a work plan to ensure we are making progress on our inclusivity objectives.

7. *Job growth and economic development: What will you do to advance the state's economic interests, while addressing wealth and income inequality, given that Massachusetts has the 6th worse income inequality in the union?*

The massive wealth gap that exists in Massachusetts is one of the defining issues of our time. If we don't work to address the inequities in our society, we cannot hope to continue our prosperity. The inequity, unchecked, will ultimately cause decay and decline for all. In Massachusetts we excel in areas that include educational achievement, universal healthcare, environmental sustainability, software innovation, and scientific discovery among other areas. To maintain a strong local economy, it will be important for us to focus on our strengths and work to be a national leader in these areas. I am seeking a position in the General Court so that I can work closely with likeminded legislators, advocacy organizations, unions, businesses, and residents to enact policies that ensure Massachusetts leads and all our residents prosper.

I understand the issues surrounding income inequality and feel deeply about the importance of working hard to close opportunity gaps to build an economy that works for all. Investing in Environmental Justice neighborhoods so we don't leave anyone behind is an important first step. Educational investment and transportation investment are the areas that will have the biggest impact on closing the achievement gap.

Affordable and convenient public transportation is vital to lower income people who can't take a job if they can't get to the job. Broadening and improving transportation options has long been a special interest of mine and an area of expertise for me. In the past, I have worked to support synergy and coordination between existing modes of transportation such as corporate shuttles, senior shuttles, local van services and other disparate systems to efficiently benefit wider groups of passengers. If elected I will work hard to promote the development of innovative programs using emerging technologies and will support any measures that make public transportation part of the means to reducing income inequality. Bus rapid transit, electrified rail, bicycle, and pedestrian investments all need to be part of a comprehensive transportation system.

We have a severe shortage of tradespeople in our economy despite the fact that jobs in the trades pay very well. I will work to make vocational and technical education widely available for free for those who are unable to afford it and for a modest needs-based tuition for those who can afford to pay a little.

I understand the role of community development investment in raising up the economic vitality of an area. When I first became the Assistant Town Administrator in the town of Hudson, the downtown suffered from boarded up storefronts and bars that attracted a rough clientele. I later became Hudson's Community Development Director where I had the opportunity to bring residents and business owners together to plan a major revitalization of the downtown. I worked to secure grants and funding for restoration, historic renovation and enhanced public amenities. My public sector investment projects attracted an equal amount of private investment and today, downtown Hudson has a lively collection of restaurants, cafes and stores and is a regional destination. One of the draws to Hudson is its location on the Assabet Valley Rail Trail, a project for which I brought five participating towns together, secured funding, coordinated with state transportation agencies, hired the engineering firms, and oversaw construction.

8. *Transportation is a major producer of greenhouse gasses (GHG) and consumer of fossil fuel energy sources. What is your philosophy for producing an effective transportation system that is environmentally and financially sustainable?*

Meaningful investments in transit and transportation infrastructure must be a priority for Massachusetts. Increased traffic congestion, outdated public transit, and crumbling roads and bridges make getting around the region an increasing challenge and can ultimately damage our economy. Since the transportation sector is a major consumer of carbon (soon to eclipse the building sector), we need to find ways to encourage the greening of our transportation system. I strongly support expanding transit opportunities and improving bicycling and pedestrian connections. I also believe we need to focus on the use of technology and innovations anticipated in the transportation sector to completely re-envision how we get around the Commonwealth. A focus on reducing single occupancy vehicles will be critically important to prevent grid-lock and congestion. We will need to collaborate with the business community to streamline how people get to work and provide ways for municipalities to have a stronger voice in planning for transportation improvements. This will require that we work with the Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) and the Transportation Management Agencies (TMAs) and other regional groups. I have had extensive experience working with these groups in the past and am more than familiar with the transportation organizations in the Commonwealth.

While in Hudson, I served on the Metrowest Regional Transit Authority, and helped to lay the groundwork to create a shuttle to serve that community. While Chair of the MAGIC Subregion of MAPC (the 13 towns in the area north west of Boston), I initiated one of the State's earliest Suburban Mobility Studies to evaluate how collaboration can make local shuttle buses more efficient to increase ridership and access to transit. I was an appointed member of GreenDOT, an initiative under Deval Patrick to green up the Mass. Department of Transportation. We advised on improving transit and bicycle and pedestrian mobility. I also served on the Healthy Transportation Compact Advisory Committee which had some overlap with GreenDOT in its mission.

As the initiator of statewide legislation that created the Complete Streets program which is currently expanding bicycle and pedestrian options across the Commonwealth, I will continue to focus on funding capital improvements to public transportation.

We need to close the "last mile" transit gap that separates our homes and workplaces from convenient access to public transportation. Bicycling and walking options are a piece of this puzzle. We must focus on using data and technology to improve traffic flow, and we must make real investments in public transportation infrastructure. We must prepare for the inevitable disruptive changes that new technologies and autonomous vehicles will bring so that we can harness the opportunities that they present for real improvements to our transportation systems.

I support the use of Regional Ballot Initiatives as a mechanism to help pay for some transportation expansion projects but that legislation will provide only limited new revenue. At the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, for more than 5 years, as an agency we have been working on numerous position statements and recommendations for increasing transportation revenues. As you can see, as far back as 2013, we have had specific transportation finance recommendations: <http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/MAPC-Transportation-Finance-Recommendations-MARCH-22-2013.pdf> This document was prepared when I was President of MAPC and I was actively engaged in contributing to the ideas and positions expressed in this white paper. Most of these recommendations are still relevant today and provide some ways in which we

can bring much needed new revenue opportunities into the transportation system. In addition, I support public-private partnerships and have spearheaded highly successful transportation projects in Hudson that have been built around of such public-private collaboration. Finally, I am currently working to develop “transit betterment” legislation to provide a fair, equitable, and sustainable financing model for suburban transit expansion projects and would be happy to share the draft of that legislation with anyone who wants to see it.

9. Renewable energy production is essential to meeting Massachusetts’ commitments to GHG reduction, yet recent rate structure proposed by investor owned utilities threatened to make municipal and residential installations financially impractical. What is your approach to creating incentives for renewable energy production that are not rendered moot by actions of the DPU?

Given Massachusetts’ ideal northeast coastal location, the Commonwealth has greater potential than just about any other state in the nation to produce energy through wind turbines. According to a report by the Environment Massachusetts Research and Policy Center, Massachusetts has a surplus of wind power potential. That organization projects that today we could power nearly 19 times our current statewide electricity consumption. Moreover, assuming a continued conversion to all-electric vehicles and electric building heating and cooling systems, depending on how quickly we convert these sectors, we should still be able to produce 8 times the projected future statewide energy consumption with wind. There are few if any credible arguments against aggressively pursuing off-shore wind.

Furthermore, Increasing investment in solar is critically important to achieving 100% reliance on renewable energy. As a second term Selectman in Lexington I’ve shepherded large-scale solar projects through to completion. While working in Hudson where I served for 20 years as the Assistant Town Administrator and Community Development Director, I initiated a large-scale solar system on our former landfill there. I’ve also and made policy decisions guiding energy efficiency choices for a number of municipal buildings as both a staff person and an elected official. Solar works, is efficient, and provides a path to sustainability. While some argue that the electricity supply grid can’t absorb a large volume of new solar systems at an unlimited (uncapped) pace, and that utility companies need to be able to upgrade their transmission and distribution systems to accommodate the changes, I’d rather lift the cap entirely and provide incentives and support for micro-grids and grid modernization in response to these concerns.

As a Selectmen and current Chair of the Legislative Committee at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, we advocated for removing the solar utility demand charge which was recently authorized by DPU. That demand charge has the potential of making many of the currently installed solar systems not financially viable and could seriously negatively impact the Town of Lexington’s solar projects. The current omnibus environmental legislation that the Senate just passed outlaws this practice of allowing demand charges. Careful monitoring of the actions of DPU and corrective legislative responses when necessary will be part of the due diligence and vigilance I will undertake as a Legislator to ensure clean energy projects can continue to move forward.

10. Buildings are another major component of energy consumption. What approach would you take to incentivize building practices that approach net-zero emissions and net-zero energy consumption?

For new construction, we need a progressively more stringent statewide building code to motivate best practices in the industry to enable our buildings to become radically more energy efficient. This will require increasingly better thermal insulation, more energy efficient windows, LED lighting, and heating and cooling systems that use the most modern technologies possible. Some experts project that in order to meet our energy reduction targets we will need to convert 300,000 homes per year in Massachusetts to ground and air sourced heat pump systems for heating and cooling. As a Legislator, I will work to provide robust incentives for these conversions and to continue to support the solar industry so those heat pumps will be running on clean energy. We also need to pass proposed legislation requiring home inspections and energy ratings at the time of sale, which I have voted to advance while Chair of MAPC's Legislative Committee. Research has shown that the point-of-sale is the major opportunity when homeowners are open to energy efficiency upgrades and thus it is essential for homebuyers to understand the condition of the property and the opportunities for upgrades.

11. All the Democrat candidates for Governor for Nov 2018 support single payer healthcare in Massachusetts. The state legislature, however, for many years, has instead passed measures intending to keep health care costs inflation in check using a market mechanism for private medical insurers, rather than switching to a single payer system. Many past state house candidates had single payer in their campaign platform, but the state house has not supported the measure.

Why do you think we have this disconnect between candidates and elected officials? Do you support Single Payer – and is Single Payer feasible in Massachusetts? If not, what are the alternatives?

I support the concept of a single payer health system and believe it could be successful here in Massachusetts. Ideally, such a system would be implemented at a national level where the economies of scale could have a more meaningful impact. However, given the current administration in Washington and the lack of interest in pursuing this nationally, we must work towards the creation of a single payer health insurance system in Massachusetts that guarantees access, is publicly administered, and lowers the cost of health care. Such a system must be phased in carefully and deliberately to ensure service quality, and, importantly, to reduce disruption and displacement of workers currently employed in the private health insurance industry.

The health care system is a complex market and one not easily transformed. In Massachusetts, a significant portion of our high-paying jobs are generated from our state's prominence in the medical industry, from our hospitals and medical institutions, our biotech innovation, and our insurance industry. We have to be mindful of these institutions and appreciate that in any transformative change, there will be parts of the economy that grow and parts that shrink. Moving towards a single payer system could ultimately be disruptive to numerous jobs that sustain workers across the

Commonwealth. Thus, we have to be careful and deliberate in approaching this problem. I believe that in order to generate progress towards this objective, it will be essential to have a robust public process with careful data gathering and analysis. We will need a commission of experts from all sides of the issue, and significant opportunities for public input in order to be able to develop a system that avoids negative unintended consequences. Retraining for displaced workers, if any are to be projected, and new investment for wellness-focused initiatives should also be a part of the solution. Ultimately, the best way to reduce health care costs in the system is to prevent people from becoming sick in the first place.

12. The cost of higher education, whether public or private, has continued to significantly go up in the past 20 years. What do you see as the cause of that? What will you do, as legislator, to address it?

Higher education policy is a complex policy area and not one that can be easily summed up in a few paragraphs. However, it is worth noting that university enrollment is on the decline nation-wide due to demographic shifts. This problem is being compounded by the tightening of immigration standards and by the tone and tenor of hostility towards foreigners that is causing student applications from abroad to also decline. Couple these trends with costs associated with high administrator salaries and aging capital facilities and you can see why tuition costs are continue to rise at an unsustainable rate. More significantly, the public university system has sustained significant cuts in funding over the past decade, which has shifted the burden to a more student-paid system. Data provided by the Mass. Budget and Policy Center indicates that the State has cut higher education by 14% between 2001-2018 when adjusted for inflation.

There is no question we need to invest more in higher education in Massachusetts and in the section above where I discussed education, I detailed out some of the new revenue streams that should be dedicated to education, a portion of which should go to post-secondary education. I have also cautiously begun to explore the concept that we might want to explore putting a modest tax on large university endowments' (over \$500 million) investment income and utilize that revenue stream to support low and moderate income students at public universities. However, we would want to study this carefully to evaluate if doing so would have any adverse impacts on the number of university scholarships available. We may also need to explore consolidation and realignment of some campuses provided that we do not disrupt those university campuses in environmental justice neighborhoods. Cost savings need to be explored while at the same time we need to continue to find new revenue options.

Another measure we should explore are ways to help defray the costs of student loans. Currently, once earning wages, student-loan interest is a deductible item on one's tax return. However, I believe we should allow for a full deduction of student loan payments by providing that both the principal and interest can be deducted. This will make it easier to pay those loans back after a student graduates and help ease the burden for our newly graduated students.

13. Do you support charter schools? If no, why not? What changes, if any, do you advocate for –or have you personally advocated for in the past?

I voted “NO” on the ballot question to raise the cap in 2016. The Legislature has a track record of underfunding Charter School Reimbursements to public school districts and it is wrong to expand a system that is currently not funded adequately. For Fiscal 2019 it is projected that there will be more than \$660 million dollars deducted from local school systems statewide due to Charter School assessments on communities. Despite the fact that the House of Representatives is proposing to increase Charter school reimbursements, the amount of funding at the proposed House level will still be nearly half of what the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) estimates full funding needs to be.

The larger policy implications are even more concerning as the Charter School system has the potential to completely undermine our public school system and create gaping holes in the social safety net system. I place a high value on public education and do not support expanding the Charter School System as it is currently constituted. I believe fundamentally that our focus should be on improving our existing public school system.

I recognize that some Charter Schools have been able to achieve dramatic and positive results especially for students whose public school systems may be failing them, but some Charter Schools have had poor results and failed to serve students well. There remains considerable risk in sending public dollars to schools with an unproven track record and thus more oversight and regulation may be needed for existing charter schools. Until we develop a fair and equitable system of accountability and funding, I remain committed to providing excellent public schools as our primary objective.

14. Gun crime continues to be a significant issue in some inner city and gateway communities around Massachusetts - sometimes, drug or gang related. Throughout the state, we live with the risk of random mass shootings in schools, at work, or in places of worship.

What new gun control measures, if any, do you support at the state level?

In Lexington we have a youth-driven "Lexington Says Enough" group, which has been organizing since the Parkland shooting. Lexington sent three school buses to the March for Our Lives Rally – Two to Boston and one to Washington, DC. I attended the March for Our Lives rally, riding the bus with the students and adults and was at the organizing meetings leading up to the march. We've held a candle light vigil on the Lexington Battle Green and a rally since then and I've been in attendance for both. But, I know we need to do more. I've been promoting a series of suggestions to act locally but also formulating what I think needs to be done at the State level as I contemplate the role I would want to play if elected to the State Legislature.

In general, Massachusetts has fairly good gun protection laws but there are still areas for improvement and we need to continue to lobby our federal representatives for more action at the national level. It's important we have at a minimum:

- Universal background checks at point of purchase
- Limits on the number of guns purchased
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders ("Red Flag Laws")

- Mandatory waiting periods

I also support and would advocate for the passage of the following programs and laws:

- Support for S.1292, An Act Relative to Data Collection on Multiple Gun Purchases, which helps track illegal gun trafficking.
- Red Flag laws such as - H3610 (or a version of it) which has since passed and is pending the Governor's signature.
- Creating and funding a Gun buy-back provision for our residents to remove guns from our communities.
- Review of "safe acts" to make sure firearms are properly locked up out of reach of children and those who shouldn't have access to them.
- Creating legislation to require gun-owners insurance and allow for civil penalties to be assessed for the misuse of a firearm. This will hold individual gun owners civilly liable if their gun is not properly secured and used in a crime (The credit goes to Town Meeting Member Jonathan Suber for this idea).
- Focusing on improvements in Mental Health services and mandatory coverage by insurance plans.
- Fully funding the Shannon Grant program and other initiatives which support anti-gang programming and community policing
- Divesting pension funds and other large investments from companies that manufacture guns and from retailers who sell assault weapons.

15. Will you take on any paid work in addition to State Representative? If you will continue to have other work, how will you deal with potential conflicts of interest?

I believe the job of a State Legislator is a full-time role and in order to serve the Middlesex 15th District with distinction and to the fullest extent possible it is necessary to dedicate oneself fully to this endeavor. As anyone who knows me can testify, I have an enormous capacity for work and regularly commit 80 hours per week to my combined efforts at serving as a Lexington Selectman, and in my other volunteer and paid roles. I understand, having lived it, that being an elected official requires regular night time meetings, long days, early starts, weekend events, and holiday appearances at memorials and parades, etc. If elected, there are several local, state, and regional boards and non-profit boards which I will resign from in order to fully focus on being a Legislator. And, as a consultant presently, I am already intentionally winding down my contracts, and not taking on any new projects that will require my personal involvement going forward.

Conflicts of Interest are something that every Legislator needs to be wary and mindful of. Having taken my ethics training annually for decades, and having served as a municipal employee for 20 years and an elected official for nearly 8 years, I am well versed in how to avoid any conflicts of interest and I take this matter very seriously. The law extends to making sure any individual

legislator or public official does not gain financial benefit from their decisions and is broad enough to include consideration of the employment and financial connections of one's spouse, parents, children, brothers and sisters and other close relatives. Thus, virtually no-one can come into the Legislature without having some ties that might require them to consider the Conflict-of-Interest standards. For this reason, House members are encouraged to consult with in-house Legal Counsel on a regular basis to enable them to uphold the ethical standards expected of them.

16. If elected, how will you continuously report back and seek feedback from voters?

As a Selectmen presently, I make myself readily available to anyone who wants to meet with me or speak on the phone and can typically schedule such a meeting within a day or so of the request. I publish my cell phone, encourage people to use it, and answer all emails sent directly to me. I use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to reach out to constituents to let them know about upcoming events, the status of legislation, and more. I am also expanding into the use of YouTube as a means of reaching voters. I maintain a web site and post information there regularly. I use Constant Contact for e-blast to share timely messages to a broad list and will have that or a similar platform in place for constituents to subscribe to.

I think regular voter contact is essential to maintaining a clear-eyed understanding of one's district and the needs of its residents. With the addition of two Wards in Woburn and the opportunity to dedicate myself to being a Legislator full time, I don't plan on changing any of my habits and will make myself readily available to any constituent. Moreover, there are a number of regular things I will add to my outreach:

- Regular in-district office hours in both Lexington and Woburn
- Scheduled state-house events and visits for the community to attend
- A monthly newsletter to constituents updating them on actions on Beacon Hill and major developments within the district
- Continuing the beloved "Open House" forums that Representative Jay Kaufman has established on a monthly basis where residents have an opportunity to hear from a state expert on a policy matter, ask questions, and provide feedback.
- The use of innovative software tools such as "Involve" which lets constituents weigh in on policy questions and other controversial topics.

All candidates are asked to limit the response to each question to at most two or three paragraphs, and to provide the questionnaire responses by end of day Sunday, July 1st, 2017. Responses will not be edited, and will run as submitted. They will be posted on lex-wiki.org in PDF format and announced through other community media. Questionnaire coordinator Andrei Radulescu-Banu (bitdribble@gmail.com, 617-216-8509). Questionnaire reviewer: Joe Pato.
