

JP Progressive Candidate Questionnaire

150 word maximum, no minimum. We will publish your answers in their entirety in the web version of this Candidate Survey. In the printed version, we reserve the right to edit for length, but not for meaning or intent.

(1) Budget

Next year, with federal stimulus dollars dwindling, the state may be facing a budget structural deficit of \$2 billion dollars or more. As a state legislator, how will you propose we bridge that gap? Please answer yes or no to each question, and explain your choices at the end.

REVENUE

Income tax increase?	y	n
Sales tax increase?	y	n
Gas tax increase?	y	n
Fee increases?	y	n
Eliminate, reduce or cap certain tax credits (i.e. film, life sciences, etc.)	y	n
Misc. other revenue sources (other tobacco products, candy/soda, expanding bottle bill, etc.?)	y	n
Freezing or increasing corporate tax rate?	y	n
Other?	y	n

CUTS:

Cuts to local aid?	y	n
Cuts to education funding?	y	n
Cuts to social safety net services?	y	n
Cuts to infrastructure maintenance and improvements?	y	n
Cuts to state payroll costs (i.e. layoffs, furloughs, benefit reductions, Quinn bill benefits, salary freezes, etc.). (If yes, please elaborate)?	y	n

PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR CHOICES.

(2) Expanded Gambling

Do you support expanding gambling in the Commonwealth? Why or why not? If yes, in what ways?

(3) Health Care

What are the successes, challenges, and disappointments you see stemming from the 2006 Massachusetts Health Care Reform Act? Do you have any improvements you would suggest, or areas of particular concern that need work?

(4) Immigration

During the last budget process, several anti-immigrant proposals were raised in both the House and Senate. These proposals have included costly bureaucratic measures to double-verify that no undocumented immigrant is receiving a benefit for which they are not eligible, and setting up hot-lines that would allow people to report their neighbors if they believe s/he is an illegal immigrant. Would you support proposals like these, and why or why not?

Labor/Workers Rights

(5) MINIMUM WAGE

Would you support indexing the minimum wage to inflation, so it keeps up with the cost of living? And would you also support raising the minimum wage to a level closer to an actual living wage?

(6) PAID SICK DAYS

Many workers in Massachusetts do not receive paid sick days. Would you support legislation that guarantees that all Massachusetts workers can earn paid sick days?

Criminal Justice

(7) YOUTH VIOLENCE

Given the resurgence of youth violence in the city, what specific steps do you think the Legislature should take to ensure the safety of youth in our city?

(8) MANDATORY MINIMUMS

Do you support efforts to reform our "mandatory minimum" sentencing laws for drug-related offenses? If so, what reforms would you like to see?

(9) MEDICINAL MARIJUANA

Do you support legalizing marijuana for medical purposes only? Why or why not?

Housing

(10) FORECLOSURE PREVENTION

What steps do you think the state should take to protect tenants and homeowners facing foreclosure?

(11) HOMELESSNESS

What steps do you think the state should take to prevent, reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness?

(12) Environment

If elected, what would be your top three environmental and environmental justice priorities for the next legislative session?

Transportation

If elected, what would your transportation—and in particular public transportation—priorities be?

Education

(14) ED REFORM

Did you, or would you have if you were in office, voted for the education reform bill that was passed by the Legislature and signed into law? Why or why not?

(15) MCAS

What is your vision for how standardized tests, including the MCAS, should be used in our school systems?

(16) Women's Right to Choose:

Many states, including Massachusetts, have enacted or proposed barriers to women seeking to access an abortion—from waiting periods to mandatory ultrasounds. Would you oppose any additional legal barriers to women seeking abortion services in Massachusetts?

(17) Welfare

Each legislative session, many bills are filed that would reform our social welfare (cash assistance programs, food stamps, affordable housing & homeless shelters, etc.) systems in various ways. Are there ways in which you feel these systems should be reformed—and if so, what are they?

Government Reform

(18) ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

What are the top three specific steps you would suggest for improving accountability and transparency in state government?

(19) BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Many people feel as though the biggest barriers to progressive change in Massachusetts is the culture on Beacon Hill, and how the legislative system currently operates. Do you agree—and if so, what do you think is the source of this “cultural” problem? How would you suggest changing it?

Lightning Round - Please Answer Yes or No

1. Do you support ballot question #1, which would repeal the sales tax on alcohol?
2. Do you support ballot question #2, which would repeal the 40B affordable housing law?
3. Do you support ballot question #3, which would lower the sales tax to 3%?
4. Do you support a Single Payer health care system?
5. Will you support allowing undocumented students who have graduated from a Massachusetts high school to pay in-state tuition rates at state colleges and gain access to higher education?
6. Do you support expanding the Massachusetts Bottle Bill to include water, sport and fruit drinks?
7. Do you support legislation to allow for Election Day Registration (EDR) in the Commonwealth?
8. Do you support a woman's fundamental right to choose an abortion as stated in Roe v. Wade?
9. Will you support current legislation to extend civil rights (including employment non-discrimination, hate crimes, protections, and student rights) to transgender individuals?
10. Do you support same sex marriage?
11. Do you support restoring the Clean Elections system - with adequate funding - in Massachusetts?
12. Do you support the death penalty?

Russell Holmes

(1) Budget

REVENUE

Income tax increase?	y	n
Sales tax increase?	y	n
Gas tax increase?	y	n
Fee increases?	y	n
Eliminate, reduce or cap certain tax credits (i.e. film, life sciences, etc.)	y	n
Misc. other revenue sources (other tobacco products, candy/soda, expanding bottle bill, etc.?)	y	n
Freezing or increasing corporate tax rate?	y	n
Other?	y	n

CUTS

Cuts to local aid?	y	n
Cuts to education funding?	y	n
Cuts to social safety net services?	y	n
Cuts to infrastructure maintenance and improvements?	y	n
Cuts to state payroll costs (i.e. layoffs, furloughs, benefit reductions, Quinn bill benefits, salary freezes, etc.). (If yes, please elaborate)?	y	n

PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR CHOICES.

- Raising corporate taxes in the middle of a recession is counterproductive when businesses are already reluctant to invest and expand.
- Instead, we should implement a progressive income tax that would tax the wealthiest citizens the most.
- A gas tax has added environmental benefits, in addition to increased revenue.
- Cuts to local aid would still be passed down to taxpayers as municipalities raise their own taxes.
- Infrastructure is long-term and can wait three or four years.

(2) Expanded Gambling

I support expanded gambling.

- Important source of tax revenue and job creators.
- Many gamblers are going to out-of-state casinos.
- Support destination casinos and limited slots as long as a significant portion of the slot revenues are taxed.

(3) Health Care

Successes

- 97% coverage—highest in nation.
- Massachusetts' healthcare serves as model for national health care reform.
- Most employers have chosen to expand coverage rather than pay a penalty, in part because workers have asked for group coverage.
- Employers and workers have made a greater contribution to expanding coverage than the state has.

Problems

- Costs have risen from \$1b in FY2006 to \$1.7b in FY2010, with federal and state governments paying half the added costs (\$350 million).

Solutions

- We can explore alternatives like high deductible, low premium insurance policies for catastrophic illness combined with health savings accounts and low-interest loans for unexpected expenditures.

(4) Immigration

- Would not support proposals like these.
- These kinds of proposals are counterproductive, costly, and hardly indicative of the image we would like to project to the rest of the world. A path to citizenship is the only way to effectively address the problem of illegal immigration.

Labor/Workers Rights

(5) MINIMUM WAGE

- Would support indexing to inflation so that real wages don't continue to fall.
- Would not support raising minimum wage to closer to actual living wage.

(6) PAID SICK DAYS

Yes, and would likely cosponsor such legislation.

Criminal Justice

(7) YOUTH VIOLENCE

Obviously, we should hire more law enforcement, but we also ought to create communities where crime can't proliferate:

- Fund teen centers to get kids off the streets and out of trouble and new clean public spaces, like Mattapan's new public library that I helped bring to the community.
- Even detail-oriented ideas like street cleaning help change the social context.

(8) MANDATORY MINIMUMS

- Mandatory minimum sentencing laws for drug-related offenses have unfortunately crowded our jails and strained our budget.
- Support reforms backed by Families Against Mandatory Minimums that would repeal “one size fits all” sentences for drug offenders.
- Courts should be allowed to impose sentences that fit the crime while protecting public safety.

(9) MEDICINAL MARIJUANA

- Support legalizing marijuana for medical purposes.
- When properly used and regulated, medical marijuana can be an important medical tool as well as a source of tax revenue.

Housing

(10) FORECLOSURE PREVENTION

- Create a fund to help homeowners remain in their homes while they and their mortgage lenders work out affordable payment plans.
- Help overextended homeowners unload unsustainable mortgages and transition back into less costly rental situations.

(11) HOMELESSNESS

- Focus on prevention, not just treatment.
- Expand affordable housing, accompanied by supportive services. Enact programs that negotiate with landlords and help with bad credit histories.
- Expand programs that help individuals develop personal and family financial management skills, reestablish good credit, and retain housing.
- Expand rental assistance programs.

(12) Environment

1. Carbon tax
2. Increase tax credits for sustainable energy and hybrid cars
3. Increase tax credits for home weatherization

(13) Transportation

- Expand the T (either bus or rail) to better connect our district with downtown Boston
- Promote dedicated bus lanes to remove public transit from mixed traffic

Education

(14) ED REFORM

I would have voted for the education reform bill.

(15) MCAS

MCAS should continue to be used but should not be the only measurement of students and performance ratings of teachers.

(16) Women’s Right to Choose

I would oppose any additional legal barriers to women seeking abortion services in Massachusetts.

(17) Welfare

Focus dollars more on transitional assets such as home purchase and businesses. We must encourage ways for families to move to financial independence.

Government Reform

(18) ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

1. Increase the use of third party audits to assess the efficacy of legislation, especially tax credits.
2. Support and cosponsor legislation such as *An Act Relative to Transparency in State Revenues and Expenditures* (Sen. Cynthia Creem and Reps. Antonio Cabral and Jay Kaufman), which creates a searchable online database detailing the costs, recipients, and purposes of all appropriations by the state government.
3. Support and cosponsor legislation such as *An Act improving the Laws Related to Ethics and Lobbying*, filed by Gov. Patrick and proposed by the bipartisan Task Force on Public Integrity.

(19) BARRIERS TO CHANGE

I agree that the culture on Beacon Hill is the greatest barrier to progressive change in Massachusetts and that, ultimately, this culture is rooted in a disconnect between politicians and the communities they serve. To the typical family in Dorchester, Roslindale, Mattapan, Hyde Park or Jamaica Plain, Beacon Hill seems like a distant place.

While technical reforms can help, it is primarily the individual *character* of each elected official that can change this culture of disconnect. We need to elect leaders who put community first—who have a history of making change in their own neighborhoods—if we ever want to change how the legislative system currently operates. We must find more ways to have ideas come directly from our communities to Beacon Hill and not the other way around.

Lightning Round

1. Ballot question #1. **No**
2. Ballot question #2. **No**
3. Ballot question #3. **No**
4. Single Payer. **No**
5. In-state tuition. **Yes**
6. Expanding the Bottle Bill. **Yes**
7. Election Day Registration. **Yes**
8. Right to choose. **Yes**
9. Transgender Rights. **Yes**
10. Same sex marriage. **No, Support Civil Union**
11. Clean Elections. **Yes**
12. Death penalty. **No**