



**Chris Dempsey for State Auditor
Massachusetts Organization of State Engineers and
Scientists
Questionnaire Responses**

Submitted: April 24th, 2022

- 1. Collective bargaining rights are the single most important issue to MOSES. Once workers freely decide to form a union their power is found in the right to collectively bargain their wages, benefits, working conditions as well as their ability to collectively assert their voice at work. It is vital that elected officials understand and defend collective bargaining rights and stand with workers to resist any weakening of these rights, including efforts to legislate areas that are traditionally negotiated during collective bargaining, including capping sick leave buyback.**

Will you oppose all legislation that seeks to compromise, weaken or otherwise lessen collective bargaining rights for all workers?

Yes. As State Auditor, I intend to focus my legislative efforts on bills related directly to the work of the Auditor's Office.

- 2. In a few sentences, please describe how you intend to support strong wages, benefits, promotional opportunities and working conditions for public employees as an elected official, as well as what actions you would be willing to take to protect the repeal or weakening of protected subjects of collective bargaining for all workers.**

I will support strong wages, benefits, advancement opportunities, and conditions for public employees. I am the only candidate in this race who has worked alongside MOSES members as an executive-branch employee, and I have seen first-hand the valuable contributions that MOSES members and other public employees make to our Commonwealth. I will support public employees in their mission, using audits as tools to make state government work better, not weapons to tear down public employees and their work. I will use the office to identify successes, share best practices, and assist state agencies in implementing the innovative and productive ideas of their employees. Audits and evaluations can be powerful tools to identify where changes to or additions in resources available to an agency can provide significant societal benefits *and* a better working environment. Further, I will protect our State employees from doctrinaire anti-government ideologues by using my full power under the Pacheco Law to review any and all proposals that seek to privatize a publicly-provided service. Through this, I will defend both workers and residents against initiatives that deliver profits to private companies at the expense of unionized public employees by rejecting any proposal that does not clear a high bar on both cost and quality.

3. MWRA Workplace Democracy: Unlike the vast majority of state employees, workers at the MWRA do not have the right to negotiate for certain benefits such as assignments, promotions and seniority. Worker discipline is meted out through an arbitrary and capricious standard instead of through a “just cause” system. This is due to restrictive language in the MWRA enabling act.

MOSES has filed a bill to eliminate this exception to the collective bargaining laws. Will you support, and would you sponsor or co-sponsor this legislation?

Yes. As State Auditor, I intend to focus my legislative efforts on bills related directly to the work of the Auditor’s Office.

I support strong protections for workers in the public and private sectors, and I oppose any workplace standards that are arbitrary and capricious. While I intend to focus my legislative efforts on bills related directly to the work of the Auditor’s Office, I believe there are ways for the Auditor’s Office to be helpful that are even more powerful than legislative support or sponsorship. The Auditor’s Office must be attuned to risks and inconsistencies within state government. These areas deserve special attention and will receive that needed attention when I am State Auditor.

4. Public employees, particularly those working in scientific, engineering and technical positions, make on average, \$20,000 to \$30,000 less than workers in the private sector. Increases in healthcare premiums, co-pays and deductibles, along with changes to state pension plans, are inhibiting the ability of the state to attract and retain highly educated and trained individuals to state service. Earlier this year, headlines were made when the Group Insurance Commission (GIC), which determines healthcare benefits for most public employees, voted to drop three of the most popular carriers. Despite having the power to determine the benefits and cost structure of health insurance for the majority of the public workforce, only six of the 17 seats on the GIC are currently designated for public employees or retirees. As a result, over the past three years the GIC has voted to shift over \$300 million onto employees and retirees through increased co-pays and deductibles.

MOSES has filed legislation to incur additional labor representation on the GIC, giving public employees a greater voice in the decision-making process. Will you support, and would you sponsor or co-sponsor this legislation?

Yes. As State Auditor, I intend to focus my legislative efforts on bills related directly to the work of the Auditor’s Office.

- 5. MOSES is concerned about the long-term impacts these changes will have on the ability of the Commonwealth to recruit and retain top talent in the engineering and scientific professions.**

In a few sentences, please describe how you will work in your capacity as an elected official to contain the rising costs of healthcare for public employees, prevent the shifting of costs from the state onto employees, and fix the broken GIC:

The GIC is one of the many agencies under the State Auditor's mandate. As Auditor, I will assess how the GIC defines its mission, how this may differ from state enabling legislation, and how the agency measures its success. If the mission and metrics are not centering our hardworking government employees, the audit will provide clear direction to ensure their duties to serve state employees are represented in their everyday practice. In the event changes to legislation are necessary to protect state employees, the audit will also make appropriate recommendations.

- 6. Perhaps the contributions of the labor movement that are most taken for granted are the accomplishments we have achieved by our fights for occupational safety and health. One of the reasons the labor movement formed was the desire of workers to act collectively to improve their working conditions. Safe jobs at safe workplaces are an indispensable factor in an employee's quality of life. Nothing is more central to quality of life than one's health and ability to return safely home from work. Each year on April 28, MOSES participates in the international 'Workers Memorial Day', meant to commemorate the lives of workers who die on the job each year. One worker dying on the job in preventable accidents is one worker too many.**

Thanks to recent actions taken by the legislature, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations now protect not only private sector workers but almost all public sector workers in both state and municipal roles across the Commonwealth.

The challenge now comes in ensuring that these laws are properly implemented and enforced.

Will you support legislation to strengthen worker safety on the job and prioritize strong funding for the Department of Labor Standards (DLS) to enforce OSHA standards?

Yes. As State Auditor, I intend to focus my legislative efforts on bills related directly to the work of the Auditor's Office.

Worker safety should be a top priority of the Auditor's Office, and I expect there will be ample opportunity for the Auditor's Office to help advance worker protections through legislative and executive/administrative recommendations.

7. State revenue has fluctuated in recent years, leaving many agencies uncertain as to how to best plan for the future. Past proposals to lower the state personal income tax and a more recent proposal to lower the sales tax, all negatively impact state revenue. Alternately, a proposal to increase taxes on individuals with income over \$1 million, would increase revenue for the Commonwealth. With costs for health care and energy steadily increasing, MOSES is very concerned about the stability of state revenue to fund the important work being done by our members at agencies across the state.

In a few sentences, please describe your views on changes to the state personal income tax and sales tax being proposed:

When it comes to supporting strong public services with sufficient tax revenue, there is a clear choice in this race. I am the only candidate in this race who has consistently opposed reducing the state sales tax. I also support the FAIR SHARE Amendment that increases the tax on income over \$1 million. As we've seen in the past, cuts to state income tax have led to lost revenue that could have been invested in our infrastructure and services.

8. Despite major public-private partnership (P3) disasters across the nation and here at home, foreign, multi-national companies and Wall Street investment houses continue to push for private toll roads and other risky private takeovers of public assets. These projects allow investors to syphon huge profits out of the public transportation and water systems while inflicting outrageous fees through cumbersome, lengthy contracts. In 1993, the Legislature enacted the Tax Payer Protection Act (TPA)/Pacheco Law as the direct result of reports issued by the state auditor that uncovered large scale instances of waste, fraud and abuse in privatization contracts. The TPA, which applies to state contracts of \$500,000 or more, establishes a process through which private vendors are required to meet a set of standards before proceeding with privatization. Vendors must demonstrate to the auditor that the total cost to perform the service in question will generate savings of just *one cent* and maintain equal or greater quality to the in-house cost. Unfortunately, the TPA does not include design and engineering services. This has created a persistent consultant culture in Massachusetts, driving up costs and creating dangerous safety situations for the public. The transportation sector in Massachusetts alone now sees over \$300 million a year being spent on consultants doing engineering and design—work that could be done in-house at 1/3 of the cost. In a few sentences, please describe your views on public-private partnerships, any experiences you have had with these kinds of projects and how you would approach the TPA as an elected official:

P3s are often used as a coping mechanism for understaffed state agencies or as a pipe dream belief that they present the state with “free money.” Use of P3s in these scenarios causes the state and residents to lose out through higher costs, a brain drain in expertise, and failing to provide proper oversight on public services.

As State Auditor, I would use and enforce the TPA (Pacheco Law) to make sure that when companies try to privatize services, they clear a high bar of cost and quality so that the people and workers are not burdened with such partnerships. As Auditor, I would also provide quality information to state agencies and evaluate the full lifecycle of costs and benefits for these partnerships, such as what happens after contracts expire and if non-incumbent companies can win those bids in subsequent opportunities.

There are places where the state and the private sector *can* work together to drive significant value to residents and I look forward to continuing to identify such situations as they arise. For example, I co-founded the MassDOT open-data program that gave the public access to bus and train arrive times, saving taxpayers and farepayers millions compared with more costly and cumbersome alternatives. The open-data program represents a good place where public and private sectors can work together to each do what they do best without granting an unaccountable monopoly to private individual businesses or picking winners and losers.

9. Since the 'Great Recession' of 2008-2009, the budgets for many of the agencies where our scientists and engineers work have been cut dramatically. These cuts combined with early retirement have left our members struggling to fulfill their agencies' mission. Some of these include:

- **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**
- **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)**
- **Department of Public Health (DPH)**
- **Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM)**
- **State Police Crime Laboratory**
- **Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)**

During the State Budget process, will you prioritize investing in staffing levels at public agencies such as MassDOT, DCR, DEP, DPH, DCA & the State Police Crime Lab to ensure the Commonwealth maintains and develops in-house expertise and is able to carry-out its key functions?

The State Auditor does not set or vote on the state budget, but I support a state government that properly staffs public agencies, including the agencies where MOSES members work.

10. In a few sentences, please describe which of these agencies you would prioritize during the budget process and why:

As State Auditor, I would not be a legislator and I would not control how or where funds are invested during the State Budget process. With that said, I will carry out the duty of the State Auditor to make sure funds are being used efficiently and effectively during the budget process. I will make sure that our state departments and agencies are receiving the proper funding and identify the times and places when staffing and funding is insufficient to accomplish the agency mission.

11. What, if any, direct experience do you have or have you had with labor unions?

I am the son of public school teachers who were union members for their entire careers. Since my childhood, I have understood the hard-fought gains made through organizing and collective bargaining that helped support my family and the benefit unions bring to families across the state and country. Additionally, I have seen the power of organized labor to support pro-labor candidates. I have worked on the campaigns of Senator Kennedy (2006), Deval Patrick and Tim Murray (2006), and Congressman Joe Kennedy III (2012), all of whom enjoyed strong support from a wide range of unions. From holding signs in a field to collaborating on policy proposals, I have partnered with organized labor to advance the campaigns of these candidates and the perspectives of working people they support. I am also proud to say that when I co-founded the Mass Transportation and Climate Initiative table, my co-founding partners were Community Labor

United, a group that itself is a collaboration between Labor Unions and community groups.

Additionally, in this race for State Auditor, I am proud to have been endorsed by labor unions across the state representing thousands of workers in both the public and private sectors, including United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 791, UFCW Local 1459, the Alliance of MBTA Unions, SMART Transportation Local 0898, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, and OPEIU Local 453.

12. Please utilize the space provided below to provide us with some final thoughts about why MOSES should consider an endorsement of your candidacy. A simple paragraph or two will suffice. Please try not to skip this section.

I am proud to have been a partner to MOSES since I worked in the Patrick Administration from 2007 to 2010. Joe Dorant has been a longtime partner and friend, and I admire the advocacy he led on behalf of MOSES members over many years. I have been a strong supporter of more investment in transportation and support for all transportation workers at all levels of state and local government. As State Auditor, I will continue that work and partnership. I fundamentally understand the importance of unions and the workers that they are composed of. By monitoring and auditing state agencies and their actions, I will make sure that the government's money is being well spent so that state employees are well paid, given the proper tools they need to work, and are supported by the government that they are making function. As State Auditor, I will make it my mission to bring transparency and accountability to areas of state government that need attention.

I have experience holding big interests accountable and going up against well-funded groups and winning when I headed No Boston Olympics. I am the only candidate in this race with experience in the executive branch of government and as State Auditor I will make sure to continue my path towards supporting workers and union members by shedding light on financial interests and fixing the inefficiencies in state government. We can make the Commonwealth stronger together.