



**Chris Dempsey for State Auditor
MassEquality
Questionnaire Responses**

Submitted: July 26th, 2022

1. Please include a brief biography (1 paragraph) outlining relevant experience, education, membership in political organizations and any public offices held.

I am the son of public school teachers who met while teaching at the Martin Luther King Jr. School in Dorchester in 1970. With my parents as my role models, I have spent my career in and around public service. I served as Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Governor Deval Patrick, where I co-founded the MassDOT Open Data Program that allows transit riders to find their bus and train in real-time on their phones. After my time in the Department of Transportation, I was one of the leaders of No Boston Olympics, the grassroots group that successfully pushed back against a corporate-backed Olympic bid that required all of us as state taxpayers to cover 100% of Olympic cost overruns. I was named "[Bostonian of the Year](#)" by the Boston Globe Magazine for this volunteer work. I have served as a Brookline town meeting member since 2012 and previously served as a member and Chair of the Brookline Transportation Board. I attended Brookline Public Schools, Pomona College (B.A.), and Harvard Business School (M.B.A.).

2. What district are you running in? How long have you been a resident of the district?

I am running statewide to be the Commonwealth's next State Auditor. I have been a Massachusetts resident my entire life.

3. Why are you running for this seat?

My campaign is driven by the desire to make state government work better for the residents, taxpayers, and workers of the Commonwealth. Growing up, I saw my parents digging into their own pockets to pay for school supplies for their students. I have seen first-hand how we underfund critical needs like public education and public health. I have also seen that when decisions in state government are made with a lack of public accountability and transparency that they often benefit special interests -- especially corporate interests -- at the expense of the common good. As State Auditor, I will make the Commonwealth a more fair and equitable place to be born, raise a family, work, and grow old, by making our state government more effective, more inclusive, more accountable, and more responsive to its people.

Massachusetts residents face a number of pressing challenges: from the high cost of housing, to a broken transportation system, to health care that is neither cost effective nor accessible, to an education system that produces vastly different outcomes for students depending on their zip code. The State Auditor's Office can help improve all of these areas of public policy and more. Our campaign was the first in this race to issue policy plans for how we wanted to use the office as a platform to improve state government. Our first three policy papers addressed these three topics: (1) [Federal Stimulus Funding](#), (2) [Climate and Environmental Justice](#), and (3) [Reform of the Massachusetts State Police](#).

4. Have you used your past position(s) to advocate for LGBTQ social justice, and if so, how?

I am proud to have worked alongside MassEquality when I worked as Policy Director for Joseph Kennedy III's 2012 run for Congress. Joe and I worked closely with Kasey Suffredini to ensure that Joe's campaign platform was progressive and inclusive.

I was proud to have my campaign support Bay State Stonewall Democrats' Pre-Convention event last year. Within my campaign, I have sought out diverse voices to ensure equitable policymaking and effective organizational leadership. Our Kitchen Cabinet, which has been meeting consistently to guide the campaign since June, 2021, reflects the full diversity of the Commonwealth, including LGBTQ+ individuals. This diversity of perspective, viewpoint, and lived experience makes our decision-making stronger. I also rely on staff and supporters to push me to be a better candidate, a better public servant, and a better human being. I feel incredibly honored and fortunate to have them on my team.

5. How have you engaged with and contributed to the LGBTQ+ Community in your district?

I personally attended the first legal gay marriages in Central Square in Cambridge in May, 2004. It was inspiring to witness the expansion of civil rights -- not in the history books, but right before my eyes. It was one of the moments that I have been most proud to be from Massachusetts. I was working a summer job in New York City in the summer of 2011 when marriage equality became the law in New York. Later that day, I joined the festivities at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. My sister was able to enjoy these rights when she married her wife in New York City eight years later. I have regularly joined Pride events and publicly applauded and attended efforts like the Dyke March and the Trans Resistance.

6. What does the local political climate for LGBTQ+ Issues look like in your district?

I am proud to be from a state that has led on LGBTQ+ issues. However, there still remain real struggles and there is always room to do better for our LGBTQ+ residents. I believe that our state still can make great strides for inclusion for our LGBTQ+ residents, especially as our transgender and non-binary peers have found additional voice to let us know what we can and *must* do for them. This goes hand in hand with facilitating an education that truly represents everyone in our community.

Additionally, we are facing the threat of the current national environment, the dangerous discourse and language used by hardline extreme conservatives to disparage, demean, and threaten LGBTQ+ individuals, and the potential danger of Supreme Court decisions regarding gay marriage (Obergefell) and private intimacy (Texas v. Lawrence). I will make sure that Massachusetts remains a safe haven for those who are persecuted and attacked for their identity while strengthening the protections we currently have for Massachusetts residents.

Platform Questions:

1. What does the local political climate for LGBTQ+ Issues look like in your district?

As State Auditor, I will use my powers to advance the goals of and support the members of the LGBTQ+ community. I strongly support the Healthy Youth Act and its goal of implementing sex education programs that are modern and inclusive with LGBTQ+ people. When this becomes law, as I hope it will soon, I will make sure that appropriate oversight is conducted so that schools have the resources and materials they need to function as safe and inclusive places for students. Additionally, I will use my power to audit the Safe Schools Program meant to prevent bullying and harassment based on gender and sexual identity. By auditing this program, it will allow us to see what has succeeded and what needs work to fully reach its goal. Moreover, as auditor, it will be my job to audit a variety of programs, particularly in employment and housing, meant to prevent discrimination. And finally, the changing and frightening national landscape virtually guarantees there will be new needs and concerns arising in the coming years; while not all of the necessary specific interventions are known yet, I know my voice and actions will be necessary.

2. Do you support legislation that supports comprehensive health education in public schools that includes medically accurate and age-appropriate information for all students, especially those that are LGBTQ? How will you work to pass it into law?

I wholeheartedly support legislation to include comprehensive health education in public schools that is inclusive of those that are LGBTQ+. Contrary to what conservative partisan pundits and politicians claim, we all know this is entirely possible and *necessary* to do in a way that is inclusive and informative while remaining medically accurate and age appropriate. This is important because the best way to make our Commonwealth more inclusive and supportive of all its residents is to provide them with these positive signals before they've had an opportunity to integrate the negative stereotypes and stigmas. As I mentioned above, I support the Healthy Youth Act meant to revitalize and modernize our health education curriculum. While I can only suggest and recommend the passage of legislation as Auditor, once passed, I make it a priority to be the watchdog our LGBTQ+ youth and their friends and allies deserve.

3. Do you support legislation to train elder care providers in LGBTQ cultural competency in order to prevent discrimination against LGBTQ elders? How will you work to pass the bill?

Yes, I support the enactment and enforcement of legislation meant to train elder care providers in LGBTQ+ cultural competency to protect elders of the community. We must not to forget about those who have already lived their lives as part of the LGBTQ+ community, especially those who lived through the fights, protests, criminalization, discrimination, and eventual victories to make our country a more accepting place. Auditor Bump conducted an audit of the Department of Public Health, the organization responsible for nursing homes in the Commonwealth, to identify issues in healthcare facilities. I will continue this by making sure these facilities are conducting care with an open, inclusive, and competent environment for all, especially those of the LGBTQ+ community. Similar to before, if and when this proposed legislation passes, I will use the office to ensure necessary oversight of DPH and other enforcement bodies to make sure that discrimination is not happening in these facilities while also making sure that there are sufficient funds to train staff in LGBTQ+ competency.

4. Do you support increased funding for HIV/AIDS services and LGBTQ youth and elder services?

I would support increased funding for these services and would support legislation that achieves this goal. This includes efforts to allow minors to receive prescriptions for PrEP and HIV treatment without parental consent, as sometimes the disapproval of parents can threaten and harm the health of minors who need life saving medication.

Much like the goals of the ACCESS Law for contraceptives, it needs to be easier to receive a prescription for and access to PrEP. To that end, I support the passage of S. 1407 An Act enabling pharmacists to prescribe, dispense and administer PrEP. However, passage isn't enough, as we've seen with the ACCESS Law, vigilance from regulators and the Auditor's office will be necessary to ensure pharmacists, insurance companies, and residents are aware of the changes in the law. The State Auditor does not pass laws, but it plays an essential accountability role in ensuring the Commonwealth is living up to the laws on the books.

Once prescribed, costs can remain an issue for those seeking PrEP; The Massachusetts DPH has established the PrEPDAP (Drug Assistance Program) to assist with costs. An audit of this program can help establish how much it has done to help people in need and if there are any populations missed by current coverage, legislation, or program requirements.

The HIV Drug Assistance Program provides similar services for uninsured and underinsured individuals exposed to HIV and needing access to non-occupational post-exposure prophylaxis (nPEP) and requires similar oversight.

5. Given the current state of LGBTQ rights across the country and at the federal level, what can be done at the state and local level to protect the LGBTQ community and advance an equality agenda in Massachusetts?

As the current environment with LGBTQ+ rights across the country becomes more dangerous, it is imperative for our state's government to not only continue to protect our LGBTQ+ residents here, but also open our doors to those who are being persecuted and discriminated against for their identity in other states. At the state and local level, I will use the Auditor's Office to audit programs that are designed to protect community members to make sure they're doing just that. Making sure these programs are well-funded, properly-staffed, and effective at achieving their goals will provide protections for community members that they deserve. While we have made progress on LGBTQ+ rights and issues over the course of my lifetime, we still have a long way to go. I will audit the programs and organizations tasked with preventing discrimination, bullying, and violating rights while making sure the laws we have passed (and should pass) establish a progressive and diverse education for our young students so as to foster an inclusive community and environment for the generations to come. Finally, we need to establish day-to-day practices that keep up with our high quality legislative protections, and auditing these programs will ensure that we are doing everything we can when it comes to protecting members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Election Questions:

(As with all other sections, the answers to the questions below will remain confidential.)

1. Given the current state of LGBTQ rights across the country and at the federal level, what can be done at the state and local level to protect the LGBTQ community and advance an equality agenda in Massachusetts?

I am the only candidate in this race who has consistently supported transgender rights throughout their time in public life. At a time when these rights are under attack, Massachusetts cannot afford to have an Auditor who has wavered on issues of equality and justice.

I have worked with MassEquality in the past and look forward to partnering with the organization's leadership and members in the future. We will work together to make our Commonwealth's laws, programs, and education fully inclusive for LGBTQ+ residents.

2. What are the top 5 priority issues in your campaign?

Massachusetts residents face a number of pressing challenges: from the high cost of housing, to a broken transportation system, to health care that is neither cost effective nor accessible, to an education system that produces vastly different outcomes for students depending on their zip code. The State Auditor's Office can help improve all of these areas of public policy and more. Our campaign was the first in this race to issue policy plans for how we wanted to use the office as a platform to improve state government. Our first three policy papers addressed these three topics: (1) [Federal Stimulus Funding](#), (2) [Climate and Environmental Justice](#), and (3) [Reform of the Massachusetts State Police](#).

Weeks after the Dobbs decision, I remain the only candidate in this race who has a statement on reproductive equity on the policy section of their website.

The Auditor's Office isn't just about tracking dollars, it's about ensuring that Massachusetts lives up to its goals for equity, inclusion, climate, and any number of other important areas of public policy. I look forward to working with Mass Equality and other partners to hold Massachusetts state government to the highest possible standard.

More details on these issues can be found on the policy section of my website: <https://dempseyforauditor.com/policy/>.

3. How are you different from your opponent(s)?

I am the only candidate in this race who has consistently supported transgender rights throughout their time in public life. In April of 2013, then Representative DiZoglio voted with Representative Jim Lyons (now the Chair of the MA GOP) in supporting a cynical and hateful (and thankfully, unsuccessful) attempt to reverse many of the civil rights advances that took effect July 1st, 2012, as part of the Massachusetts Transgender Rights Act. Representative DiZoglio was one of just 15 other conservative Democrats in the House to join Republicans in this vote.

In 2016, Representative DiZoglio was one of just 30 Democrats in the House to join Republicans in supporting an amendment that, according to Progressive Massachusetts, was an "attempt to create confusion around the transgender accommodations law and its enforcement by redundantly criminalizing acts of trespassing, attempting to prey upon toxic stereotypes about transgender persons, by including a clause that gender-identity cannot be a reason to commit various listed crime." Thankfully, this motion failed by a vote of 63 to 88.

Senator DiZoglio's voting record in the House and the Senate consistently places her as one of the more conservative members of the Legislature. Her Progressive Mass scorecard has earned her these session grades: F (188th House Session), C+ (189th House Session), C (190th House Session), D+ (191st Senate Session), and C (192nd Senate Session). Progressive Mass endorsed my candidacy with 78% of the vote. Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts endorsed my candidacy with 92% of the vote. Progressive groups and organizations that are closely comparing the records of the candidates -- and not just the rhetoric -- know that I am the progressive choice in this race.

4. What is your fundraising goal? How much have you raised so far?

We have raised more than \$600K from more than 1,960 individual contributors, by far the most in the race. We will have the resources we need to win this race.

5. What other endorsements have you received to date?

A partial list of endorsements includes:

- a. The Massachusetts Democratic Party
- b. Auditor Suzanne Bump
- c. Progressive Massachusetts
- d. JP Progressives
- e. Our Revolution Massachusetts
- f. Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts
- g. Belmont Democratic Town Committee
- h. Boston Ward 4 Democratic Committee
- i. Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee
- j. Boston Ward 15 Democratic Committee
- k. Environmental League of Massachusetts Action Fund
- l. Endorsements from 5 women State Senators and 18 women State Representatives
- m. Endorsements from more than 40 State Representatives
- n. Endorsements from more than 100 local leaders, including the Mayor of Newton and the Mayor of Gloucester

We continue to roll out endorsements over the course of the campaign. Individual endorsements can be found on my website here:

<https://dempseyforauditor.com/endorsements/>

6. Is there anything else we should know that would help make our decision?

I attended and celebrated the first gay marriages in Massachusetts in 2004, long before I knew my sister was gay. Were it not for the expansion of LGBTQ+ rights over the course of my lifetime, my sister and her wife would not have been able to be legally married and to raise a child together. I am proud of the progress that Massachusetts has made, but there is more work to do, and I want to be partner and ally to Mass Equality and the entire LGBTQ+ community in making Massachusetts a leader again on inclusion, equality, and fairness.