



**Chris Dempsey for State Auditor
Pressley Policy Pledge
Questionnaire Responses**

Submitted: April 15th, 2022

Have you officially made the ballot? If not, what date is your ballot set by your state's election department?

June 7th, 2022; 5:00 p.m., last day and hour to file nomination papers (including party enrollment or voter registration certificate and Ethics Commission receipt) with the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Do you support the following legislation: Y/N

H.Res 702, People's Justice Guarantee (Y/N)

Yes

H.R. 5325, Ending PUSHOUT Act (Y/N)

Yes

H.Res 100, Student Debt Cancellation (Y/N)

Yes

H.R 7389, Freedom to Move Act (Y/N)

Yes

H.Res 145, Federal Job Guarantee (Y/N)

Yes

H.R. 4 John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021 (Y/N)

Yes

Do you have a criminal (in)justice reform platform, or specific policy proposals? If yes, please elaborate.

One of my top priorities as Auditor will be to audit the Massachusetts State Police. I have released a detailed plan for [auditing the Massachusetts State Police](#) which includes specific points related to complaints about bias and disproportionate enforcement as well as racial disparities in stops and arrests.

Reports such as those by John Linder and Associates in 1996 make clear that current problems at the State Police go back decades and go beyond a few bad apples or actors. The agency needs more structural change and reform if it is to live up to the high standards we should have for New England's largest law-enforcement agency.

The MSP didn't get to this place on its own. At each step, government officials responsible for providing oversight and accountability of MSP's operations and culture failed to do their jobs. In the absence of sufficient leadership from Beacon Hill or MSP management, the Auditor's Office must look at where the MSP's systems have failed our communities, taxpayers, and troopers themselves. My fifteen targeted components of my plan to audit the MSP audit are essential steps on the MSP's path to reform and cultural change that we know is needed.

As State Auditor, I will conduct a targeted audit of the State Police, with 15 key areas of evaluation and review including, but not limited to, reviews of supervision and accountability systems, administrative controls in payroll and human resources management, assessments of training and promotion criteria and systems, and inquiry into organizational support for the physical, mental, and emotional health of personnel. This proposal highlights the key role that I will play in reforming the Massachusetts State Police to make it more transparent, more accountable, and more responsive.

Rep. Pressley is a co-founder of the congressional Future of Transportation Caucus – a group dedicated to creating a vision for the future of our transportation system that emphasizes equity, access, and sustainability. Do you have a transportation equity policy platform or related policy proposals? If yes, please elaborate.

I have spent much of my career fighting for more equitable transportation policy in Massachusetts, and have been honored to partner with Congresswoman Pressley on many occasions to shine a light on our inequitable status quo. I served as Assistant Secretary of Transportation, worked in the transportation technology private sector, led Transportation for Massachusetts, and served on my hometown's Transportation Board.

Following the announcement of the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), I co founded the Mass TCI table to help ensure this program would improve equity and responsiveness to the needs of the impacted communities while also addressing climate change. In this task, I was proud that my co founding partners were Community Labor United, itself a collaboration between labor unions and various frontline community groups.

While at Transportation for Massachusetts, we highlighted the impacts of transportation on environmental justice and public health outcomes. Land use decisions about where to locate transportation infrastructure (and the industry to support it) has direct health impacts on the nearby communities. Similarly, policies like redlining and modern policies that maintain the status quo it created lead to significantly inequitable quality of life, health, and economic outcomes today. I worked with our partners to develop and release a Transportation Justice statement, and worked with the Green Justice Coalition to petition the MBTA to prevent the police from closing public transit in the wake of protests against police brutality and not use transit as a tool of oppression.

We need an equitable fare-setting and fare-collection system that accommodates everyone, with special provision for low-income riders. Mayor Wu, Congresswoman Pressley, former Mayor Janey, and others have driven this conversation forward dramatically in the last year, following on the work of the FMCB which pushed hard for low-income fare programs prior to its dissolution last year. I applaud those who have put this idea forward and started a conversation about the costs of transportation. We make choices as a society to charge for all or a portion of some public services, while others are free. A stone carving above the entrance to the Boston Public Library in Copley Square says, "Free to All". Why shouldn't the entrance to Copley Station have the same sign?

Mayor Wu and others have rightly challenged a status quo that has raised the price of transit while making driving relatively cheap. [MBTA fares have increased 200%-300% since 1991 \(far more than inflation generally\) while the gas tax has risen only 14% in the same period of time](#). Given the income distribution of riders and drivers, not to mention the environmental, climate, congestion, and land-use implications of this difference, this is an extremely inequitable situation and deserves immediate attention

For the MBTA, fares broadly need to be lower, including free where appropriate and with lower multiples between the cost of a monthly pass and a one-way fare. For the RTAs where the costs of fare collection make up a much greater proportion of the fares collected, making service free may be an easy net win for the agency and the public.

Would you publicly endorse the Green New Deal? How would you implement these policy proposals in your position/in the office you are campaigning for?

Concern about climate change has been a centerpiece of my campaign. Climate was the focus of my second [policy paper](#). Climate change is an existential threat to our way of life and I have committed to being the first State Auditor to introduce [Carbon Accounting](#) into audits of key state agencies.

I will also create an Auditor's Environmental Justice Commission, composed of representatives of communities that are hit hardest by climate change and by local environmental pollution. This Commission will inform the work of the Auditor's Office before, during, and after state audits that cover agencies that impact climate, emissions, and pollution.

Do you support Medicare for All? How would you implement this policy in your position/in the office you are campaigning for, or what other efforts would you support to achieve universal healthcare coverage?

My top healthcare concern is ensuring all Massachusetts residents have access to affordable health care. 100% of Massachusetts residents should be covered by robust, affordable, and reliable health insurance, whether public or private.

There is compelling evidence that a single-payer, "Medicare for All" system can provide better and more affordable coverage than our patchwork system that relies heavily on employer-based coverage and leaves too many uninsured.

Our health system is complicated and an important driver of the Massachusetts economy. As we seek to cover 100% residents, either through single-payer or a hybrid system, we should do so in ways that support jobs and innovation in our bio-tech and health care sectors.

The Auditor's office plays a crucial role in making health insurance more efficient and streamlined, reducing red tape, and ensuring that providers to Mass Health are providing the best possible services to recipients.

Do you support cancelling all federal student debt? (If not all, please specify your stance). How would you support this policy at your level of government if elected?

This is outside the direct authority of the Auditor's office but I support working to dramatically reduce the cost of accessing public and private higher education, including options that result in debt-free graduation and elimination of fees.

Moreover, there are clear reasons to address the debt already issued over the past decades through abusive lending practices, fraudulent promises of success from for-profit institutions, and failures of the public service debt forgiveness programs. As Auditor, I can help to ensure that loan forgiveness benefits accrue to those who qualify and bring attention to any situation where the public sector may once again fail these students.

What is your reproductive justice platform? Do you support efforts to remove limitations on public funding for abortion care, which disproportionately impact women of color?

I am a strong supporter of reproductive justice and reproductive equity. I fully support removing limitation on public funding for abortion care.

What are your immigration priorities? Do you support a just and inclusive path to citizenship for the more than 11 million undocumented people who call America home, including our DREAMers, TPS holders and asylum seekers?

I wholeheartedly support a just and inclusive path to citizenship for undocumented people living in Massachusetts. I am the only candidate in this race who has consistently supported the Commonwealth issuing driver's licenses to all eligible drivers, regardless of immigration status. This is a matter of fairness and public safety.

What efforts or policies would you support to protect and expand voting rights? Do you support same day registration? Do you support efforts to make voting more accessible to individuals behind the wall?

I support options to make it easier to register to vote and to vote. When I worked on elections in New Hampshire over multiple campaigns, I helped voters utilize their rights to Same Day Registration and saw the substantial benefits it brought to voters directly.

I am the only candidate in this race that has consistently supported voting access *without* raising inequitable barriers through "Voter ID" law.

That said, I understand that municipal clerks have expressed concerns about how to implement this reform, including differing suggestions about the period between day 20 and Election Day and registration on Election Day itself. We need to reduce the bureaucratic burden on voters to enable easier access to the polls but we need to hear from and work with the Clerks responsible for elections so as not to add additional bureaucratic burden to their already understaffed, underfunded, and far too often ignored offices. As the head of the Division of Local Mandates, the Auditor's Office has an important role to play in this conversation. I look forward to being an active partner and to working to get this done with a solution that works for all parties.

I also completely support restoring the right to vote for individuals currently incarcerated. The right to participate in democracy and to be represented in one's community should not be forcibly denied to anyone.

Why are you interested in seeking the Pressley Policy Pledge distinction? If awarded, how would you use the distinction on campaign materials?

Yes. I have received the endorsement of Progressive Democrats of MA (with 91% support) and Progressive Massachusetts (with 78% support). I would be honored to receive the Pressley Policy Pledge distinction, and I applaud Congresswoman Pressley for building political power through this initiative.

If awarded, I would use this distinction in emails, direct mail, and social media.

Is there any additional background you would like to provide on any of your answers or on your candidacy/campaign?

I first met Congresswoman Pressley sixteen years ago last month, in 2006, when she was serving as Political Director for Senator John Kerry and I was a new Volunteer Coordinator for the Massachusetts Democratic Party. Since that time, I have had the pleasure of supporting and working with Ayanna on many occasions, including:

- as a campaign volunteer in her 2011 re-election to the Boston City Council
- through her thoughtful encouragement of the grassroots No Boston Olympics effort I led in 2014 and 2015
- working together to elect Democrats through Get Out the Vote efforts in Georgia in 2016
- as an ally on transportation equity and justice during my time leading Transportation for Massachusetts

I would be honored to receive the Pressley Policy Pledge, and am grateful to Congresswoman Pressley for her friendship and inspiration over many years.

We are running a true grassroots campaign, with more than 1,500 individual contributors, by far the most in this race. We are proud to have the support of community leaders and local elected officials in each of the communities of the Massachusetts 7th, including endorsements from all nine members of the Cambridge City Council.