



**Chris Dempsey for State Auditor  
Bay State Stonewall Democrats  
Questionnaire Responses**

Submitted: May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**How much money has your campaign raised to date, and how much money do you intend to raise?**

We have raised more than \$450K since filing with OCPF on June 1st, 2021. We ended April with more than \$339K cash on hand. We have more than 1,500 individual contributors, with more than 1,300 of those contributors from Massachusetts, the most in this race. We will have the resources we need to win this race.

**Who do you consider to be your key constituencies, and how do you plan to mobilize them?**

Our campaign is strongest with high-information voters who take the time to research the track records of both candidates running in the Democratic Primary. We have particular strength in communities with high turnout in Democratic Primary elections. For example, in Cambridge, which typically has the second most votes in the state in a Democratic Primary, we have the support of all nine Cambridge City Councilors. In Newton, which typically has the third or fourth most votes in the state, depending on the year, we are supported by the Mayor and a supermajority of the Newton City Council. But our support is not limited to communities within 128. We have received contributions from every county in Massachusetts and have the support of legislators from Pittsfield to Provincetown. For example, in Northampton, a community known for its progressive values and grassroots energy, we have 17 grassroots contributions, while our opponent in the Democratic Primary has one (as of 5/11/2022).

We are running a grassroots campaign, with more than 1,500 individual contributors and an average contribution size of \$200. As a candidate, I have personally attended more than 200 Democratic Town/City/Ward Committee events. In February, our Organizing meeting had a representative in attendance from each and every Senate District in Massachusetts. We will continue to organize community by community as our grassroots campaign gains momentum. The more voters are engaged in this race and weigh the choices, the stronger our path to victory in September.

**Including diverse voices is essential to policymaking at all levels. How has your campaign made this priority (e.g., in terms of the composition of your campaign team)?**

I agree that diverse voices are essential to 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, with members from Western Massachusetts, Black and Latinx members, immigrants, young professionals, and people in their 70s. Our Campaign Manager is a woman and mother of two young children. Our Deputy Campaign Manager is Latino and a member of the LGBTQ+ community. 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.

**The MIT Living Wage Calculator defines a living wage for a single adult without children to be \$17.74 per hour. Do you plan to pay all full-time staff at least \$18 per hour?**

We have a small paid staff supported by many volunteers and a small handful of consultants. None of our staff members are paid on an hourly basis, though all permanent, full-time staff receive compensation of at-least \$18/hour (based on a 40-hour work week).

**Biographical Information**

**1. Previous Elected Offices Held**

I have served as an elected Town Meeting Member since 2012, have served on committees on zoning and regulation of short-term rentals (such as AirBNBs), and served for many years as the Chair of the Brookline Transportation Board.

**2. Are you a member of Bay State Stonewall Democrats or its Board of Directors? Yes/No**

I was proud to have my campaign support BSSD's Pre-Convention event last year.

**3. Have you been endorsed by any LGBTQ+ organizations now or in the past? If so, which ones and when? Yes/No**

This is my first run for state office, but I have been proud to work with LGBTQ+ organizations in the past, including working closely with MassEquality when I worked as Policy Director for Joe Kennedy III on his first run for Congress in 2012.

**Please let us know if you have ever volunteered with or supported any LGBTQ+ organizations. Feel free to include events in which you participated. Please include all groups you feel are pertinent including LGBTQ+ Equity actions or advocacy that you have taken in other non-LGBTQ+ organizations or Boards. If no previous volunteer or advocacy experience within or for LGBTQ+ Community, please explain.**

I have been proud to work with LGBTQ+ organizations in the past, including working closely with MassEquality when I worked as Policy Director for Joe Kennedy III on his first run for Congress in 2012. This experience reinforced the importance of fighting for what you believe in, and has influenced my campaign to date.

As Auditor, I will continue to support organizations such as MassEquality and Bay State Stonewall Democrats to display my commitment to the LGBTQ+ community.

### **Discrimination Protection**

#### **Non-Discrimination Policies**

**Tell us about any written non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation and gender identity that you have or will establish for staff or employees of your campaign or office? If you don't have such policies or plans for such policies, please tell us why.**

Our campaign is committed to non-discrimination, and discrimination of any kind is not and will not be tolerated. While we do not have written policies in place, our legal counsel is an experienced campaign lawyer who also served as General Counsel to the Auditor's Office. Our team will investigate options for formalizing these informal non-discrimination practices and policies.

## **Efforts to Ban Discrimination**

**How would you support efforts to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in employment and housing? Please feel free to discuss any pertinent existing local, state, and federal laws and any changes you perceive as necessary.**

Employment and housing should not be dependent on one's sexual orientation or gender identity, as that makes them no different than any other applicant. Massachusetts law prohibits discrimination in employment and housing on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, disability, marriage status, etc. I fully support these laws and will continue to uphold them as Auditor.

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination received \$75,000 from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to hire a full-time fair housing investigator, develop fair housing training, and acquire outreach materials regarding the pandemic. This is just one example of how the state can utilize the money that organizations have to better serve all Massachusetts residents, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity. I will audit this program to understand how to replicate these successes and continue to make our state inclusive by eliminating discrimination.

## **Religious Freedom**

**Please comment on your opinion of "Religious Freedom Bills." Please state if you see any reasons to support bills of this type.**

One of my goals as Auditor is to continue to create a state that shows respect and compassion for all people. These so-called "religious freedom" bills do nothing to offer respect or compassion, but instead use the cloak of tolerance to hide bigotry and violence. Moreover, I reject the notion there is any conflict between religion and rights for LGBTQ+ people; plenty of religious traditions and organizations are ardent supporters of these rights.

## **Marriage and Partnership**

### **Support for Marriage Equality**

**Republicans appear to be signaling their intention to attack the Supreme Court Decision in Obergefell, tell us how you will protect and defend marriage equality**

**Please be specific. How do you plan on being an advocate in the future? If you have not supported marriage equality in the past, please explain.**

As State Auditor I will defend the marriage rights of all people, including same sex marriages. I support the Supreme Court's decision in Obergefell because it demands marriage equality, which all people have a right to. In the future, I will speak on behalf of movements such as Obergefell, attend protests, and work to eliminate discrimination.

I am proud of Massachusetts for legalizing same-sex marriages in 2004 and recognizing that it was unconstitutional to only allow opposite-sex marriages. 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.

Further, I was living in New York City in the summer of 2011 when marriage equality became the law. I joined the festivities at the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village the weekend the marriage equality became law. Years later, my sister was able to enjoy those rights when she married her wife, Beatriz Colonia, in New York City. Beatriz and Alison recently welcomed their first child. My sister's family wouldn't be legally recognized without the work of activists on the ground in Massachusetts and other states over the course of many decades.

With the recent news of Roe V. Wade likely being overturned, not only will abortion rights be taken away, but legal gay marriage will be at risk in many of those same states. While Massachusetts is not included in the 26 states, I can still be an advocate for all of the individuals who would be affected by this law and are denied the right to marriage.

## **Education and Schools**

### **Family Life Education**

**Do you support sex-ed programs, like the Healthy Youth Act that will include information specifically targeted to LGBTQ+ students? Have you advocated for such programs in the past? Be specific. If you have not, why not?**

Yes, I would support such sex-ed programs. As our world increasingly acknowledges the diversity of sexual orientation, identity, and gender, it is crucial that our school systems provide the necessary information to ensure safety and acceptance to all students. MA lawmakers have refused the Healthy Youth Act for over a decade, leaving many schools to use a sex-ed framework that dates back to 1999. When this becomes law, it is essential to verify that it is carried through across the Commonwealth, that the office of Auditor is able to check and report on progress, and that we identify where kids are being left vulnerable.

**Increasingly Republicans are targeting learning environments to remove LGBTQ+ affirming materials. This includes banning books, protesting Drag Queen Story Hours, removing posters, and targeting after-school clubs and diversity and inclusion efforts for educators. How will you combat these efforts?**

This is saddening to hear, and as Auditor, I will work to ensure that schools have the necessary materials and resources to support all students. I will utilize the bully pulpit of the office of the auditor as well as ensuring that the various human and civil rights guaranteed by the state of Massachusetts are fully exercised by all residents.

## **Bullying and Harassment**

**Discuss your feelings about the bullying and harassment of students because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In your answer please discuss ways in which you have or will: promote safer environments in schools, and advocate for initiatives to keep LGBTQ+ students safe**

The bullying and harassment of students due to their real or perceived sexual orientation is unacceptable and must be stopped. The Safe Schools program, run by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth provides services to schools including helping schools to implement anti-bullying practices. An audit of this program can measure where it has succeeded and what we should be doing state-wide to improve safety for LGBTQ+ students.

**Will you oppose efforts by school faculty, staff or administrators to out LGBTQ+ students to their families? If so, how?**

The coming out process of LGBTQ+ students is a very personal and different process for each person, and they should be able to have that conversation with their families if, where, when, and how they want.

Outing a student against their will can be dangerous in any situation and doubly so when the power of the State is behind that act. As the gender identity law states that no student should be discriminated against or denied access to a public school due to how they identify. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination is responsible for enforcing the state anti-discrimination laws and an audit of their oversight of schools in this area may be prudent.

## **Policies Impacting Transgender Students**

**Discuss the adoption of policies in schools (elementary through college) that respect student gender identification, including consideration of reasonable and respectful accommodation in regard to facilities?**

I think it is important that there are accommodations and policies in all schools for all students. We must treat all students with respect and dignity. I will support the Safe Schools Program for all LGBTQ+ members and ensure that sufficient funds are being allocated to organizations that positively impact this community. In addition, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education must be audited once every three years, so this is one way to hold them accountable for the adoption of these policies.

**Please provide your feelings regarding legislation aimed at transgender athletes that have been proposed around the country.**

We must be inclusive and supportive of transgender athletes. I oppose laws and public policies that would restrict transgender athletes from participating in sports and leagues of their choosing.

## **HIV/AIDS Prevention, Testing, and Treatment**

### **Access to PrEP for Minors without Adult Consent**

**Do you support efforts to allow minors to receive prescriptions for Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) from health care providers as well as treatment for HIV without parental consent? Why or why not?**

Yes. Everyone, including students, are entitled to bodily autonomy, especially in situations where students may be at greater risk of denial of essential health-care due to disapproval from parents. Just as we should not and do not require parent consent to receive reproductive health services, we cannot and should not require consent to receive life-saving medication.

## **Public Funding of HIV Prevention/Testing/Treatment**

**Tell us how you have in the past or would in the future support public funding for HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, and treatment facilities. Be specific.**

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. 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.

## **Free HIV/AIDS Testing at Jails and Prisons**

**What is your opinion of free access to HIV/AIDS testing at jails and prison facilities, and the programs that support and encourage inmates to get tested for HIV/AIDS? Have you advocated for this?**

A just and humane system cannot be one that withholds medical care or other rights at its gates. Reform of the system requires treating imprisoned people with dignity, including sufficient medical and mental health care. Aside from the moral justification, any incarceration system that seeks to find space for self-reflection, self-improvement, and restorative justice will have better results when those incarcerated are in physical and mental shape to do so and to maintain their health after release. When people are at risk for HIV infection, testing and treatment are essential steps to stop the spread, to maintain health, and to place incarcerated people onto a path that enables a successful and healthy eventual re-entry.

As Auditor, I will partner with advocates and institutions who have been on the front lines of reforming our criminal justice and corrections systems, and seek ways to communicate to the broader public that change isn't just possible and desirable, it is necessary. Together, we can make a strong case that continued reform of our system to make it more humane will also make it more effective and more fiscally responsible at the same time.

## **Choice and Contraception**

### **Reproductive Freedom**

#### **Do you support an individuals right to control their own bodies, including all contraception and abortion?**

Yes. What a person chooses to do with their body is their own choice and theirs alone. I am deeply saddened by the possibility of Roe V. Wade being overturned, as it would open the door for rationale to eliminate many more privacy rights. While Massachusetts is not included in the 26 states that will probably ban abortions if it is overturned, I will continue to stand up for our college and university students who come from out of state, as well as all Massachusetts residents who seek reproductive care. I also support the Women's Health Protection Act at the federal level and will continue to be an ally to the MA delegation as they fight for its passage.

I was twelve years old when two abortion clinics in my hometown were attacked by an anti-choice terrorist who killed two women and injured five others. One of those clinics was less than a mile from my childhood home. I remember being scared and confused by the attacks, and talking with my parents about the importance of access to reproductive care and the importance of keeping people safe whether they were recipients or providers of reproductive care.

Massachusetts must be a leader on reproductive equity. We must ensure the full rights guaranteed by the ACCESS Law and ROE Act are available to anyone in Massachusetts, and the Office of the State Auditor can help shine a light on the gaps between those laws and reality. I believe broad and equitable access to affordable contraception is vital to individual autonomy and health equity. That's why I'm concerned about the failures outlined in the implementation of the ACCESS law which have represented a failure of our Commonwealth to fully bring the benefits of legislation to the public. As Auditor, I pledge to conduct an audit of this implementation and so we can both improve access to contraceptives to those who need them and to prevent such failures in the future.

Finally, the office comes with a platform as one of just six statewide officials elected statewide to improve state government. I will be a strong, reliable, and consistent ally to those who are fighting for reproductive equity and those who depend on hard-won access to reproductive care.

## **Other**

### **Commitment to Support Full Equality**

**Discuss how you have shown commitment in the past and how you can commit to supporting full equality now and in the future. How important is this stance in your future leadership plans in elected office? Include instances of your prior commitment. If none, explain your growth process if you are now committed to full equality for the LGBTQ+ Community.**

I am fully committed to a Commonwealth that is inclusive and equitable. As one of six statewide elected officials, I will be a champion and ally of those who are looking to expand and secure rights and dignity. I was proud to be an active supporter of marriage equality, and to have the honor of witnessing the first same-sex marriages firsthand. Massachusetts must be a leader on equality as it was in 2004.

While I wish every candidate running for office shared a long and consistent history of supporting the expansion of rights, this isn't the case. There is a clear choice in this race when it comes to commitment to inclusivity and full equality. In 2013, my opponent in the Democratic Primary voted with then-GOP Chair Jim Lyons and House Republicans to roll back transgender rights. (Source: <https://www.progressivemass.com/portfolio/188-house-scorecard/>) Thankfully, this effort was blocked by a House vote of 112-44 and these hard-won rights were preserved.

### **Advocacy for and Inclusion of LGBTQ+ Community**

**How have you advocated for the LGBTQ+ community and supported inclusion for the LGBTQ+ community in the past (i.e. have you spoken out publicly for policies at your place of business, testified before government bodies, adopted written policies for your employees, marched for equal rights, etc.)? Please be specific.**

I have regularly joined the Pride March and marched with various causes and candidates. I have celebrated and publicly applauded efforts like the Dyke March, a proud Massachusetts tradition for more than 20 years.

## Public Biography

**Please include a brief biography to be published on the website. Please do not provide a link to a biography already online, but copy/paste it here if you want to reuse it.**

The son of public-school educators who met while teaching in the Boston Public Schools, Chris Dempsey is a proven advocate and watchdog for the public interest. Chris was named "[Bostonian of the Year](#)" by the Boston Globe Magazine in 2015 for his volunteer work leading the grassroots campaign No Boston Olympics, which was successful despite being outspent 1,500-1 by some of the most powerful business interests in the state.

Chris served as Assistant Secretary of Transportation for Governor Deval Patrick, where he co-founded [the MassDOT open-data program](#), which launched [smartphone applications](#) that tell you when your bus or train is going to arrive, [saving taxpayers and farepayers millions compared with more costly and cumbersome alternatives](#). In the private sector, Chris worked with some of the country's largest companies to help the economy grow, and also led business development for a software technology startup that created jobs in Massachusetts.

Chris has worked to improve his community as an elected Town Meeting Member since 2012, and as Chair of the Transportation Board.

Chris knows how to tackle complex financial problems, build grassroots coalitions, and stand up for our most important priorities. Chris will be an Auditor who can ensure an efficient, effective, and equitable state government for all residents of the Commonwealth.