

Boston Ward 4 Dems Questionnaires At-Large

Included:

- Domingos DaRosa
- Annissa Essaibi-George
- Michael Flaherty
- Priscilla Flint-Banks
- David Halbert
- Julia Mejia
- Jeff Ross
- Alejandra St. Guillen
- Michelle Wu

Domingios DaRosa

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

Education, public safety, Economic opportunities

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

We can build public housing, support movements like the Poor People's Campaign, advocate for more funding at local, state and federal levels of government. Check out the Poor People's Budget @ <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/PPC-Moral-Budget-2019.pdf>.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

Lowers greenhouse gas emissions by increase bus and bike lanes across the city on major roads like Columbia Rd, Mass Ave, Dorchester Ave, advocate to expend the orange line into

Readville or Dedham to help reduce traffic on Hyde Park Ave, Washington St and coming into the city from the south of Boston, Lower natural gas leaks across the city, push for more usage of renewable energy on new constructions and all municipal building, use city funds to assist home owners convert from oil to natural gas or solar to heat and power their home.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

Educate the public on their service, hold these institutes accountable for their roll and responsibility to all of Boston residents, conduct monthly and quarterly review of their attendance record, create partnerships with grassroots programs, provide residents with memberships or tickets to attend events.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

Yes, I support making changes to the program. I would increase permit fees, restrict types of permits issued, as a city we won't grant permits on new developments unless they met our needs as a city example BC would not be about to build new dorms unless they provide Brighton high school with need resources, advocate at federal level to make changes to the language governing these type of non-profits.

Annissa Essaibi-George
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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

Recent data shows that Boston has some of the greatest income inequality in the country. We must work as a city to create more affordable housing opportunities so that low- and moderate-income individuals can afford to live and thrive in the City. Similarly, we must demand that more 3+ bedroom affordable units are built specifically for retaining families.

Currently, developers are able to opt out of affordable housing, pay into the affordable housing fund, and then the vast majority of affordable units are developed in two or three neighborhoods. This creates tremendous disparities between our neighborhoods, which is unacceptable. By forcing developers to develop new affordable units in the neighborhood where they are building, we can begin to address this issue. I also have concerns with the process for

obtaining an affordable unit. In far too many cases, the process is unclear on how to obtain a unit and it takes a very long time, while an individual or family with real need isn't aware of the process for obtaining this sort of unit. The process also needs to be streamlined and made more efficient.

Additionally, Boston should create affordable commercial units so that local, small businesses are able to start, grow, and thrive across all of our neighborhoods. While it is exciting to have an "Innovation District" in the Seaport, I want to make sure that access to great CAREERS (not just jobs) and the innovation economy exists throughout all of our neighborhoods and for all of our residents.

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

Homelessness is a very pressing issue in our city and which is why I helped form the City Council's Committee on Homelessness, Mental Health & Recovery. In 2016, I worked with Council President, Michelle Wu, to develop the committee, and have served as chair of the committee ever since. The decision to include the topics of homelessness, mental health, and recovery under one umbrella, was strategic because many of the symptoms are interconnected and a holistic approach is needed when trying to solve the issues.

During my first term on the Council, we uncovered that more than 4,000 students are experiencing homelessness. Recognizing that schools are sources of stability for these children, I worked with Mayor Walsh to secure \$1.2 million in funding to create new resources and school-based support for BPS students experiencing homelessness. During my first term, I also fought for families sheltered in motels. Every time a family is transitioned to another non-permanent location, the move is traumatic and is logistically challenging. When the State announced plans to close two motels that were sheltering families in Brighton, I worked with the State and BPS to make sure that all of those children were in school on the first day.

During my second term, I have continued my work advocating for homeless youth and families. I have collaborated with the City, non-profit, and private sectors to create the Family-Led Stability Pilot which works to house homeless families close to the schools their children attend. The Family-Led Stability Pilot coordinates housing, education and health services across seven Boston Public Schools to house the families of an estimated 240 homeless students, helping families achieve greater economic stability and improve school success. Following the pilot phase, we plan to scale up to house 3,600 students experiencing homelessness throughout Boston's 126 schools.

Since the beginning, I have made it my goal to have those experiencing homelessness at the table when discussing solutions. In an unprecedented move during my first term, I hosted a hearing at the St. Mary's Center for Women and Children, one of Boston's largest family shelters. I invited families who were living in the shelter to share their stories and ideas for

system improvements. It is imperative that we have those directly impacted at the forefront of discussions and solution efforts.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

I am proud of my environmental record on the Boston City Council. Since being elected, I have worked with Councilor O'Malley to pass the plastic bag ban, get commitments from utility companies to fix underground gas leaks, and am currently collaborating with he and other supportive Councilors to pilot curbside food composting and textile recycling programs, extend residential yard waste collection and advocating for net-zero carbon buildings. I am also proud to have signed on to the resolution calling on Boston to embrace the Green New Deal.

This year, I piloted the first ever "Needle Take Back Day" in Boston to provide safe and sustainable ways to get dangerous sharps out of our waste stream.

My top environmental priorities are:

- Reducing emissions in Boston by first making City buildings and infrastructure more sustainable (greening roofs of municipal buildings, performing energy audits to reduce energy consumption, greening and modernizing our City vehicle fleet).
- Increasing Boston's recycling rate and encouraging the expansion of composting to reduce waste and encourage sustainable behavior.
- Raising the sustainability requirements for all new large buildings, to guarantee that CO2 creation and physical waste is being minimized.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

We must do more to ensure that Boston's thriving cultural resources are accessible to all Bostonians and that they reflect the diversity of our City -- that was made abundantly clear in May. I support expanding partnerships between these institutions and the Boston Public Schools, so the institutions are introduced to and continue to build strong, lasting relationships with Boston's youth. Not only should these institutions be welcoming places for all Bostonians to visit, but they should also do more to actively recruit from our neighborhoods and promote diversity in their workforces. As former head of my local civic association, I know that the creation of "community days" and more community-focused events would be successful in bringing these institutions into our neighborhoods. Every Bostonian should feel welcome and connected to our thriving cultural institutions and be able to access an expanding creative economy.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

Yes. It is crucial that all institutions in Boston pay their fair share, and P.I.L.O.T. payments are a step in the right direction. Some institutions pay more than their fair share, while others come up short year after year. The City must do more to hold all institutions accountable to create some level of consistency. We also must ensure that there is not undue burden placed on smaller non-profit organizations. More must be done to increase the stability and predictability of these payments so the City of Boston can budget accordingly.

I have called for a hearing regarding P.I.L.O.T., and at a recent working session, I advocated for and received commitment from the Administration to reconvene a P.I.L.O.T. Task Force and examine the cost of reassessing property values of non-profit institutions in the City of Boston.

Michael Flaherty

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

The three keys to restoring equality in Boston are employment, housing, and education. With regard to employment, my top policy priority is advocating for job training programs to ensure Boston residents are in the best position to take advantage of our rapidly growing economy. In a city experiencing record economic growth, it is imperative that we take all measures to ensure that this rising tide lifts all boats. For housing, I have been leading a push this year with my fellow Councilors to improve the Linkage formula and expand the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) requirements for developers looking to build in our city. Just as ensuring our residents benefit from the City's growing job market, it is equally imperative that our residents have access to the new housing stock created during this economic boom. More needs to be done to ensure all of our residents can continue to call Boston home. Increasing the IDP requirement will go a long way towards achieving this. Finally, on education, I fully support The Promise Act from Sen. Chang Diaz at the State House as it will allow Boston to take the necessary steps to combat the achievement gap in our schools. Only 28% of low-income students are performing at grade-level for math, less than half the rate of their higher-income peers. I entirely support revisiting the outdated formula posed in Chapter 70, considering the solutions to the formula posed in the 2015 Foundation Review and phasing them into law. It's time that we follow up on the promises that we made and prove to our state's students and teachers that we will fiercely defend their right to quality education.

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

The biggest thing the city can do is create a city-funded housing voucher program to provide additional rental assistance to homeless families and people in Boston. I support this effort. I recently sponsored a home rule petition that would allow Boston to preserve and restore at-risk affordable housing at no cost to the City. The proposal applies to current or formerly HUD subsidized housing with "expiring use" restrictions, which, according to the Mayor's Housing Report, includes about 3,000 apartments across the city. This proposal would help maintain affordable units in the city and discourage condo conversions of these homes, which often causes displacement of some of our most vulnerable populations. In addition to that effort, I supported an order for the adjustment of the local room occupancy excise rate under MGL c.64G, section 3A and acceptance of MGL c64G, sections 3D(a) and 3D(b) allowing cities and towns to impose a community impact fee on short term rentals. This act authorized the City to adjust the local room occupancy excise rate to 6.5% and allowed the City to impose a community impact fee of 3% on short-term rentals that are professional managed and units located in two or three family dwellings. This act will generate five million dollars annually, with four million dollars being used for affordable housing, specifically the creation of more permanent supportive housing stock for our chronically homeless population, and one million dollars dedicated to youth homelessness. These efforts paired with other housing stabilization efforts such as the expansion of the IDP requirements, the linkage program, and funds from the Community Preservation Act will go a long way towards eradicating homelessness.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

The potentially devastating impacts of climate change on our city require a complex, multi-faceted plan. It is unlikely any one program will "save" the city. It will require buy-in from public and private stakeholders to change the way we operate in Boston in order to shift to a more environmentally sustainable future. In my role on the City Council, I have fought for and will continue to support efforts to expand commuter routes and bike lanes on our streets to encourage people to leave their cars behind and expanded recycling and curbside compost programs. I encourage developers to incorporate as many energy efficient and environmentally responsible components into their projects as is economically feasible. I have also publicly opposed new fossil fuel infrastructure in the City of Boston and supported a commitment to powering all municipally owned and operated buildings with 100% renewable power by 2025. In my role as Chairman of the Government Operations Committee I chaired a productive hearing on Councilors Wu and O'Malley's wetlands protection ordinance. I look forward to determining a feasible way to implement as much of this ordinance as possible to ensure our city is as resilient to coastal flooding as possible as a way to mitigate the effects of climate change that are outside of our control.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

Making sure that our City's cultural institutions are accessible to all of our city's residents is extremely important to me. Our cultural institutions benefit immensely from their location in our great City and I strongly believe that relationships should be reciprocal. That being said, these institutions need to be physically and financially accessible to all of our residents. They need to be easily accessible via public transportation to meaningfully engage with the community. One way to ensure that our institutions are accessible to our residents is by strengthening partnerships with community organizations and neighborhood groups to ensure that institutions who are claiming Community Benefit Credits are truly engaging and contributing to their communities in tangible and substantial ways. In 2018, cultural institutions contributed only 59% of requested PILOT contributions. In contrast, medical institutions contributed 94% of requested PILOT contributions. I support recommendations made by the P.I.L.O.T. task force and support re-implementing the special committee on P.I.L.O.T. reform so that we can have public conversations about how cultural institutions are contributing to the community and create a standard, more transparent way to measure community benefit credits. Another way to make our cultural institutions more accessible to our city's residents are by removing or reducing any financial barriers that may prevent people from visiting.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

As a Boston City Councilor At-Large, I have been fighting for P.I.L.O.T. reform for years. My efforts have been focused on not only increasing revenue via P.I.L.O.T. through changes to the funding formula and contribution levels, but also on broader, more sweeping systemic reforms. I have advocated for changes to how the P.I.L.O.T. system is organized in order to boost the levels of standardization, transparency and accountability in the program. During my time as Council President, I created a Special City Council Committee for P.I.L.O.T. reform. The Special Committee's work was critical to the creation of a new P.I.L.O.T. program in 2011, which sought increased payments from Boston's 48 largest tax-exempt institutions. The new program is more systematic and consistent than its predecessor, and resulted in total receipts of \$19.5 million in fiscal year 2012, which was a \$4.3 million increase over the previous fiscal year. This was a nearly 29% increase in collected revenue and represented over 90% of the program's first-year goal.

Despite the new program's early successes, I filed an order for a hearing in July 2014 to discuss the discrepancies between task force recommendations and actual P.I.L.O.T. payments to ensure institutions are being held accountable. More recently, I have spent time meeting with the P.I.L.O.T. Action Group, other advocacy groups, and my colleagues to discuss how we can improve the P.I.L.O.T. program. In January 2019 I signed onto an order for a working session to

discuss P.I.L.O.T. reform and offered remarks in support of reinstatement of the special committee on P.I.L.O.T. reform. I applaud the improvements in the city's P.I.L.O.T. program and fully appreciate the contributions that tax-exempt institutions make to our City. However, tax-exempt institutions must pay their fair share of the revenue for their use of municipal resources. I continue to support the efforts of increased revenue via P.I.L.O.T. to benefit our City and its resources.

Priscilla Flint-Banks

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

a) I would advocate that the Boston Resident Job Policy be fully enforced by having monitoring committees throughout the nine districts. Monitoring committees would be community members and would receive a small stipend for their time and transportation.

b) I would insure that the Good Jobs Standards was made a city wide ordinance so all Boston residents could benefit from it: • All construction jobs should be paid prevailing wages whether union or non-union • 75% of all newly constructed buildings should be permanent jobs. • 50% of all permanent jobs should be Boston residents, 50% should be people of color and 50% should be women.

c) I would work with state elected officials to bring the stalled Jim Brooks Stabilization Act to halt some of the evictions and displacement of families that is happening all over the city. Having been homeless myself for 10 months, I know what it feels like and I believe Boston should fight for our residents and not displace them.

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

I believe we should bring developers, colleges, universities, as well as some of our homeless individuals and the community together to have real talk and real solutions to this epidemic. Community should have input and their input should be recognized. With Boston named A World Class City, we should look at ways we can provide shelter, medical services, job training and counseling for our homeless population.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

Work with Harvard and Mit to implement the ideas they have that will reduce the effects of global warming. Cutting greenhouse gas emissions to reduce the impact of global warming. Encourage residents to make changes in our own home that Will enable us to maintain energy saving appliances especially the use of solar energy and wind power. We have some of the most brilliant scientist in the world, right here in Greater Boston. We should solicit ideas and input from these individuals.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

I would meet with these organizations and create an Arts Commission to make sure all residents have access by providing discount tickets, senior day discounts as well as youth discounts. Initiate sensitivity training for these institutions to prevent a repeat of the ugly racial incident that happened recently at the Museum of Fine Arts. Institutions such as the Museum of Fine Art and Boston Symphony Hall can do more outreach to all of the City's neighborhoods. The Boston Symphony, for example, could hold more concerts in neighborhood Parks, such as Franklin Park-which is about to undergo a \$28 million dollar upgrade.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

Yes I Do. I think the PILOT program should be a mandatory program instead of a volunteer program. I would work with our state and federal elected officials as well as community organizations and residents to have input to the PILOT program and what it should look like. Also the back payment that is owed to the City should be paid in full.

David Halbert

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

- 1) Providing more access and support for those seeking home ownership opportunities, with a particular focus on those from low-income or traditionally under resourced communities.
- 2) Working to promote business development, particularly small business, throughout the city. These efforts would be targeted towards entrepreneurs seeking to bring new or innovative

amenities and services to neighborhoods - rather than simply recreating what is already in existence.

3) Addressing structural issues in the governance and operation of Boston Public Schools as a means to create more uniform quality in the educational foundation of Boston's youth.

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

The Council must first fully and candidly assess current efforts to address the challenge of homelessness in Boston to determine what is working and what is not. Next, the Council has to work with the Mayor's Administration, the Boston State House delegation, relevant federal officials, those engaged in the work on the ground, and, most importantly, those directly impacted by homelessness & housing instability to develop new approaches to the problem - and identify the necessary resources from the start.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

- Increased access to and utilization of mass transit across all neighborhoods
- Creating plans to address climate change in a manner that is sustainable and also takes special care to protect vulnerable environmental justice communities.
- Working to source city goods and services from sustainable vendors whenever possible.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

As a Councilor I would promote knowledge in all corners of the city that institutions such as these are public treasures that should be enjoyed by all. I would also work with the leaders of these organizations to encourage more resources be directed toward programs that seek to break down barriers to entry for those who would like to enjoy them but may be unable to due to financial burdens. As a Councilor At-large I would also promote collaboration, awareness and patronage of other institutions across the city, with a focus on those, such as the Veronica Robles Cultural Center in East Boston or the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Roxbury, that speak to the expansive socio-cultural landscape of Boston. This is just as important as opening the doors to our more widely known attractions.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

I do support changes to the PILOT program. The first change would be a reassessment of the values of real estate holdings by these institutions - and creating and adhering to a more regular schedule for such assessments. I would also create an incentivized local procurement program for small businesses as a defined component of the community benefits portion of the agreement. This would provide a bonus to institutions that purchase goods and services from Boston-based, verified small businesses. For small businesses that meet additional criteria (women owned, minority owned, veteran owned, LGBT owned, etc.) this bonus could be increased. In this way the money these institutions spend will be more precisely directed at local economic development in a direct fashion, and will support and encourage small business growth and vibrancy across the city.

Julia Meija

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

- (1) Constituent engagement-civic accountability and Transparency in City government.
- (2) Increasing access to Affordable Housing via higher mandatory minimum % of affordable units required with new buildings and a reduction/elimination of the offsets currently allowed
- (3) Public School Education - both in terms of funding and community engagement

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

- Advocate to raise the IDP to 50% - we need bold action to address this growing crisis.
- Recognize the intersection of teen homelessness and gender and sexual orientation. City Council needs to engage this group in a different way than the city engages the adult homeless population.
- Recognize the intersection of addiction and homeless and work to enact policies that address the illness of addiction to mitigate the housing impact of addiction.
- Work in a regional capacity to ensure that Boston is not the only city offering services
- Urge for additional pathways to ownership to prevent high concentrations of poverty.
- Require developers to earmark money to affordable housing and job training based on the size of their project.
- Enforcing 20% mandatory minimum on units without the option to offset with park money.
- Strengthen tax credits to incentivize and reward small mom-and-pop landlord owners who keep rents below market.

- Support cooperative ownership, land trusts, rent-to-own programs, homeowner classes. Streamline the understaffed city bureaucracy and process for screening tenants and awarding low-income units.
- Provide free representation to low-income families during eviction hearings.
- Support providing rent-relief, particularly for the elderly.
- Ban no-fault evictions for those over the age of 75, and require landlords to raise rent only by 5% per year for all renters
- Push to make it mandatory that all large-size developers build affordable housing.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

(1) Climate resilient waterfront: As the sea level rises, we need to invest in innovative waterfront designs to protect Boston from flooding. I intend to advocate for the use of both artificial and nature-based flood defense mechanisms to keep our city safe and above water.

(2) 21st Century Emerald Necklace: I believe we need to expand and improve our current green space to ensure our city is sustainable. I will support measures such as rain gardens, tree canopies etc to combat heat waves and prevent storm floods among other climate disasters. I will give extra focus to historically lower income communities and communities of color as we often bear the brunt of the consequences of climate change.

(3) Working to increase new building in the city includes renewables such as solar (which is in the State House right now) and wind. I will work to divest our reliance on fossil fuels including transisions our city vehicle fleet to electric as quickly as possible.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

As a City Councilor I will work with the institutions to ensure that accessibility needs are lead by those most impacted. That means, that these institutions need to be encouraged/pushed to hire staff that can lead these discussions and institutional policies as part of the process not as an add on to the process. In addition, I will work to incentivize the institutions to be more accountable by working with them to create benchmarks demonstrating to the Boston communities that authentic engagement is happening. That the doors of their institutions are open wide to every resident of the city regardless of race, gender, ability or economic status. That they integrate All means All into their programming.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

I will work with the Pilot Action Group and my colleagues in the City Council to hold private universities/colleges and hospitals publicly accountable for their agreed upon payment plan. When PILOT was first introduced the majority of the nonprofits participate more fully than they currently do. I will call for a full assessment of the actual tax-relief-to-alternative-payments ratio and hold these institutions publically to their agreement to pay their fair share generating much needed city revenue.

Jeff Ross

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

We should together, consider a holistic approach to address inequality in Boston. We need to address housing inequality, income inequality and education inequality.

For housing equity, we must do a better job connecting homeless populations to the over 800 vacant units in the BHA. On the trail I met and worked with Shannon Booker, who was homeless and needed assistance with a housing voucher application extension. Later she was diagnosed with stage four cancer, and confined to the Barbra McGuinness house. Without being able to leave the facility or have access to a T-pass or telephone she could not complete all the pieces of the application process, such as MBHP furniture voucher requests, Cori checks, letters from the shelter and other necessary parts to complete the housing application process. This process should be streamlined.

We also need to find solutions to the broader housing crisis, such as re-writing linkage legislation to incorporate affordability into more housing development projects. We must work together to look for solutions to this crisis throughout the city.

One important way to address income inequality is through the fair share constitutional amendment. I worked on the ballot question campaign to get it on the ballot before the courts overturned it. I would partner with the efforts of Ward 4 Dems and Progressive Mass on this issue to help get the amendment through.

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

We must streamline the systems of housing access and the application process, create the amount of housing necessary to house homeless populations. In addition we must continue the

community conversation about addiction and recovery and redistribute supports across the city such as a recovery campus at the Shattuck Hospital or a Pine Street Inn branch in Egleston. We can provide better and more targeted resources for detox and longer term supports such as transitional housing, workforce training and development and multimodal treatment and harm reduction options.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

I support the “No new fossil fuels” movement, climate resiliency efforts and quicker action on energy aggregation to move us toward clean and renewable energy sources, except nuclear. We must rapidly incorporate carbon neutral solutions into new development and develop a plan to retrofit existing buildings that are emitting greenhouse gasses. In terms of transportation, we must move toward carbon neutral transportation options: electric vehicles, safe bike lanes, and a T that does not use fossil fuels. If we work together, in the future Boston will have the option of developing its own green energy sources.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

Public mean free and accessible to the public. On the Boston Public Library, is inscribed “Free to All” and we all have natural rights to these institutions and they should be free and accessible to every member of the public. Although some of these institutions are moving toward eBooks, we know that income inequality results in barriers of access to technology and we must think of ways to address access on all levels, including the effect of technological and automation developments. We must make sure we have enough devices for vision and hearing impaired folks in these institutions.

I will work with Ward 4 and institutions on information design and reconciling aesthetics and comprehension and examining the effective practices of designing marketing collateral, exhibit signage, style guides, and digital graphics to create better access. We can do better and more on verbal training sessions to train museum staff to better describe visual objects and transfer information through different sensory engagement. We can do better with long term relationship building with a diverse Boston rather than “one off” exhibitions. We can do better training staff on CADET software that creates more accessible material to hearing impaired individuals. We can explore new approaches to meeting the needs of diverse audiences, with a focus on senior citizen, veteran, and immigrant/refugee populations. We can explore how inclusive website design, audio/multimedia tours, and universal design can open up our museums and other cultural institutions. Let’s consider how to create policies and procedures that give our

institutions a good base for customer service and a foundation on which to build inclusive programs.

There are transportation improvements being made to the station must include multi modal accessibility. The delays have been caused by underfunding and we can ensure that the project remains funded and future projects don't meet the same delays as future projects. We need to dump Baker to make this happen more smoothly.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

In FY18, reports show the city took in less than 75% of requested PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) contributions. Nonprofits in Boston from the educational and medical sectors own and occupy billions of dollars in property across the City, and yet, paid less than \$34 million in PILOT contributions. These institutions are staples of Boston, but we must create a community process requiring these nonprofits ensure that their "community benefits" do, in fact, benefit the community, and report these contributions in a consistent and transparent manner. There can be a balance between supporting these massive nonprofit institutions and ensuring that all residents in Boston can benefit from their presence.

In addition, we should have a community discussion around the development of private taxable dormitories as a way of moving some of the untaxable real property assets of some of these institutions to the city's tax base as well as requesting PILOT contributions on the basis of more current real estate valuation.

Alejandra St. Guillen

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

Education Equity: One major concern for me is one of equity across the schools, particularly as is exhibited in the exam school admissions. We are far beyond the point of "having conversations" about what can be changed and make that change immediately. For instance, we know the ISEE is a test that disproportionately benefits students with wealthier or better connected parents who either can pay the high cost of tutoring for the exam and/or are more connected to the schools and programs that prepare students for the exam. Offering this exam more widely across the district is not a solution if the vast majority of students are not prepared to take it.

Transit equity: Inequality in transit access has a disproportionate impact on low income communities and communities of color. Black public transit riders spend 64 more hours per year in transit than do their white counterparts. My top priorities for advancing sustainability and equity, especially in transit dependent communities like Mattapan, Roxbury, East Boston, and high demand transit corridors Washington Street, Blue Hill Drive, or Centre St will be working with advocates and city/state agencies to upgrade core transportation assets across the city and reinvesting in neglected transportation links, some of these improvements include: --Installing transit signal prioritization technology to enable the city to control traffic and optimize signals in real time to increase efficient flows of bikes and buses, while also decreasing the energy use of traffic signals. --Installing and enforcing dedicated lanes on key bus high demand bus routes to improve reliability and travel time to where you live, work, and play.

Housing equity: As someone who grew up in Mission Hill, I understand how much the city has become unaffordable for the average family. The area's median income calculation has gone unchanged, affecting how we even define affordability. If elected, I will advocate for more affordable housing options and support tax based revenue increases, such as higher taxes on luxury development and real estate transfers. I would advocate for the expansion of community land trusts, expand the Acquisition Opportunity Program (AOP), and Advocate on Beacon Hill for more local control (supporting House Bill 4196-Connolly). I would also advocate for land use changes like reducing parking ratios and right to height, to unlock the zoning and permitting challenges that increases density, walkability, and safety. We must also recognize that there is no "one size fits all" model for expanding affordable housing opportunities. For example, low-income LGBTQ youth are at particular risk of homelessness and a housing solution to meet both their housing and life needs may differ from our aging LGBTQ population who have increasingly been forced back into the closet because of lack of training of their providers.

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

Housing resources are scattered across many different agencies and systems. Due to the lack of a concerted systematic effort to house the most vulnerable individuals, many are unable to navigate the system and are passed over when appropriate housing opportunities become available. If elected, I would work with my colleagues to coordinate a system that tracks housing placement through an online database to track crucial information such as: prior living situation, demographics, disability and other factors. This system will be beneficial to match homeless individuals to available housing units based on needs. The city of Boston has a moral responsibility to support the stability and well-being of all its residents as they struggle through homelessness, and I would be a fierce advocate to make sure we are taking the necessary steps to eliminate homelessness in Boston.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

-Making sure the City of Boston divests from the fossil fuel industry and reinvests in green energy initiatives

-Implementing new city wide composting system and furthering recycling policies to manage our waste more effectively and reduce trash generation

-Moving towards a transportation system that is more carbon neutral the City must implement infrastructure improvements and wayfinding so that we have more pedestrian and bike friendly streets and levy new fees on parking and driving, including permit fees and congestion pricing for vehicles coming into the city

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

Access to our city's premier cultural institutions can be inaccessible to city's residents both financially as well as culturally as was recently displayed by the incident at the Museum of Fine Arts. As the director of the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement, we worked with the Museum of Fine Arts and the Fish Family Foundation to launch the New Americans initiative which offered a free year of membership to all new citizens. Programs such as this, in partnership with foundations to cover costs, are a great way of encouraging attendance at or institutions. We need to figure out a way to make these financial supports sustainable all year to open the institutions to a more diverse constituency. A Municipal ID program, implemented in partnership with our cultural institutions, can also help open the institute grow a more diverse visitorship. The issue of cultural competence is a larger one and an issue which we face across the city, not just in our cultural institutions. The City of Boston must take a stronger lead in exploring issues of Race Equity and promoting and supporting training sessions across the city for all the institutes that reside here. An important first step would be to join GARE - Government Alliance on Race & Equity.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

I believe that the PILOT program should be fully funded. Both the City Council and the office of the Mayor have a responsibility to the people of Boston to make sure that our large non-profit institutions are paying their fair share. I was proud to sign onto the PILOT Action Group's campaign to hold City government and large non-profit institutions accountable for the millions of dollars owed through the PILOT program. I fully support the following list of policy improvement demands:

- Full payment of PILOT from nonprofits -PILOT oversight commission with community representation
- Full transparency in community benefits reporting

-Community engagement process for community benefits

In order to create a more fair tax base and hold institutions accountable, if elected, I will advocate for the City Council to use its convening power to have both the City's Chief Financial Officer & Chief Budget Officer publicly report out the PILOT program contributions on a regular basis. To ensure revenue collection and enforcement, I will also advocate that we subpoena large non-profit institutions that are not meeting their PILOT commitments. Often located in places where infrastructure is strong (e.g. public transit, open space, sidewalks, etc.), these institutions benefit from the city's workforce and human capital.

Michelle Wu

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(1) Boston is one of the most unequal cities in the US. What are the top 3 policies you would advocate to reduce inequality in Boston?

1) Expand access to affordable and reliable transportation options (advocate for a low-income fare for the T and fare-capping, expand protected bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure, speed up bus service throughout the city with designated lanes and signal priority in the most congested corridors).

2) Ensure equity in opportunity for city contracting. In accordance with the ordinance that I coauthored with then-Councilor Ayanna Pressley which required a focus on supplier diversity and regular reporting of procurement data, the City of Boston released a report this year documenting that city departments spent \$664 million in discretionary spending and 0.55% of those contracts went to businesses owned by people of color. Through increased technical assistance, transparency, and commitment to using our discretionary spending to build wealth in our neighborhoods, we can support local businesses and close the racial wealth gap.

3) Close the achievement gap in Boston Public Schools (support the social and emotional health of every student, fund universal early education, invest in vocational and technical education).

(2) Homelessness in Massachusetts rose 13% last year. What can the City Council do to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, homelessness in Boston?

Boston's development boom has not resulted in a significant growth of affordable housing units to meet the demand for extremely low income residents and residents experiencing homelessness. To eliminate homelessness in Boston, we must increase the supply of truly affordable housing. I stand with efforts to pass a home-rule petition to establish a transfer tax on

luxury housing as proposed by Councilors Edwards and Janey, which would dramatically increase funding for affordable housing. I also support boosting the inclusionary development requirements from 13% onsite affordable units to at least 20%, and expanding the number of permanently affordable units through community land trusts or public ownership. We must also address the fact that many of our residents experiencing homelessness in the city are dealing with substance use, mental health challenges, and often both. We need to continue advocating for resources from state and federal government to increase treatment, decriminalize poverty and addiction by supporting criminal justice reforms, and focus on connecting youth to opportunity.

(3) As a coastal city, Boston will be hit by climate change especially hard (indeed, the effects have already started). What are your top priorities for making Boston a more environmentally sustainable city?

The global scientific community has defined a window of time from now until 2030 to dramatically transform our economy and society to keep temperatures from rising beyond the point of habitability on earth. That means our top priority should be acting with urgency to do all within our power to advance climate justice. In the broadest terms, we must electrify everything, transition to clean sources of electricity, and change our land use patterns and societal habits to reduce consumption of electricity. In Boston, that means expanding public transit and multimodal transportation to get more single occupancy, fossil fuel-burning vehicles off the road and installing infrastructure for electric vehicles (I was proud that my home-rule petition increasing access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure for condo owners passed the Council, State Legislature, and was signed into law.). Our buildings must be resilient and we should not see any new fossil fuel infrastructure expansion. The Local Wetlands Protection ordinance I've proposed with Councilor O'Malley to require green infrastructure in new development and empower the Conservation Commission with more regulatory authority would be the single biggest step Boston could take to address resiliency in development. We must also continue ramping up renewable energy. I was proud to introduce the order for Community Choice Energy with Councilor O'Malley and a coalition of advocates to increase the City's sourcing of renewable energy, and we must go further in committing to transition to 100% renewable energy as quickly as possible, including moving immediately to clean our municipal energy procurement. Finally, our zoning and land use should aim to support walkable local communities, and we should focus on social resilience as the best preparedness strategy.

(4) Ward 4 is home to many of the city's premier cultural institutions, such as the Boston Public Library, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. As a Councilor, what do you plan to do to make sure that such institutions are accessible to all of the city's residents?

Boston is a segregated city, and we must proactively work to break down barriers to opportunity — including access to the cultural offerings of the city. All of Boston's institutions should form the wider classroom for our youth, and what happened to young people at the MFA last month should spark leadership at every cultural institution in the city to step up in connecting with

traditionally underrepresented communities. I have been working with Councilors Edwards and Janey to discuss how to address the need for equity in Boston's monuments, memorials and place names, and I intend to be actively supporting Councilor Janey's hearing and discussions about diversity and inclusion at our cultural institutions.

(5) Ward 4 is also an epicenter of untaxed institutions, with numerous colleges, universities, and hospitals. Do you support changes to the city's current PILOT program? If so, what changes?

Yes, I support the proposals by the PILOT advocacy coalition to reconvene a task force to discuss updating the PILOT agreements with our large tax-exempt institutions, including definition of community benefits and accountability mechanisms. At a minimum, I support immediately updating the requested payment levels to reflect current assessed values, rather than continuing to use the baseline levels from 2011.