



**Massachusetts Voter Table & We Decide Coalition
2017 Boston Candidate Questionnaire**

September 28, 2017

Dear Candidate:

Below you will find the Massachusetts Voter Table & We Decide Coalition 2017 Boston Candidate Questionnaire.

The Massachusetts Voter Table is a statewide network of community-based groups representing low-income people and people of color -- the New American Majority (NAM). The Voter Table increases the NAM's share of the statewide vote through strategic, coordinated voter registration, education and mobilization campaigns that connect values to voting. Table partners integrate election organizing with issue advocacy, grounded in leadership development.

The We Decide Coalition is a nonpartisan effort comprised of several nonprofit community groups and organizations that are coordinating a series of community forums with the candidates for Mayor and City Council. Over the past several years, our members have come together to host civic engagement events for the surrounding communities

MA Voter Table and We Decide Coalition have come together to populate this questionnaire highlighting issues and campaigns that are important in our neighborhoods. We will post your responses online and the questionnaire will be turned into a voter guide, which will share with voters across Boston -- through door-to-door canvassing, at local meetings and community events, at service agency offices, by mail and by email.

The deadline for responses is Sunday October 8, 2017 by 11:59pm. Please include a photo ready headshot.

Please note that we have a strict 40-word limit for each question, so that we can put your complete answers on our guide, which we are required to do by law. We will be obligated to stop your responses at the 40th word.

We very much appreciate you taking the time to fill this out. If you need more information about a particular issue or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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Sincerely,



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Please answer each of the following questions in 40 words or fewer. Your answers will be put on a voter guide to be shared with voters, and we are required by the laws governing 501c3s to put your exact words on our guide, so in order to fit your answers we must ask that you stick strictly to this limit. (If answers go over 40 words, we'll be forced to end them at the 40th word.) Shorter answers are also appreciated.

The deadline for responses is Sunday October 8, 2017 by 11:59pm

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to answer these questions.

Candidate Name: Michael F. Flaherty, Jr.

Office seeking: Boston City Councilor At-Large

Contact Information (Name, Phone/Email):

Filled out by: The Flaherty Committee

Current occupation: Boston City Councilor At-Large

GENERAL.

1. If elected, what will be your first three action steps?

- Voting for a City Council President whose leadership guides the body.
- Engaging in conversations with stakeholders on the upcoming budget season its correlation to efficient city services.
- Networking with community groups to address quality of life concerns.

DEMOCRACY, VOTING RIGHTS

2. In light of the underfunding of the 2020 Census, what will you commit to do to ensure that everyone will be counted? (40 words or less)

Boston has an annual survey to make sure that every resident is counted. Given that Boston is a growing, changing city, I will work with my colleagues and community groups to raise awareness of the 2020 Census survey.



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Will you commit to working with the US Census Bureau on the official address update program (LUCA) to ensure all of your constituents have an opportunity to be counted in the 2020 Census?

Yes

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, DEVELOPMENT

- 3. Low and moderate income families are being priced out of many of Boston's neighborhoods. How will you ensure that residents of all incomes have housing options and are able to afford living in their community? (40 words or less)**

As a longtime champion of the Community Preservation Act, I look forward to generated revenue being used for affordable housing across Boston. Further, I have worked with developers to make sure that Linkage Fees and IDP are in compliance.

- 4. The median home price in Boston is now \$560,000. Low-and moderate-income first time buyers struggle to afford a home in this market. Cambridge offers first time homebuyers financial assistance up to 50% of the purchase price in exchange for an affordable housing deed restriction. Would you support establishment of a similar buy-down program housed at Department of Neighborhood's Home Center using funds from linkage, IDP and CPA? Why or why not? (40 words or less)**

While there definitely needs to be more creation of and accessibility to affordable housing, this is a conversation that needs to take place with all stakeholders who would contribute to the creation and implementation of the program.

- 5. One of the resources available to build affordable housing in Boston is the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP). If elected, what measures will you take to increase both the number of units built and the dollar amount paid into the IDP funds? (40 words or less)**

Due to the growth taking place in our city, the cost of living has increased and many residents are being priced out. We must not only enforce IDP compliance but also strengthen affordable housing accessibility through CPA and Linkage Fees.



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Would you support legislation to raise the percent of on-site affordable housing units required through IDP to 25%, why or why not?

We must strengthen the compliance standards for not only the IDP but also for Linkage Fees. Additionally, we need to advocate for housing options that are suitable for seniors and veterans. CPA funds will also help with affordable housing development.

6. Should City subsidies be given only to development projects with majority resident support, enforceable community benefit agreements and living wage jobs (both construction and/or permanent)? Why or why not? (40 words or less)

Yes. With strengthened and increased compliance standards for BRJP, we must keep in mind that developments in Boston should benefit our residents and the impacted community. Further, subsidies should follow guidelines crafted by an array of stakeholders.

7. According to Census data, Boston has the fourth highest per capita rate of homelessness in the Country. What are your plans to reduce homelessness? (40 words or less)

As Chair of the Committee on Government Operations, I worked with stakeholders to pass the Jim Brooks Stabilization Act. Further, I have supported similar legislation and programming to reduce evictions and provide housing opportunities.

8. Will you support the pilot program proposed by nine City Councilors, to spend at least \$5 million annually from the City budget and/or Community Preservation Act, to provide for a net increase in new rental housing for low income families, including but not limited to Housing First for the homeless? Why or why not? (40 words or less)

We must be more diligent in looking at feasible options for creating housing opportunities for our most vulnerable residents to deter homelessness. Funding, generated as a result of implementation of the Community Preservation Act, will greatly assist in this.



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOBS

- 9. Current, there is an effort to increase the state's minimum wage to \$15/hour. Do you support such an effort? If so, how will you ensure that funding for youth jobs increases to reflect the raised wage? (40 words or less)**

Yes. I have supported efforts by several organizations in the Fight for \$15. I will work with the Mayor and City Council colleagues to advocate for private-public partnerships for a youth jobs budget that reflects the raised wage.

- 10. If elected, how will you address the disparate unemployment rates and the barriers to employment causes by CORI and discrimination? (40 words or less)**

As our city continues to develop, there are employment opportunities and partnerships that need to be taken advantage of. In a world that is seeking to fight climate change, the green economy provides an opportunity for workforce development.

- 11. If elected, what steps will you take to further economic development in Boston's neighborhoods? (40 words or less)**

Economic development planning must begin with neighborhood master plans that are rooted in the priorities of the community. Further, we must use funds that are generated through the Community Preservation Act and Linkage Fees to benefit Boston's residents.

IMMIGRATION

- 12. Would you support using City funds to provide attorneys for residents in immigration court? Why or why not? (40 words or less)**

While we must be cautious on external spending, my office has worked with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement, which provides informative resources to residents who seek to address legal concerns around immigration.

- 13. Do you favor maintaining the City's policies regarding protecting its residents through immigration enforcement? Would you favor enhancing those policies? If so, how? (40 words or less)**



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I worked with my colleagues to strengthen and pass the Boston Trust Act (which directs local enforcement agencies to not act as ICE). I will continue to act as both an advocate and a friend to Boston's immigrant community.

EDUCATION

14. What are your top 3 priorities your office will take in order to ensure quality education for all Boston's students? (40 words or less)

Our school system needs to be given the tools and resources to close the achievement gap. Our students need to be able to compete in a global economy, so it's pertinent that they have the skills, both academically and professionally.

PUBLIC SAFETY

15. What factors do you believe contribute to violence in Boston? Should what role does city government play in addressing this issue? If so, what role? (40 words or less)

City officials and community partners need to work together to address substance abuse and mental health issues, quality schools and education options, more year-round programming for youth.

PUBLIC HEALTH

16. What do you intend to do to address health disparities Boston such high rates of asthma among communities of color and food insecurity? If elected, how do you intend to increase social and family support systems to address mental and public health issues? (40 words or less)

We need to continue to partner with our community health centers to address health disparities, such as hunger, asthma rates and mental health. Further, I have been a longtime advocate for treatment-on-demand for those who deal with substance abuse issues.