

DotOUT's 10 QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES

FOR THE 13th SUFFOLK STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Question #1: What are the three issues you believe should be a priority in your term?

PJ McCann

I strongly believe that ensuring LGBTQ rights is the defining civil rights issue of our generation. While Massachusetts has led the nation in the fight for marriage equality, far more advocacy is needed at the local, state, and federal level to ensure that marriage rights, equal benefits, and the full range of all necessary legal protections are recognized and enforced at home and throughout the country.

First, as an overarching priority, I would work to ensure that the rights and interests of the LGBTQ community are brought into all policymaking processes in city and state government, and that a LGBTQ equity perspective is built into all policy decisions, particularly those relating to civil rights, economic development family law, public health, violence prevention, suicide prevention, education, housing and elder services.

Second, my campaign is focused on making sure that our city's economic growth and prosperity is shared by all our neighborhoods and neighbor. My core focus is on rebuilding pathways to prosperity and promoting a housing and community development strategy that creates and protects housing that helps to build inclusive, vibrant and healthy communities. A top priority will be making sure that state government does more to ensure equity of opportunity in our state's economy for all residents regardless of gender, gender identity, gender presentation, race, ethnicity, or class. This will require working toward stronger workplace discrimination protections, adequate HIV/AIDS funding, and better services for LGBT youth to remove barriers from participation in the Commonwealth's economic prosperity.

Third, while Massachusetts deserves to take pride in what it has accomplished in the fight for marriage equality, far more work will continue to be needed at all levels of government in the coming years to come to ensure that equal rights and strong protections are put into place to achieve true equity and equality in that marriage rights, equal benefits, and all other necessary legal protections are strengthened and replicated by other states and the federal government.

I have a strong track record of using my professional skills as a policymaker and attorney to advocate for legal reforms that improve health and quality of life for Dorchester residents. The day-to-day advocacy needed to address each of the issues raised in this questionnaire will demand a tireless advocate in the state house, and I have the skills, experience, and dedication to be that advocate.

Liam Curran

Education: specifically public education for all children beginning at age 4. Studies, including *Impacts of a Prekindergarten Program on Children's Mathematics, Language, Literacy, Executive Function, and Emotional Skills*, reported in the journal *Child Development*, consistently indicate that children who receive education at this age perform better throughout their life. With Mayor Walsh calling for expansion of

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	<p>pre-K I believe there is real momentum for this and I want to capitalize on that momentum.</p> <p><u>Human rights:</u> Massachusetts has an all too pervasive problem with many issues touching on human rights violations, in particular human trafficking. Also, human and civil rights for members of the LGBTQ community. While we have finally achieved marriage equality for same sex couples in Massachusetts after U.S. v. Windsor', we are far from achieving true equality, both as a legal matter as well as a cultural one. Strong work and achievement in Massachusetts sets a higher bar for the rest of the country and I want to continue to push our bar higher.</p> <p><u>Substance abuse:</u> Dorchester and Quincy, along with many communities in Massachusetts, are in the grip of a long standing and all too secretive opiate abuse epidemic. We need to invest our money in resources into programs and solutions that work to not only detoxify struggling addicts, but give them the post-detox services for a truly successful reintegration into society as functional and supported successes. We also need legislation that encourages more responsible prescribing and tracking of opiate/opioid medications, along with education and resources on drug disposal and security.</p>
<p>John O'Toole</p>	<p>My three priority issues are: getting the resources we need to put an effective public safety plan in place for extended T Hours; making sure the pending gun safety bill addresses violence in our district; and working to complete the Neponset Riverway.</p>
<p>Dan Hunt</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating safer communities for everyone in our area, including additional chapter 70 funding for police and schools. 2. Educational issues. I believe we need to strengthen our schools and create more opportunities in school and in afterschool programs in arts, music and athletics. 3. Creating local jobs that pay a living wage and offer benefits that all families can rely on.

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Question #2: What is your position with regard to the South Boston St. Patrick's Day parade continuing to exclude LGBTQ groups from participating and will you pledge not to participate and/or march in the parade until they inclusive to LGBTQ groups?

PJ McCann	I would stand strongly in opposition to the exclusion of LGBTQ groups, refrain from participating in the parade until they are able to participate, and work to make the parade more reflective of the vibrant, inclusive city that we are striving to be. I believe that an inclusive St. Patrick's Day parade would send a strong message about the character of our city and I would work with all parties to make that a reality as soon as possible.
Liam Curran	I think the exclusion of LGBTQ groups is unacceptable. I do pledge to not participate or march in it until the parade inclusive.
John O'Toole	I don't believe that South Boston St. Patrick's Day Parade should exclude LGBTQ groups, and will pledge not to march in the parade until they are inclusive to LGBTQ groups.
Dan Hunt	Quite simply, I do not believe that any parade or event should exclude any person based on sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. I will not participate nor march in the South Boston St. Patrick's Day Parade unless they are inclusive to LGBT groups.

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Question #3: What actions would you take to ensure that all citizens have access to HIV/AIDS services & resources?	
PJ McCann	As I have in the past, I would advocate for adequate funding of the HIV/AIDS line item in the state budget for the Department of Public Health. I would also work with our Congressional delegation to preserve all federal funding, including but not limited to Ryan White HIV/AIDS program. I would also work to make sure that local public health departments, including the Boston Public Health Commission have the resources needed to build on their work to prevent HIV and STI infections.
Liam Curran	<p>I would lobby for more state and federal funds to go towards successful programs already in existence. I would also meet with such programs and personnel to gain a deeper perspective of what the clinicians and patients feel would work. My brother, Timothy Curran, is the nurse case manager for the HIV/AIDS program at Neponset Heath Center and I would certainly consult with him on these issues.</p> <p>I'm also familiar with Project Trust, one of the oldest drop-in clinics in Boston. They offer preventative services and education, along with STD/HIV testing. I would like to explore opportunities for similar services in our district and across the state.</p>
John O'Toole	I support the health-care reform bills that have passed here in Massachusetts and in Washington, D.C., that have removed pre-existing conditions and life-time caps on care from health insurance. Providing quality health-care to all citizens is the best way to ensure that everyone has access to the HIV/AIDS services and resources they need. I will continue working to improve the quality of care Massachusetts residents receive, and pledge to work with DotOUT on making sure HIV/AIDS services and resources continue to be an important part of that care.
Dan Hunt	I will work with AIDS Action Committee and other advocates to ensure that the HIV/AIDS funding is protected in the state budget and that increases are fought for. As a board member for Harbor Health, I am specifically focused on making sure that vulnerable populations have access to the care they need. I also support efforts to require insurance providers to cover Lypodystrophy related complications of HIV/AIDS, which they are currently not required to cover in Massachusetts. I would support the bill pending in the legislature to require coverage of this condition, which affects many long-term HIV/AIDS patients.

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Question #4: What steps will you take to decrease violence and insure safety for all residents in Dorchester?	
PJ McCann	I would work to build on existing community policing efforts, adequately fund violence prevention initiatives like Boston's Violence Intervention and Prevention program. I would also work with state and local law enforcement to make sure that all officers have the necessary training to respond appropriately to violence against LGBT residents.
Liam Curran	As a young man I was robbed at gun point twice and witnessed a serious knife attack on a friend, so I know first hand the importance of the ongoing need to confront issues of crime and violence. We have a long way to go on this issue and it will take a sustained effort employing multiple tactics. I will work closely with our police, first responders, and community groups to stay on top of the issues in the neighborhoods, hear the constituents' concerns. I hope to secure local aid to facilitate and encourage more neighborhood "beat cops" officers on bikes, and dedicated safety teams allowing the officers out of their cruisers and interacting with our community. I will work with the BPD, QPD, and MBTA police to explore the viability of more bike units. Additionally, I will personally be available by phone or email to respond to the concerns of my constituents.
John O'Toole	In Adams Village, I worked with residents, small business, and the Boston Police, to build a partnership that kept drug-dealing and other criminal activity off our streets. That leadership earned me the support of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association, the MBTA Police Association, and the personal endorsement of folks like Mark Parolin, the Vice President of the BPD Superior Officers Federation. I will continue working with Boston Police to build partnerships across the neighborhood, and I look forward to voting in favor of new Gun Safety legislation that will restrict the flow of illegal guns.
Dan Hunt	I will fully support funding for the Gay Men's Domestic Violence Project, which is traditionally funded in part by a line item in the state budget. I also support initiatives like Mayor Marty Walsh's gun buyback program that will help make our streets safer and get illegal guns off the streets.

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Question #5: What actions would you take to ensure that attention is brought to LGBT victims of violence including domestic violence and what have you done to reduce violence against LGBT residents?

PJ McCann	I would support the implementation of the 2010 Anti-Bullying Law and work to improve school health curricula to include critical LGBT inclusive-information and framing. Professionally, I have contributed legislative research to support advocacy efforts aimed at improving the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law. In my personal life, I have always stood against violence against LGBT residents, as far back as junior high and high school where I used my leadership position in my class and student groups to stand with my gay friends and classmates to eliminate the use of hateful language and bullying in our school community, and participating in my hometown's No Place for Hate initiative. As an adult, I have continued this commitment of zero-tolerance for violence and violent language, and as a legislator I would do everything in my power to reduce violence against my LGBT friends and neighbors.
Liam Curran	In my time working as a student prosecutor with the Suffolk District Attorney's office in the West Roxbury District court I became directly familiar with the well known cycle of abuse and reconciliation, that typically worsens as the victim(s) become more isolated from their friends and family. I will convene a meeting of residents and stake holders to bring attention to the issue of domestic violence. I recognize the reality that LGBT victims may face the trauma of feeling especially isolated, I will proudly be a leader on these issues to give it the attention it deserves.
John O'Toole	I proudly participated in this year's polar plunge, and I have been an enthusiastic sponsor of other LBGQTQ community events. I believe that being a strong ally of the LGBTQ community means engaging with the community, and making sure the community is at the table when issues like extended hours on the T, violence in our neighborhood, and violence in the home are discussed.
Dan Hunt	I strongly support anti-bullying legislation that is pending before the legislature now, and in addition to supporting the legislation I talk about this issue on the campaign trail often. We need to make sure that LGBT people feel safe in our community and I will support cultural competency efforts and other efforts to reduce bias crimes. I have worked to elect other pro-LGBT champions like Senator Linda Dorcena Forry through working with MassEquality and other groups.

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Question #6: As you may know, suicide is the leading cause of death among gay and lesbian youth. Approximately 40% of homeless youth are LGBT, and approximately 28% of gay & lesbians drop out of high school because of verbal and physical abuse. Given these startling statistics, what actions have you taken or will you take to address these important issues?

PJ McCann

As a legislator, I would propose targeted funding for the Department of Public Health's suicide prevention program. I would work to increase the dropout age, and work to deliver appropriate wraparound services to make sure that all students, especially LGBT students, have the supports they need to achieve their full academic potential.

Liam Curran

These statistics are very troubling. We need to ensure that there are greater resources available to our LGBTQ youth and their families. Bullying at large needs to be better addressed in our schools, teen centers, extracurricular activities, and in the workplace, especially as it pertains to LGBTQ youth, who are especially vulnerable. This issue comes full circle to the issues of human trafficking and substance abuse, as many homeless people, including LGBTQ youth, are persuaded into prostitution and often end up abusing drugs.

I was raised in a family where, amidst the chaos of ten children, we were taught clearly the lesson to treat all people with dignity, compassion, empathy, and respect. Race, gender, sexuality, and the like were not the traits by which we judged a person. My own brother, despite the knowledge that our family would be accepting of his sexual orientation, struggled with coming out. It took years for him to build up the courage to begin to have that conversation with us, those who he knew loved him unconditionally. It was our brother's sudden death in 2009 that gave him the strength to be open with us. After he told us that he was gay, he also revealed he had long harbored suicidal thoughts and tendencies. It hurt me to know my brother felt so much pain and isolation. Even in supportive environments our LGBTQ youth face enormous pressures. We have to work to ease this pain, and break down the barriers to their happiness.

One of my sisters was a member of Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth. Through them she met and developed a very close relationship with C.J. Garber. Tragically C.J. passed away, at least partly the result of the stress of so many of the issues our young LGBTQ people deal with. I admired C.J.'s parents are Ken (deceased) and Marcia Garber, well known transgender rights activists, loving and steadfast support of C.J.. C.J. was a wonderful friend to my sister, and truly a member of our family.

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	<p>I could never turn my back on these issues because I have seen firsthand the unnecessary suffering of such wonderful people. Our world lost a very special, kind, and loving person with the passing of C.J., and we continue to lose children and adults like this every day.</p>
<p>John O'Toole</p>	<p>Massachusetts has taken strong legislative action to address bullying in our schools, and I think that's something we can all be proud of. It's the role of our elected officials to continue working with leaders in the affected communities to make sure that strong laws are followed up with strong enforcement, and I have the relationships and experience in Dorchester, and with LGBTQ community to do that work.</p>
<p>Dan Hunt</p>	<p>In addition to working to elect pro-equality champions, I strongly support efforts of the state Commission on LGBTQ Youth as well as the efforts of the newly created Commission on Unaccompanied Youth in their work to craft recommendations to reduce bullying, homelessness and suicide of LGBTQ youth. As a legislator I will be a champion for equality and respect of everyone, including supporting and pushing the ant-bullying bill, the recommendations of the Commission on Unaccompanied Youth, and securing the safety of people who are discriminated against based on gender identity.</p>

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Question #7: It is believed that there are anywhere between 1.6 to 3.2 million gay men and women who are 65 or older. Many of these LGBT elders are invisible to mainstream elder service providers and also invisible to the LGBT community as a whole. What actions would you take to ensure that LGBT elders have access to elder services and resources?

PJ McCann	<p>I would work to address the lack of benefits, housing, and social engagement that LGBT elders experience disproportionately. We know that LGBT elders are often excluded from, or made to feel unwelcome in, mainstream elder housing and service programs. I would work to support LGBT-focused elder outreach, the development of LGBT-inclusive elder housing, and take efforts to ensure that LGBT elders are fully included in all public benefits that our elders have rightfully earned.</p>
Liam Curran	<p>I know that the LGBTQ community face a number of concerns as they age. We have to take a look at the services offered in our communities (i.e. senior centers) and ensure that they are not marginalizing our LGBT elders. We should reach out to such programs, and work with them to ensure they offer more inclusive programs and services. The goal should be that all senior services are eventually LGBTQ friendly but until that time we need to be cognizant and responsive to the needs of LGBTQ elders so that they are not re-victimized and re-marginalized by being cut off from the progress that has been so hard fought.</p> <p>We need to make sure that clinicians in our neighborhoods are ready to embrace, and have to resources to serve, their LGBT clients, in particular the elderly, and make sure they are not being under served based on assumptions about their lifestyle. LGBT elders often do not have the same access to programs as a result of institutional bias. While in Massachusetts we have achieved marriage equality, but we still need to actively continue fighting for it, and setting the path for other states and municipalities to follow suit. Even if a couple is married in a state that recognizes marriage equality (i.e. MA) they will not currently receive benefits if they choose to retire in a more mild climate (i.e. FL), where marriage rights are not recognized. We are not affording our LGBT elders with the same opportunities for a higher quality of life that their heterosexual married counterparts can enjoy. There are numerous financial, health and welfare factors that would precipitate a Massachusetts couple to move out of state for retirement. It is outright discrimination that our elderly cannot make these choices without taking into consideration the consequences that they would not face if they were not in a same sex union. We simply cannot allow this to continue. We need to set a precedent that when policy changes are discussed or implemented at any level of government, that our LGBT community always has a place at the table.</p>
John O'Toole	<p>I have fought for senior services for under-served populations, whether it was working</p>

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	<p>to make sure that the Cape Verdean community had a community center for their seniors, or making seniors' home more accessible, allowing them to continue living on their own. Identifying the needs, and taking action to meet them, is something I've been doing for 25 years in Dorchester, and I will continue to do it as state representative.</p>
Dan Hunt	<p>There are two very important pieces of legislation that I support pending in the legislature right now that have been filed by Representatives Peake and Malia directed at making LGBT seniors feel less isolated and safer in their care settings. One of these bills would require the Department of Elder Affairs to ensure that caregivers are provided with cultural competency training to ensure that the needs of LGBT seniors are understood by nursing homes, care facilities and other providers. I will work to pass these bills because I believe nobody should feel isolated or feel like they need to be "back in the closet" based on their environment.</p>

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Question #8: Massachusetts' education officials this past year have issued new guidelines governing the inclusion of transgender students. Do you support these guidelines and what actions will you take to insure the transgender community is treated with dignity and respect?

PJ McCann	I support the guidelines to support better inclusion of transgender students, and I believe that more steps can be taken to ensure that the implementation ensures more robust protections, and makes sure that there is adequate oversight and funding for enforcement.
Liam Curran	<p>I have reviewed Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools, Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity published by Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and I support the progress and goals that these policies represent. We need to be proactive in our approach to monitoring the implementation of these policies to include and protect all children in our public schools as effectively as possible, ensuring that their learning environment is nurturing and beneficial to them and their peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify adults and students in the school who will be the onsite contact people that our transgendered students can trust. -Identify community leaders who will be in regular contact with our on site liaison -Educate all students on these issues, and encourage an environment of respect and humanity. -Create a connection between schools and different school systems (Boston versus Cambridge) to learn about their approaches to this matter, and share best practices.
John O'Toole	I support the guidelines issued by Massachusetts education officials this past year, and once elected I will support legislation to make sure that good guidelines become good law.
Dan Hunt	I do support these guidelines. Transgender students (and adults) should be treated with dignity and I think the guidelines set an excellent example for how other areas of public accommodations should be regulated. I will support and advocate for Rep. Sciortino's update to the newly passed public accommodations laws so that people are no longer singled out for discrimination in any areas of public accommodation based on gender identity or gender expression.

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Question #9: How have you supported the LGBTQ community in the past?	
PJ McCann	In my professional career, I have supported public health initiatives, economic development, affordable housing protection, and quality of life improvements that have improved life for the LGBTQ community. In law school, at Northeastern University School of Law, I was chosen by a group of 12 of my classmates to lead a semester-long collaborative research project to examine LGBT adoption and family status across the country on behalf of a national LGBT rights advocacy organization. I have actively demanded that the politicians that I support, volunteer, and work for stand with me on LGBT rights issues. As noted above, my support for the LGBTQ community is unwavering and without exception as far back as my childhood, and I would work tirelessly to advocate for the interests of my LGBT neighbors, friends and family members as a state legislator.
Liam Curran	As a voter, and campaigner, I have supported candidates who embrace and embody equal rights for all people to the extent I was able to assess.
John O'Toole	When the marriage equality debate was raging, I supported my friend and employee Rob Jason, one of the first gay men to get married after the Goodridge decision. That same year and the year after I sponsored a float in the Boston Pride Parade, years before I considered running for office, and have marched in and supported that parade since. With my friend and neighbor Greg DeCenzo I have been a supporter of the LGBTQ Domestic Violence Project, which I was proud to support this past weekend. I am proud of the relationships I have with members of the LGBTQ community, proud of the friends and family I have in the community, and I look forward to continue supporting this important part of the 13 th Suffolk.
Dan Hunt	I have attended State House rallies in support of marriage equality, transgender equality and anti-bullying. I have volunteered my time at MassEquality phonebanking for endorsed LGBT Champions like Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry.

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Question #10: If endorsed by DotOUT what would you do with our endorsement?	
PJ McCann	<p>If endorsed by DotOUT, I would leverage the endorsement to getvelected and be a strong leader for LGBT rights and all of the interests of the LGBTQ community. As discussed above, I would work to ensure that all policy changes are evaluated from the perspective of their impact on the LGBTQ community. I would work to build a stronger coalition of legislators and advocates working to advance for LGBT equality, equity, and anti-discrimination, use my relationships within the Boston delegation, the executive branches of all levels of government, and beyond to protect LGBT rights and be a strong advocate for funding the resources needed to ensure an inclusive future for our community.</p>
Liam Curran	<p>If I were endorsed by DotOUT, I would proudly accept such an achievement. I immediately announce the endorsement by press release and seek volunteer support from your membership. I would consider your endorsement an honor.</p> <p>A State Representative must know the law to defend his constituents against unjust laws. Even in Massachusetts, organizations continuously attempt to attack the work towards equality, in particular marriage equality. We are not immune to attacks, such as those from the various groups who supported the (failed) constitutional amendment in 2005. We need a State Representative that will be a champion of the LGBTQ community; I will gladly take on that effort.</p>
John O'Toole	<p>I have a diverse set of endorsements, from religious and civic leaders, unions, and thousands of district residents. DotOUT's endorsement would be another indication that I am the only candidate who can represent the 13th Suffolk, because I already have the personal relationships to make sure everyone's voice is heard, in the district, and on Beacon Hill.</p>
Dan Hunt	<p>I will publicize the endorsement proudly alongside other individuals and groups who have endorsed me like Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry, MassEquality, Mass Alliance, Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters, Clean Water Action, SEIU1199, Mass Teachers Association, Boston Teachers Union, IBEW 2222 and other unions. I would be humbled to have the endorsement of DotOUT.</p>