

# Ayanna Pressley

## Affordable Housing

The goal is to have development done in manner that is successful — for everyone. I believe it must:

- Be at a pace and in a manner that benefits residents and doesn't displace them
- Adhere to smart growth principles — mixed use, a range of housing choices, walkable neighborhoods, access to public transportation and use of green design
- Involve active community participation from all members of the community

## Development

Support efforts to ensure accessibility to and the development of affordable housing which is vital to retaining the unique diversity within our neighborhoods.

Encourage development that embodies the principles of smart growth: mixed use, a range of income and affordability levels, proximity to public transit, and the incorporation of green space into development plans.

Work to enhance and grow opportunities for small businesses, particularly women- and minority-owned small businesses, through projects like Main Street, strengthening the vitality of Jamaica Plain.

## Environment and Energy

Promote and lead climate change solutions that are economically progressive and ease cost impacts on the lowest-income residents of our state—thus making advocates for low-income communities allies in the fight against climate change

Partner with the City Environmental and Energy Department and private utility companies to educate my constituents about products and services such as energy audits, energy efficient appliances, smart metering, and energy efficiency tax incentives.

Support ongoing partnerships with local community organizations that raise awareness of environmental issues and environmentally-responsible living, particularly in underserved communities.

## Youth Violence

Having grown up in a tough neighborhood in Chicago where there were bad influences and distractions around every corner, I understand the devastating impact violence has on communities. We must focus our public safety resources on community-specific solutions. We also must

fully include the community itself—neighborhood associations, religions institutions, community-based organizations—into the discussion of solutions for crime and public safety issues facing each specific neighborhood. Through an open, inclusive process that includes all impacted voices, we can cultivate innovative methods for addressing crime and public safety in each specific neighborhood instead of a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to recognize that each neighborhood faces unique challenges.

We also need to improve access to mentoring, quality education, expanded after-school programs, day care, and children's health and nutrition programs.

## Accountability, Transparency

- Adopting a program like Citistat such as Somerville uses to measure results and improve efficiency and effectiveness of all City Programs
- Greater budget and spending transparency — putting information online that's easy for all residents to access and understand
- Implementing and obeying open meeting laws

## Education

We need to be balancing the benefits of neighborhood schools through lower cost transportation costs that can and must be re-invested in failing schools as well as improved parental involvement because of proximity — with the costs — inability to provide choice and equal quality of education as well as economic and racial diversity.

There is an achievement gap because disparities do exist in our school system and must be addressed. Disparities in our school system mirror disparities we find in society at large. It is critical that we address those societal disparities in order to successfully close the achievement gap.

Several steps we should take include:

- More investment in on-going teacher development and training
- Increased access to after-school programs, including tutoring, SAT prep and college placement assistance
- Increased parental involvement — school's must be a welcoming place for parents something that could be achieved through ideas like evening hours, translation services, teacher training in working with troubled families and family learning.

Certainly, as referenced above, there is an achievement gap in our schools and that must be addressed with immediate solutions, including those I mentioned earlier. The city must address the roots of the problems, in the neighborhoods and communities most impacted, with programs and policies tailored to those communities. How we educate our young people- and how we ensure they receive an outstanding education- should not be a "one size fits all" proposition; if there are communities facing a unique set of problems, it is essential we respond to their problems.

## Human Services

Human service and public health agencies are facing an almost crushing demand for their services at a time when their budgets are being slashed. At a time of such economic crisis, my first priority would be ensuring this much-needed influx of \$10 million did not turn into a political tug-of-war. I would meet the heads of the agencies such as Dr. Ferrer at the Public Health Commission, Larry Mayes in Human Services and Daphne Griffin at Boston Centers for Youth and Families, examine their budgets and talk to outside experts about how to best invest the money. Ideally, the money could provide short-term stability to underfunded programs while also enabling longer-term benefits, such as lowering health care costs, promoting nutrition and wellness and providing young people with important life skills.

## Transportation

First and foremost, public transportation in Boston must be preserved and fully supported. But Bostonians should not be expected to solely shoulder the burden of the necessary reform of the state's overall transportation system. Boston is the economic engine which drives this state and the public transportation system is an essential ingredient for our economic success. As such, my priority would be supporting the efforts of Boston's State House delegation while also reaching out to our Congressional Delegation. Investing in our transportation infrastructure requires a coordinated effort involving municipal, state and federal government and I believe my background will allow me to take a leading role in that effort.

## Jobs and Labor

I think it is important to recognize that, unfortunately, there is no single "silver bullet" policy that can tackle the disparities in unemployment in Boston. The only way to end the disparities is to implement comprehensive, long-term policies that can (1) ensure our young people of all races and ethnicities are prepared for the 21st Century job market (2) support local minority-owned small businesses (3) ensure developers adhere to regulations in regards to employing local contractors and vendors, and (4) invest in industries such as green technology which provide jobs at every level of the economy.

## Race and Diversity

I believe it is essential that government reflects the people it serves and have worked personally to expand the pipeline of political talent in Boston to include more women and minority. I would urge increased support for mentoring programs which provide young people with the essential skills

and support they need to succeed professionally. New programs could be created, partnering city agencies with Boston Public Schools, to provide students with the real world skills they need to be attractive job candidates, while also exposing students to public service career opportunities.

## Budget Policy

54% of all property goes untaxed in the City because of our current tax laws surrounding non-profit entities. However, many of these organizations, such as colleges and hospitals, maintain hundreds of millions (some even billions) of dollars in endowments and are reaping astronomical profits. Studies have shown that their "donations" back to the city for the services they are using equal just pennies on the dollar compared to their tax paying counterparts. These are outdated laws that are hurting small businesses and working families throughout the City of Boston. I will work diligently to negotiate creative and long-term solutions that benefit our communities, including our non-profit community.

I do not necessarily agree that the money would have to come from two other departments. Like President Obama says, we must comb through our budget line by line to achieve the cost savings we need, and I can not commit to drastically reducing the budget of any of our already stretched thin departments.

Like working families across the City, we must find a way to sharpen our pencils and find cost savings wherever we can. Are there departments that can be combined that currently have redundancies in their responsibilities? Are we effectively using the internet and telecommuting in order to cut down on costs related to fee collection and staffing? Is there surplus property or equipment that can still effectively be used by other departments or non-profits? These are the questions that must be asked in order to effectively manage our budget.

## Lightning Round (Yes or No)

*Many workers in Boston are organizing to form unions, especially in the hospitals. Will you publicly support their efforts to organize?* **Yes**

*Do you support the death penalty?* **No**

*Do you support same sex marriage?* **Yes**

*Do you support anti-discrimination laws that protect someone from being fired, or denied housing, education, or access to public facilities (including bathrooms) based on their gender identity?* **Yes**

*Are you pro-choice?* **Yes**

*Would you support a state constitutional amendment implementing a progressive income tax?* **Yes**