

2017 North Shore Labor Council Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: _____ Political Office Sought: _____

Yours or Campaign's Street Address _____

Town/City _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Date Questionnaire completed: _____

Please respond in detail so that we understand where you stand on each issue.

I. Right to Organize

The right to organize a union is a right granted to workers by the federal and state government. Unfortunately, all too often employers ignore this basic civil right and deny their employees a voice at work. Far too often, these violations go unpunished by the agency designated to monitor such union elections.

1. Will you publicly support workers who are forming unions by reaffirming the importance of unions to our communities and by taking actions such as issuing public statements, attending rallies and supporting organizing?

YES

NO

2. Would you support free and fair elections through neutrality agreements and voluntary recognition or card check recognition of any bargaining unit within your jurisdiction?

If so, how?

3. Have you supported union organizing in the past? If so, how? If not, why not?

II. Collective Bargaining

State and federal laws requires all employers to bargain fairly in good faith with labor union bargaining units. If employers fail to bargain in good faith, charges can be filed with

the appropriate agency at either the state or federal level. However, charges often take years to litigate and reach resolution. Labor unions and employees have come to rely on community activity to help move the bargaining process along.

4. As an elected official how would you uphold the standard of negotiating in good faith and work to settle collective bargaining agreements **both in public and private** sectors in your community in a timely fashion?

Will you work to ensure the funding of contracts that the city has negotiated?

YES

NO

Additional Comments:

III. Responsible Employer Language, Prevailing Wage

A number of cities and towns have committed to being “Responsible Employers.” These cities and towns require that contractors who wish to bid on public projects pay the prevailing wage; provide health insurance for all employees; be affiliated with a state or federal certified apprenticeship training program; maintain workers’ compensation insurance for all employees; classify workers properly as employees rather than as independent contractors; and comply with local residency and/or affirmative action requirements.

5. Will you support **the existing Responsible Employer ordinance**, or passage of one if it does not presently exist in your city or town? If so, how?

YES

NO

In 1988, Massachusetts voters in 349 of 351 cities and towns voted in favor of the Massachusetts Prevailing Wage Law (58 to 41% opposed repeal statewide) or the bid laws. The Prevailing Wage Law sets hourly pay rates on publicly funded state and municipal construction projects.

6. Will you oppose legislation to repeal the Prevailing Wage Law and allow local selective exemptions from the bid laws? Will you oppose legislation to weaken the laws or raise the thresholds?

IV. Privatization

Privatization laws (like the Tax Payer Protection Act, or “Pacheco Law”) do not prohibit privatization, but establish procedures to ensure the proper expenditure of state funds when current state services are contracted to private vendors. The bill requires the state of Massachusetts to demonstrate savings in privatization proposals.

7. What will you do to protect public services from privatization? (school employers and teachers, city custodians, police, fire fighters, etc.) What will you do to protect union members in any privatization process? **Will you support a Tax Payer Protection act for the public employees in your town/city? If so, how?**

V. Economic Development

Traditional economic development strategies focus on tax cuts, tax incentives, business relocation expenses and other subsidies to attract and retain companies.

The labor movement is attempting to change that standard and replace it with a system of public accountability for the allocation of any public funds, subsidies or tax breaks to companies.

8. Would you support progressive and pro-worker economic development strategies by phasing out traditional public strategies for recruiting and retaining business like corporate tax cuts, lax safety and health enforcement, low minimum wage, tax incentives, opposition to unions, relaxed labor and environmental regulations?

YES

NO

How? _____

9. Do you support Tax Increment Financing that helps workers and companies, not just companies and clawback reforms?

YES

NO

How would you support it? _____

10. Will you support a inclusionary zoning agreement, similar to those in place in Boston that would require developers of major projects (over 20,000 square feet) to contribute to a fund that could be used for housing, job training and education opportunities for your city or town? Or alternatively, would you support “Community Benefits Agreements” that require large developers to negotiate such agreements directly with community organizations? For example, if there was a multi-million dollar development project proposed for Lynn's waterfront, that developer would be required to contribute to such a fund.

YES

NO

Your reasoning for or against _____

VI. Revenue

Paying taxes is the price we pay for living in an advanced and progressive society. The choices we make about who pays taxes, how much they pay, and for what services those taxes are spent on are the foundation for what Massachusetts can accomplish as a Commonwealth. Over the last ten years, Massachusetts enacted more than 42 tax cuts, which have created a structural budget deficit. Massachusetts must have a balanced approach when dealing with growing budget deficits. We support over a billion dollars in revenue enhancement, responsible spending cuts, and other creative funding opportunities both short and long term.

11. Will you use your position to lobby (**your legislative delegation**) for increased state revenue for your constituents?

YES

NO

12. What is your proposal to deal with the fiscal concerns in your city or town while maintaining services and jobs?

13. Please rank the following 7 revenue raising option that you are most likely to support as an elected official (1 being the most likely to support, 7 being the least likely to support):

- Local options taxes (ie. excise, meals, fees, hotel)

- Progressive state income taxes (higher rates for higher earners)

- Flat rate state income tax (same rate regardless of income)

- Sales tax

- Property tax rate

- Gas tax

- No tax

- Other _____

Comments: _____

VII. Education

All local communities receive money earmarked from the state for Chapter 70 (local aid to education).

14. Would you aggressively protect Chapter 70 money in your jurisdiction for education purposes only?

YES

NO

15. What is your position on charter schools? Do you oppose or support the expansion of charter schools in your municipality?

16. Teachers and parents are increasingly demanding a turn away from a current overemphasis on “high-standards testing” that pushes out other learning. Should MCAS or PARCC (Standardized State Tests) be the sole determinant of high school graduation or a part of other requirements? Please Explain.

YES

NO

17. What are the three most important issues facing the public schools in your city in the next five years?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

VIII. Wage Theft & Worker Safety

Wage Theft, in all of its various forms, costs the U.S. economy and its workforce tens of billions of dollars, and in Massachusetts, an estimated \$700 million dollars annually. It not only hurts workers, but hits the coffers of government at all level through fraud and tax evasion. Cities like Somerville, Cambridge, Chelsea, Boston, and Medford have tried to address this growing epidemic through ordinances and enforcement of existing laws. The USDOL, state AG, and private litigation only recover a fraction of what is owed, so much

more needs to be done. Wage theft punishes law abiding businesses by putting them at a competitive disadvantage with employers who cheat.

18. Would you support a strong wage theft ordinance in the district you represent and statewide bills, such as H.1033/S.999? If so, how?

19. Would you support worker safety initiatives and strict review of safety and labor law regulations and violations prior to issuing city contracts? If so, how?

IX. General Questions

20. Many Boards and Commissions appointed by elected officials directly and indirectly impact the lives of working men and women. Where you have the authority to make appointments, will you consult with the Central Labor Council when making appointments to these Boards and Commissions?

YES

NO

23. Why do you want the endorsement of the North Shore Labor Council?

Signature: _____

Please return this questionnaire by **June 10, 2017** to:

Katie Cohen, Council Organizer
112 Exchange St.
Lynn, MA 01901

Office: 781-595-2538 Fax: 781-595-8770 northshorelaborcouncil@gmail.com