



# 2024 ELECTION PREP: QUESTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES



## Purpose

Guide CLM Member discussions with candidates to educate candidates and learn about their plans to support children and family services in the Commonwealth.

## Script and Targeted Questions

[Begin by [introducing yourself and your town](#), and share that you live in the [candidate's/legislator's district](#). Then, [introduce your role and the organization you work for](#), including the organization's location if it falls within the candidate's/legislator's district.]

"As a Member of the Children's League of Massachusetts, also known as CLM, our League collectively advocates for public policies and quality services that are in the best interest of children, youth, and families in the Commonwealth. CLM's Members include nearly 60 direct service provider and advocacy organizations, serving 175,000+ children, youth, and families every year.

We appreciate your commitment to children and families in the Commonwealth, and we are interested in learning more about your approach to this work.

To highlight some key issues and learn more about desired approaches to supporting child and family well-being, we have a few questions.

- 1 How will you tackle **systemic issues of poverty in the Commonwealth** (particularly as they are tied to systemic racism)? What do you view as the biggest obstacles to implementing policy initiatives and securing the funding to support at-risk families, and how would you work to ensure that all families have the opportunity to thrive?
- 2 What steps will you take to ensure Massachusetts can **recruit and retain a stable workforce** of high-quality human service workers that ensures a thriving service network that reaches every local community? What is your view of the partnership between the Commonwealth and the network of contracted providers who also provide services?
- 3 How will you address the challenges of **race equity and disproportionality in child welfare**, for example, as it relates to the identification/reporting of families and equitable access to services? Are there any child welfare policies initiated in another state that you would like to see Massachusetts adopt?
- 4 As you may know, **transition-age youth** are young people between the ages of 18 and 22 years old who are in the process of leaving or who have left the child welfare system. Currently, 59% of young people exit the foster care system in Massachusetts, or "age out," without a permanency plan in place. Transition Age youth are struggling to move out of state care without comprehensive plans for support, including plans for housing, education, employment and health care needs. How would you work to ensure these youth can transition successfully to adulthood?



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### Script (cont.)

- 5 How would you **foster collaboration across agencies and Secretariats** to advance solutions to complex problems faced by children and families? What are your thoughts on a Children's Cabinet or similar advisory working group organized by the Administration?
- 6 The pandemic has heightened the need for increased, dedicated, sustained funding for **children's mental health services** in the community and schools. How would you use your position to make sure that all children in need of mental health services receive them in a timely fashion?
- 7 There are a broader set of issues **affecting families and workforce**, and how will you address these challenges, such as:
- affordable housing
  - emergency shelters
  - childcare
  - maternal health
  - juvenile justice
  - equity
  - transportation
  - new arrivals support
- 8 What else should Members of the Children's League of Massachusetts know about your plans to **prioritize children and families in your policy making**?

### Share your notes with the Children's League!

- Which candidates expressed sincere interest in and commitment to ensuring children, adolescents, and families involved in the child welfare sector would be prioritized in their legislative decision-making?
- Share your thoughts with us after having discussions with legislative candidates up for election in your district!

#### Contact us!

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