

Common Cause Massachusetts

2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Warren Tolman
Office: Attorney General

DEADLINE: Monday, August 18, 2014

Thank you for taking the time to indicate your position on the following issues. If desired, you may also include any other ideas on how you would work to make Massachusetts government more open and accountable. We reserve the right to summarize or shorten particularly long answers but will make the full text available on our website. We appreciate your prompt response. Thank you!

1) Are you concerned about the amount of money in politics and what would you do to promote policies to limit its influence in elections and governing?

I have always believed that at the end of the day, politics and government ought to be about values, not about money. I am very concerned about the amount of money in politics. The pernicious influence of large donations on the political process is a serious problem, and has only become more concerning with the Supreme Court's decisions in the *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* cases. I will continue to support policies that reduce the influence of money on politics, as I have throughout my career.

I have a track record of standing up to get big money out of politics and supporting grassroots organizing. In the state legislature working closely with Common Cause, I authored the last major campaign finance and ethics reform legislation passed in Massachusetts, the Act for Accountable Politics. The legislation lowered individual contributions and created a system of limited public financing – regulations that are still in place today. I supported Clean Elections when it was on the ballot and was the first and only statewide Clean Elections candidate when I ran for Governor in 2002. The Boston Globe once referred to me as Mr. Ethics Pain in the You-Know-What because of my work in this area.

Do you support public financing of elections? Please be specific about which offices it should cover and any other information about what kind of support should be provided.

I support public financing of elections, and wish that it was more available in Massachusetts. Public financing allows for candidates to run for election based on the strength of their ideas rather than their ability to raise money. I supported the Clean Elections law that allowed for true public financing. In 2002, I ran the only ever certified

statewide Clean Election Campaign in Massachusetts history. I staked my run for Governor on that law and sued the Speaker of the House of Representatives to force the implementation of that law. Common Cause honored me with the John Gardner Public Service Award in 2005 and I will continue my dedication to pushing for public financing.

Had the legislature and Governor Romney not repealed that law in 2003, I would be running a Clean Elections campaign today in this race for Attorney General. Under the current system, however, there was likely to be \$0.00 available to Attorney General candidates, since Gubernatorial candidates are entitled to get fully funded before candidates for any other office receive a penny. As a result, the current system is fatally flawed and offers a candidate for an office other than Governor a chance to engage in political gamesmanship but no realistic chance for public financing. I would favor the reinstatement of a true public financing system like the one that former Governor Romney did away with but the current system is an impossible one under which to run a statewide campaign in 2014.

Do you support a constitutional amendment to allow the government to limit political spending and to clarify that corporations do not have the same rights as people? Why or why not.

I support a constitutional amendment to ensure the government can limit political spending and to clarify that corporations are not people and do not have the same rights as people to spend money to influence the political process. I believe *Citizens United* decision and following cases were wrongly decided and agree with former Supreme Court Justice Stevens that this decision “threatens to undermine the integrity of elected institutions across the Nation.” I fully support amending the Constitution to clarify that corporate donations are not speech.

2) What would you do to bring more transparency to government operations?

I have always believed that sunlight is the best disinfectant. As Attorney General, I want to work with community leaders and organizations to ensure their problems are addressed and discuss progress that the office is making on those problems. I will make sure that any public information requests made to the Attorney General’s Office are seriously considered and that denials or requests for more specificity are only made where absolutely necessary. I will take action when government fails to live up to its responsibility to the public and use the full authority of the office to investigate allegations of impropriety. For example, I would have investigated whether Massachusetts officers acted properly in the Florida incident involving suspected marathon bomber Ibragim Todashev. I will vigorously enforce the provisions of the Open Meeting Law and push for updates to that law which allow for more public discussion on the internet.

I have a track record of shining a light on problems that many in government would rather leave in the dark. I fought for oversight of the Big Dig even though top leaders on

Beacon Hill didn't want details to come to light because costs were spiraling. But I took a stand because it was the right thing to do. That is the same approach to transparency I will bring with me to the Attorney General's Office.

3) The legislature passed a terrific elections bill earlier this year that will make great steps towards modernizing our elections. Would you support Election Day registration for the commonwealth? Is there anything else you think we should do to improve our elections in Massachusetts?

I support Election Day registration, but I think we need to go further. I support expanded absentee voting and flexible in-person, early voting. If a citizen wants to vote, our Commonwealth should make it as convenient as possible for them to do so without compromising the integrity of the election. Many other states already have Election Day registration, flexible early voting, and expanded absentee voting. It is time to bring these common sense, voter friendly procedures to Massachusetts. The law the legislature recently passed is a great first step, but we need to do more.

4) What do you think should be done, if anything, about the issue of political patronage?

Political patronage will not happen in the Attorney General's Office when I am Attorney General. I will initiate merit-based hiring panels to ensure my office only hires the best, brightest, most qualified individuals. I will also push for their widespread implementation throughout other offices of government.

I will investigate and aggressively pursue any allegations of impropriety in the hiring and firing of public employees. I will work closely with the State Auditor, Inspector General, and Ethics Commission to ensure that no allegations of wrongdoing slip through the cracks. Nobody will be tougher in making sure that political patronage is exposed and routed out.