

Common Cause Questionnaire

Candidate: Leland Cheung

Office: Lt. Governor

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?

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.

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.

Yes, the amount of money involved in elections today is excessive and has far too much of an influence on the outcome of elections. Corporations and special interest groups are able to use money to claim a disproportionate amount of political power, both by donating to candidates and influencing ballot initiatives. Massachusetts voters, not corporate executives, should have influence over the outcome and existence of ballot initiatives. To address the problem of overspending in elections, I am in support of publicly funded elections. I believe that public financing is the best way to ensure that candidates win based on their background and merit, not on the number of zeroes in their bank account. Without public financing, unlimited sums of money could flow into candidates' campaigns, which would give certain well-funded interest groups an exorbitant amount of influence. This, in turn, could easily lead to political inequality that would hurt the working class. I am also in support of a constitutional amendment to limit political spending and the rights of corporations. In 2012, the Cambridge City Council unanimously passed a bill in support of a Massachusetts Legislature measure that requests the Supreme Court to repeal their Citizens United decision.

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

Keeping government open and accessible to all citizens has been a priority of mine as a Cambridge City Councilor and will continue to be important in my role as Lieutenant Governor. One way I would like to accomplish transparency is by canceling the exemption of state legislators from government transparency laws. State senators and representatives should be

required to comply with the Open Meeting Law so the public has the opportunity to see exactly what their elected officials are accomplishing. If elected, I would readily comply with the open meeting law because I believe in the importance of transparency. As a Cambridge City Councilor, I made it a priority of mine to ensure that the public had access to information about council meetings and that meeting minutes were posted online. In order to give the citizens of Cambridge a greater role in the law making process and to ensure transparent government proceedings, I created an open- data ordinance, which allows individuals to online crowd source. If elected lieutenant governor, I will take similar measures to keep government accessible to the people it serves

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?

Yes, I believe that Election Day registration is a crucial step in maximizing voter turnout and ensuring that all citizens have a chance to make their voice heard through the political process. In 2012, Rock the Vote ranked Massachusetts 42nd in the nation on ballot access. Election Day registration, coupled with bilingual ballots and early voting, is an important step in improving access to voting state wide. I also support other measures that maximize citizens' ability to vote, streamline the registration process and ensure that elections are conducted in a fair and legal manner. Bills pertaining to these issues, such as allowing online registration and randomly auditing voting machines, have recently appeared before the state legislature. I support the passage of these bills and related election reform legislation.

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

Political patronage is a practice that the Commonwealth should terminate. Individuals in government positions should be chosen based on their merit and their ideas, not the people they know. The citizens of Massachusetts deserve to have the best qualified people representing their needs, and that cannot be guaranteed if political patronage continues. I have used my position as Cambridge City Councilor to promote fair hiring processes by fighting for the use of disaggregated statistics when hiring employees at all levels.