

Mike Heffernan
Treasurer Candidate

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?

I think the voters are very intelligent, and we have seen many examples where outspending an opponent is not enough to win. I believe our campaign finance laws should require the utmost transparency, so it is clear to all where the money comes from and how it is spent. The campaign finance laws should also be fair and not give favored status to any group, which is why I opposed the \$15,000 loophole allowed for certain special interests.

The amount of money spent in elections is a reflection of the cost of communicating with the voters. Our election system should allow all candidates to raise sufficient funds, especially challengers who are often at a serious financial disadvantage to incumbents.

When I see all the unmet needs in our state – the rising problem of homeless families, for example – and the crushing state debt – the highest in the nation – I do not see the public funding of elections as a top priority.

I would prefer to see campaign finance laws that require full disclosure of the sources of money. I believe the voters, with the aid of the news media, are intelligent enough to decide whether a message by a third-party organization is worth considering in an election.

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

As Treasurer, I will expand the state's online checkbook to include more information about how much was spent and for what purpose.

I will use the full power of the constitutional office of Treasurer to promote and protect transparency and accountability. For example, the Democrat-controlled Legislature recently passed, and Governor Patrick signed, a \$1 billion expansion of the convention center in Boston. Buried in the legislation is language that grants special exemptions to the public records law.

The state agency in charge of the convention center is now protected from disclosing financial information that would be available at other state agencies. In addition, the legislation weakens the power of the independent Office of the Inspector General, which usually has authority to both review and approve certain methods of buying goods and services.

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There is no good public policy reason for weakening the laws regarding transparency in operating the convention center, and as treasurer, I will stand up to efforts to undermine transparency in government. I will use the full power of my office, including refusal to issue related debt to bring a consistently higher level of transparency and accountability to state government.

In general, I would support the Attorney General's Office having a formal role in reviewing procurement contracts, and I would support an increased role for the independent Office of the Inspector General in reviewing and approving procurement of goods and services for the state and its quasi-independent authorities.

3) The legislature passed a terrific elections bill earlier this year that will make great steps toward 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?

Voting is a fundamental right for every citizen of this Commonwealth and nation. We must do more to encourage voting, rather than discourage it. Turning away citizens at the polls for failure to meet a previous registration deadline is a denial of their fundamental right.

With today's technology, our Commonwealth should be able to create a system of election-day registration. Because I believe strongly in the right of citizens to vote, I also believe we must protect the integrity of our election system. We must establish a system by which we are able to confirm the citizenship of election-day registrants or accept their vote provisionally until citizenship is later established.

In addition, I would support creation of a system for early voting, in which citizens may vote at the town or city clerk's office prior to election day. I believe this will encourage more voters, and in those elections with high turnout, could ease voter traffic at the polls and reduce the strain on municipal resources. Again with an eye toward integrity, any such system must prevent a person from attempting to vote more than once.

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

I will not tolerate patronage in the Office of Treasurer and Receiver General or in the agencies it oversees. Patronage is a leading cause of government inefficiency. When unqualified people are hired, less work gets accomplished and more mistakes are made. Unqualified coworkers degrade the morale of qualified and skilled individuals who have devoted their careers to public service. Getting a job should be about what you know, not who you know.

I also believe in equal pay for equal work. Employees must be treated fairly in both the hiring and compensation systems. No employee should be paid less because of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or political beliefs. As Treasurer, I will also post the available job openings, salary

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range and job requirements. Then, the name of the person who is hired for the position will be posted.